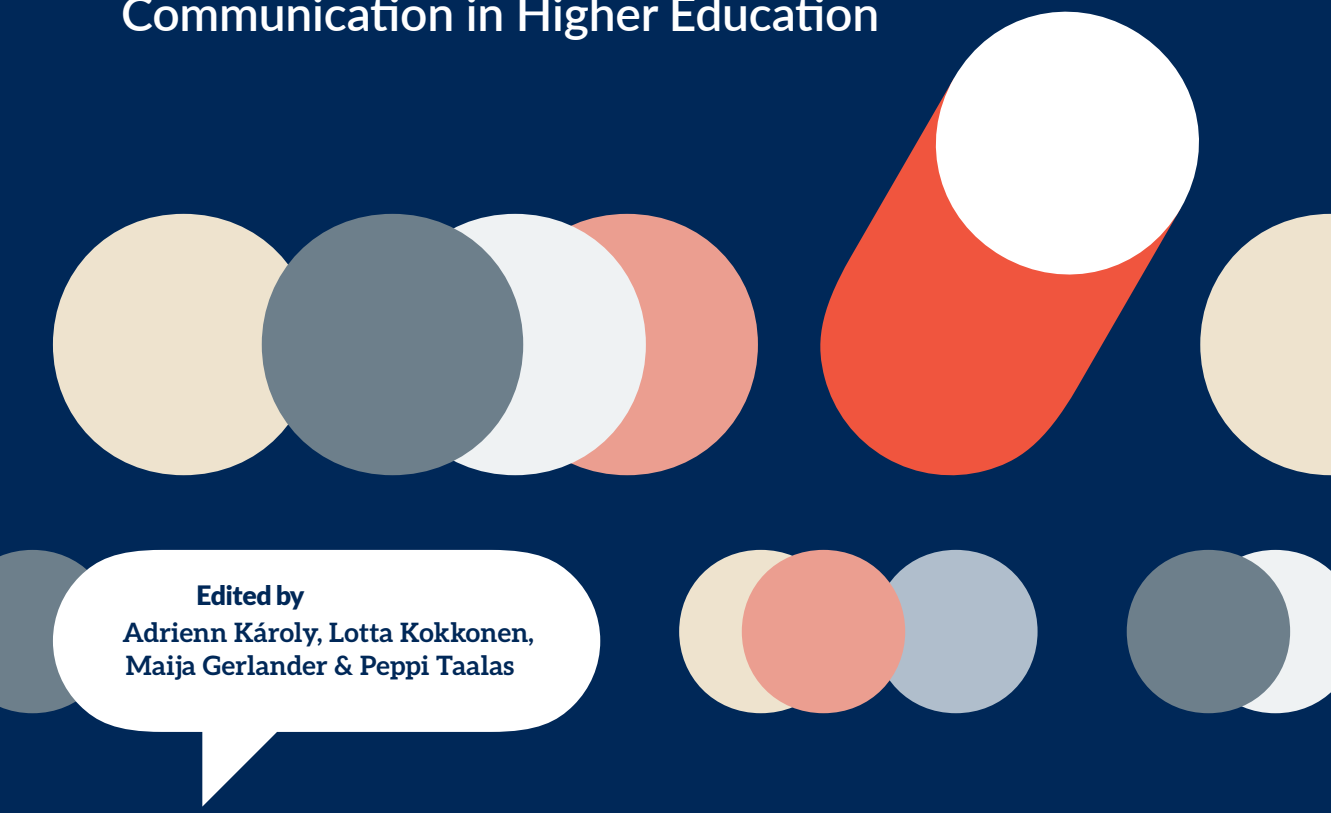
JYU STUDIES 1

Driving and Embracing Change

Learning and Teaching Languages and Communication in Higher Education



Edited by
Adrienn Károly, Lotta Kokkonen,
Maija Gerlander & Peppi Taalas

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Adrienn Károly, Lotta Kokkonen, Maija Gerlander & Peppi Taalas

> We must change the world while constantly reinterpreting it; as much as change itself, the reinterpretation of the world is a collective endeavor. (de Sousa Santos, 2018, p. viii)

Changes affecting the higher education landscape

When considering the title of this book, we, as its editors, had to reflect on the notion of change. Change is constant and inevitable, but fundamental changes do not happen overnight. Such changes result from actions and measures that address deep, complex and interrelated systemic issues, and thus require a shift in mindset. Fifty years ago, Gregory Bateson (1972/2000), an early advocate for ecological thinking, warned that solving the challenges facing society requires a re-examination of the ideas that have dominated thought since the industrial revolution. For Bateson, ecological thinking meant more than adding an environmental perspective and implied the need to revisit the core values and principles that form the basis of societies. Similarly, in the field of education, as Selby (2000) has argued, ecological thinking involves a shift to a more holistic worldview and an awareness of the interconnections and interdependencies of issues of culture, development, environmental and social justice, equity, health, and peace, as well as the interplay between our outer and inner worlds and between different disciplinary epistemologies.

These ideas have special significance in the dynamic landscape of contemporary higher education, which faces complex challenges and often unforeseen and/or unpredictable changes and events, such as shifts in government policy or the COVID-19 pandemic. The constantly evolving changes necessitate strategic, future-oriented planning and decision-making in addressing the most critical questions relevant to universities today: the provision of education that is accessible and equitable to all and that meets the changing needs of economies and societies; internationalisation and the growing linguistic and cultural diversity at universities alongside the increasing dominance of English in academia; financial sustainability and the increasing competition for funding; technological advancements; and the well-being of both students and staff. These questions are linked to larger social, economic, geopolitical, technological, ideological, and environmental changes, which directly or indirectly influence higher education, such as intensifying global migration, deepening social inequalities, escalating armed and cyber conflicts and threats, increasing political/ideological polarisation,

the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation that diminishes trust in science, ethical issues surrounding AI, and the impending environmental crisis. On a more practical level, interest and investment in learning languages other than English is diminishing. These challenges are relevant in the Finnish higher education context, too, and they require flexibility and continuous adjustments not only in institutional strategies and frameworks but also in mindsets, pedagogical practices, and working cultures.

Movi's diverse roles and responsibilities

The Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication (Movi), an independent unit within the University of Jyväskylä with which the contributors to this book are affiliated, is particularly affected by these changes since its focus area and core activities revolve around language and communication. As language and communication are foundational to every aspect of life, including learning, social interaction, academic knowledge construction, and science communication, Movi's sphere of operation has a wide-reaching influence. This requires an awareness of emerging changes in both the immediate and broader environment, including an understanding of their impact not only on Movi's operations but also on students' lives and experiences. But these changes also call for a proactive approach and concrete actions instead of merely adapting to recent developments and uncritically accepting new ideas. Movi's staff strives to embrace change in all its complexity and unpredictability and move in the desired direction by taking forward-looking steps. In doing so, Movi hopes to contribute to gradual but meaningful changes. This volume provides a forum to share ideas and increase the visibility of Movi's pedagogical approaches and practices. The challenges identified above are a shared concern that require joint effort and collaborative development of new ways forward. The nine contributions in this volume demonstrate how engaging in pedagogical inquiry and/or in creative explorations shapes Movi teachers' thinking and professional identities, develops their expertise, and makes them reflect on their pedagogical practices, with the overall goal of enhancing and enriching students' learning experiences. The ideas discussed in the chapters are intended to inspire readers to reflect on their current practices and develop the field further.

As part of the establishment of the network of language centres in Finland in the middle of the 1970s, a national centre for these units was established at the University of Jyväskylä (JYU). The main objective of this national centre was to develop and coordinate university language education at the national level, develop discipline-specific curricula as well as teaching materials, and to offer professional development training for language centre teachers. In 1977, an independent language centre was also established at JYU to offer degree-specific academic language and communication courses for all students. As the language centres around the country gradually became more autonomous, the national centre in Jyväskylä shifted its focus from coordination and development to research in the area of applied linguistics. In 1996, the centre was renamed the Centre for Applied Language Studies (CALS). Today, CALS, which is part of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, has a strong research focus on individual, community, and societal language phenomena and plays a pivotal national role in identifying challenges and providing research-based solutions. Because applied linguistics has been, and remains, a prominent field of research at JYU, the Language Centre staff has had excellent opportunities to participate in innovative research projects and be a member

of a vibrant research community. Over the years, the activities of the Language Centre gradually expanded as a response to the emerging real-world developments and theoretical advancements. The change in name from the Language Centre to the Centre of Multilingual Academic Communication (Movi) in 2018, nearly 40 years after its establishment, indicates the broadening of responsibilities as well as a qualitative shift in its vision and connection to contemporary theories, research, and pedagogical practices.

Movi's primary task today is to provide support for the learning of languages and academic/research communication for students and staff, but its broader mission is to promote multilingualism, critical language awareness, and the development of intercultural competence across all disciplines. Movi's wide-ranging operations, centred around language and communication, are closely linked with the overall functioning of the university from three key perspectives: as an educational and research institution, as a workplace, and as a societal agent. These three core functions are explicitly mentioned in the latest version of the official language policy of the University of Jyväskylä (2015), originally published in 2003 as one of the first of its kind in Europe. In addition to the specific tasks assigned to it, Movi is responsible for the general implementation of the principles and values set out in the language policy.

Over the years, we have developed into a dynamic, multilingual, and multicultural professional learning community with a working culture that emphasises collaboration, mutual support, knowledge sharing, and a collective orientation to action. Thus, multilingualism is viewed not only as a phenomenon and as a set of skills to be developed, but also as an operating culture, as "ways of thinking, working and co-constructing" (Jalkanen & Nikula, 2020, p. 117). While teacher collaboration and team-teaching may bring their own challenges, resolving tensions contributes to both professional and personal growth (e.g., Dang et al., 2022). From the perspective of management, in curriculum development work it is crucial to support collaboration and agency rather than adopting a top-down approach for implementation with an excessive focus on control and monitoring (e.g., Englund & Price, 2018; Hökkä et al., 2019). It therefore becomes crucial to consider and respect teachers' individual ideas, approaches, and solutions as well as the perspectives of students. In addition, the current context of higher education, characterised as it is by evolving changes and a "culture of speed" (Berg & Seeber, 2016), requires us to maintain a positive outlook and see the opportunities in the constantly arising challenges as well as to be mindful of our own and others' well-being and cherish what we have achieved together as a community. As Martela (2014) put it, "We . . . need work communities that are communities in the true meaning of the word recognizing us also on the affective and relational levels" (p. 106).

Movi plays a central role in promoting the values and implementing the goals set out in the university strategy and language policy. With a staff of about 100, Movi offers nearly 600 language and communication courses in 14 different languages, in a variety of modes. A wide range of courses are available for students across all levels, along with courses and professional development programmes for university staff, focusing on various aspects of language, communication, and pedagogical competence. Movi's primary responsibility, however, remains implementing the mandatory communication and language studies in Finnish, Swedish, and English, and in some cases in other languages, as part of the bachelor's and master's degree requirements at the national level.

About a decade ago, as theoretical advancements were made in the conceptualisations of language and language learning, Movi started to redesign the mandatory language and

communication studies at the undergraduate level, also prompted by the evolving needs of students. The guiding principle was to more closely integrate these studies with students' subject studies and offer them in a more timely manner. Such integration would enable the progressive development of academic and disciplinary literacies through different languages. Thus, rather than viewing the development of these literacies in isolation, they were to be seen as mutually supportive multilingual processes. The restructured system of integrated, multilingual, and discipline-specific language and communication studies has been the largest development project in the history of Movi. The work started in 2013, and by 2020 it had encompassed all undergraduate degree programmes. The new structure is often referred to by the acronym UVK, which stands for "uusiutuvat kieli- ja viestintäopinnot" in Finnish. The mandatory courses now span the entire duration of undergraduate studies, and their content is tailored to specific degree programmes. Designed in collaboration with the faculties and departments, they address the unique needs and disciplinary requirements or each programme (Jalkanen et al., 2016). At the same time, the system retains the core element of flexibility and is continuously reviewed, which helps teachers identify the most effective practices. Our approach has been influenced not only by the growing prevalence of multilingualism at the individual and societal level, but also by the changing views of language and of the role of languages and multilingualism in the development of academic expertise. (For a comprehensive overview of the theoretical underpinnings of the UVK studies, see Jalkanen and Nikula, 2020.)

The design, implementation, and continuous development of the new studies requires a very different pedagogical culture and a shift in teachers' mindsets. As educational expert Michael Fullan (2001, 2008) has pointed out, the restructuring process must go hand in hand with reculturing, an effort to change the way we do things: a type of reculturing "that activates and deepens moral purpose through collaborative work cultures that respect differences and constantly build and test knowledge against measurable results" (Fullan, 2001, p. 44). Teachers needed to accept that their own ideas (the ones most natural and familiar to them) represent just one approach, and other teachers may adopt, modify, or even reject these. Being open to, reflecting on, and acting upon feedback is a basic social skill, and also part of teachers' professional competence. Thus, the restructuring process has held a huge potential for professional development. It not only enables the integration of individual expertise but also helps teachers directly experience how group dynamics and social competence work in practice. One of the most important changes for teachers has been to adapt to new ways of thinking and working and look beyond the perspective of teaching (in) a particular language. Traditionally, colleagues, even within the same language group, may not have been aware of each other's pedagogical approaches and teaching practices, but in the new system, everything is done in collaboration: the team members and teams exchange ideas and solutions while making plans and decisions together and also share the responsibility, which leads to a new level of transparency.

In addition, it is essential to acknowledge and understand the students' perspective. In 2017, Movi initiated a longitudinal research project (AAKE) in collaboration with the Finnish Institute for Educational Research on the development of academic expertise in the restructured mandatory language and communication studies at the bachelor's level. One aim was to systematically follow the development of students' academic expertise during the three-year bachelor's study path through regular surveys and interviews. Another aim was to investigate what kind of pedagogy best supports the development of students'

academic expertise. Expertise is considered holistically, taking into account generic working life competencies, including social skills (Virtanen & Tynjälä, 2019, 2022), academic literacies (Kiili et al., 2013; Li, 2022; Wingate, 2018), communication competence (seen as effective and appropriate behaviour in a given context, see Spitzberg, 2013), multilingual and intercultural communication competence (see Kokkonen & Natri, 2024 in this volume), and the dimension of wisdom (see Kallio et al., 2024; Tynjälä et al., 2020). It encompasses cognitive, behavioural, emotional, motivational, and ethical aspects with an interplay between intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual factors. The surveys are administered at the beginning of the first academic year and at the end of the first, second, and third academic year. The results, which are to be published in a forthcoming article (Tynjälä et al., 2024), are used not only as a self-assessment tool for students but also for the pedagogical development of the bachelor's level language and communication studies.

Recent research has revealed several benefits of the collaboration between content and language specialists (see Li, 2020). Subject specialists often develop expertise implicitly through membership in discourse communities, which means that their knowledge of academic and disciplinary literacies is often tacit, and they may not be aware of or be able to articulate their values and expectations (McGrath et al., 2019, 2023). On the other hand, academic language and literacies experts may not have as deep and extensive knowledge about specific disciplinary discourses as content teachers do, and they often have a lower status and professional recognition within the institution and may even be perceived as marginalised and isolated service providers who operate in a "third space" (e.g., Ding & Bruce, 2017; MacDonald, 2016). Thus, deeper collaboration between content teachers and teachers of academic language and literacies is beneficial not only for students but also for staff (Li, 2020; Wingate, 2018). Such a collaboration not only facilitates reflection but also fosters professional development through a culture of collaboration, respect, and mutual responsibility. A disciplinary approach to language and communication blurs the line between teaching content and language and provides opportunities for language and communication experts to reflect on their professional identities and pedagogical practices (Jalkanen & Nikula, 2020). The topic of professional identity has been further explored in recent studies, where a broad spectrum of expertise and roles are identified alongside a complex interplay of contextual constraints and affordances that results in multilayered professional identities and varying degrees of agency (e.g., Fenton-Smith & Gurney, 2022; Ilieva et al., 2019). From an even broader perspective, a multilingual approach to disciplinary literacy pedagogies considers learning as multilingual practice, where languages are seen as integrated (rather than separate) resources. It highlights the significance of multilingual and multimodal repertoires and multilingual competence in the development of academic expertise, while also bringing to the fore the different status, role, and functions that specific languages have in academic communication in the Finnish context (Jalkanen & Nikula, 2020).

In applied linguistics, the multilingual turn (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014) or the multi/plural turn, as Kubota (2016) refers to it, signifies a shift in our understanding of language, language use, and language learning (see Meier, 2027), with an emphasis on plurality, multiplicity, hybridity, and fluidity (Kubota, 2016). Following these theoretical developments, multilingual approaches to language learning and teaching (including assessment, see Gorter and Cenoz, 2017), which draw on the concept of multicompetence (Cook, 2013), have challenged the traditional monolingual paradigm and its dominant linguistic norms and ideologies, while also bringing the social, historical, and ideological dimensions of language use

and language learning to the forefront (e.g., Kramsch, 2008, 2022; Kubota, 2016; Pennycook, 2022). These multilingual and holistic approaches do not see languages as isolated entities with fixed boundaries, owned by native speakers, but rather as deterritorialised, translocal resources used in interaction with others (Meier, 2017). Moreover, they consider language as part of a multimodal (linguistic, semiotic, and spatial) repertoire and as a multilingual social practice situated in time and space (see, e.g., Canagarajah, 2018). The multilingual turn has also directed attention towards the learners, who are seen as emergent bi/multilinguals living in a multilingual world (a multilingual ecosystem), each with individual, complex, and dynamic identities (Meier, 2017). Movi recognises the importance of supporting students in learning languages and "becoming multilingual", while also emphasising "being multilingual", that is, multilingual practices and the way multilingual speakers navigate between languages linked to their multilayered identities within and outside of the classroom (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015, p. 6). The dimensions of both becoming and being multilingual are particularly important in academic knowledge construction, research communication, and academic interaction. Moreover, as Meier (2017) has pointed out, the multilingual turn is part of a larger critical and transdisciplinary shift in education. Multilingual pedagogies do not simply promote multilingualism and focus on the benefits it brings to individuals (such as a competitive advantage in the labour market) or societies but also foster linguistic and epistemological diversity. In contemporary academia, it is particularly crucial to value and incorporate insights in multiple languages (other than English) and from different disciplines, intellectual traditions, and cultural contexts (e.g., de Sousa Santos, 2018; Molinari, 2022). From an even broader societal perspective, multilingual pedagogical approaches that address existing language-related challenges in society, such as inequalities, exclusion, or power dynamics, have the potential to raise critical language awareness (e.g., Shapiro, 2022), cultural sensitivity, and overall consciousness and, thus, play a vital role in fostering social cohesion and positive change in society (Kubota, 2016; Meier, 2017).

Another major influence on Movi's work is the process known as internationalisation, which is a central dimension of the university strategy. Internationalisation is most directly noticeable through the presence of students and faculty from countries other than Finland and in the growing number of international partnerships and collaborative projects. However, rather than being a measurable goal and an end in itself, internationalisation should be seen as a means to foster an attitude of openness, respectful communication, mutual learning, and meaningful contributions to the broader community or society as a whole (e.g., de Wit, 2020; Latorre et al., 2024). These goals are captured by the concept of internationalising the curriculum (e.g., Leask, 2013), with its focus on developing the intercultural competence of both students and staff (e.g., Deardorff & Jones, 2012, 2022). It has been suggested that university policymakers need a more qualitative and long-term approach that highlights ethical and social responsibility (Knight, 2023; Latorre et al., 2024). Such an approach is believed to help prevent the perpetuation of inequalities and biases and direct attention to larger societal issues. It is important to emphasise that making surface-level changes are not enough: this development work requires deeper transformations in underlying structures, everyday discourses, and pedagogical practices.

Within the framework of a recent development project, Movi has worked closely with faculties and departments to actively support these internationalisation goals. The internationalisation of the curriculum is particularly important, and Movi has promoted the inclusion of intercultural learning goals in the curriculum, alongside the use of personal study

plans. More specifically, Movi offers guidance and support for students in making personal plans and for faculties in formulating and implementing departmental-level strategies related to intercultural competence. Movi's overall mission is to support students in becoming effective, confident, and ethical language users, ones who can make informed and strategic decisions when communicating and interacting with people from diverse backgrounds while relying on multiple languages in their repertoire. These aspects are crucial during their studies but also in their future work when they engage in expert activities in their chosen field. As the themes of language, identity, and equity are increasingly important in public discussions and academic research, Movi also encourages a deeper and more critical reflection on the role and impact of languages, as well as on the value and challenges of multilingualism and intercultural communication in students' professional and personal lives, not to mention in society in general. In line with the specific internationalisation goals put forward in the university strategy, developing multilingual and intercultural competence is seen as an integral part of university studies, starting from the bachelor's level.

In addition to providing the mandatory language and communication studies at the bachelor's level, Movi offers support courses for students experiencing high social anxiety and low communication self-efficacy. Recent studies show a considerable increase in social anxiety worldwide following the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Batista et al., 2021; World Health Organization, 2022), but studies conducted in the Finnish context indicate similar trends among adolescents from 2013 to 2021, particularly among girls (Ranta et al., 2024). During their studies, students experience social anxiety and communication challenges, especially when they need to use a language that is not part of their everyday lives and/or when they interact with strangers. Since these challenges directly impact learning, teachers need to identify them and offer support. Movi was the first unit within the university to recognise the importance of considering students' academic study ability from a holistic perspective when offering structured support, and today it has a central role in this endeavour at the university level. The Academic Study Ability Team works closely with various stakeholders within the university to provide versatile support for students. One concrete result of their work is a website that provides guidelines and tips for students related to academic reading and writing, argumentation, feedback interaction, technology-mediated collaboration, language learning and multilingual communication. In collaboration with the JYU Student Life programme, the Student Union of the University of Jyväskylä, and the Finnish Kennel Club, Movi has brought Care and Reading Dogs to the campus to enhance students' well-being and support their learning, while also promoting new pedagogical methods.

The Flexible Pedagogy Team is responsible for developing and promoting flexible pedagogical approaches and learning solutions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they provided valuable support for Movi and JYU teachers when transitioning to online teaching. Recently, the team's focus has been on the ethical and pedagogically informed use of AI in teaching and learning as well as on assessment practices. Their activity is linked to the university-wide collaborative pedagogical development initiative JYULearn, which aims at improving teaching practices at the university.

Movi is in charge of INTEGRA, a one-year training programme for highly educated immigrants (those with a higher education degree or partially completed higher education studies from outside of Finland) who want to continue their studies in a Finnish degree programme or find employment in Finland within their own field. The pedagogical model developed for INTEGRA is unique in that it integrates subject studies, language and

communication courses in both Finnish and English, and study guidance. The model has been adapted to various English-medium degree programmes at JYU to support international students in learning Finnish, which is important if they plan on staying in Finland.

Movi also provides support for the professional development of JYU staff members who teach academic content through English to culturally and linguistically diverse student groups. The programme is currently being updated and integrated into the newly developed university pedagogy programme, the underlying philosophy of which is informed by multilingual and multicultural approaches. The new programme will be launched in the fall of 2024 and Movi is responsible for developing, coordinating, and partly teaching the modules. In addition to updating the content and ensuring a solid theoretical grounding, the renewed studies will have a modular structure to enable more flexibility and more linkage to current issues and changes in the working environment. Participants will more easily be able to customise their learning experience and tailor their pedagogical studies to their specific needs and objectives.

Within the framework of Academic Readiness Screening (ACRES), specific support is offered to departments in assessing the language and academic readiness of applicants to some of the English-medium master's degree and doctoral programmes.

For doctoral students, Movi offers research communication courses in Finnish and English, which can be taken at different stages of their studies. The courses encompass various aspects of research communication, along with specific genres that students will encounter during their doctoral journey and beyond. From 2024 to 2027, JYU is participating in a doctoral education pilot project that aims to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of doctoral training and meet the growing need for experts who can provide evidence-based solutions for complex problems. Movi's role in this project is crucial. It is essential that doctoral students possess strong language and communication skills when communicating their research results, collaborating with others, and engaging with policymakers, industry professionals, practitioners, and the general public with the purpose of achieving both scientific and societal impact. In addition to these pragmatic goals, doctoral students need to be aware of and reflect on broader issues in global academia at the intersection of language, power, and identity (e.g., Habibie & Flowerdew, 2023; Kubota, 2016; Shapiro, 2022), consider their interconnectedness with impact (Ennser-Kananen et al., 2022), and, overall, develop a sense of agency as researchers (Károly, 2022).

Finally, university staff members can choose from a range of courses, in both Finnish and English, that focus on various aspects of language and communication at different levels. Moreover, a wide range of traditional language courses in a number of languages are part of Movi's course offerings for language learners at different levels.

Contributions

This volume comprises nine chapters, each presenting a study that is linked to one or more of the changes outlined above. The book is divided into three parts, starting from studies that explore broader themes and gradually moving to investigations of more specific topics.

The first part consists of three studies linked to broader changes that directly impact on higher education and diversify the learning and teaching context. As mentioned earlier, Movi is taking an active role in implementing the university's internationalisation strategy and goals. In their contribution, Kokkonen and Natri offer a conceptual framework for multilingual

and intercultural communication competence (MICC), which is seen as an integral part of academic expertise. Their framework serves as a valuable pedagogical tool that aids students in articulating, self-assessing, and reflecting on their multilingual and intercultural communication competence and their individual goals. Drawing on this framework, Brauer focuses on students' motivations and ideal international selves by examining their personal internationalisation goals. As a concrete example of pedagogical experimentation, Károly looks into the pedagogical value of translation from the broader perspective of intercultural learning within the context of a recently developed elective course. She considers translation not merely as the practical activity of meaning transfer but also as a theoretical topic and a subject for critical discussion with complex cultural, social, ethical, and ideological dimensions.

The second part of this volume contains three studies that are linked to the importance of interaction, reflection, and collaboration. They show how change affects inter- and intrapersonal dynamics: Movi's workplace interactions, pedagogical priorities, and students' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. As explained above, Movi is at the forefront of pedagogical collaboration in the design, development, and implementation of teaching. In their contribution, Ahonen and Ylönen focus on team teaching, an essential part of the working culture at Movi. They analyse peer feedback received in teacher teams to examine perceptions of feedback and ways to improve feedback practices within collaborative teams. Gerlander and Alanne focus on a course that provides support for students in developing their academic study ability by examining the phenomenon of oral communication apprehension. They highlight the importance of understanding personal perceptions and establishing a supportive and collaborative learning environment to develop students' communication confidence and call for a holistic approach in the design and evaluation of such support courses. Students may experience discomfort in intercultural communication situations when interacting with people from different cultures. Combining visual and verbal data, Kelly and Imamura zoom in on the experiences of Japanese university exchange students in Finland who participated in English-medium courses on academic language and communication offered for international students. The courses seem to provide transformative learning experiences for these students as they encounter international students from diverse cultural backgrounds who use English as a shared language.

The last part of this book contains three studies that focus on academic literacies, more specifically on learning and teaching academic reading and writing. At Movi, it is important to be aware of and understand the experiences of students who are new to the world of academic reading and writing. In this area, change manifests in the form of novel pedagogical solutions, curricular shifts, and increased pedagogical awareness and support. Orszag focuses on an online academic reading module to examine how teaching presence is influenced by certain pedagogical factors, such as embedded support, the design of the learning environment, and teacher feedback, while also considering other factors, such as students' confidence in their academic and English abilities and their working mode preferences. Jokinen, Kuitunen, and Torvelainen seek to identify the changes in how academic writing was conceptualised in the writing curriculum between 2010 and 2020. They discuss how the comprehensive reassessment of pedagogical goals and content led to a new approach that reflects a broader understanding of writing and better takes into account cognitive processes and the sociocultural context. Finally, Riikonen and Kotilainen delve into the challenges of learning academic writing in the transition to university study and explore students' individual perspectives and experiences as they relate to three particular aspects of writing identity.

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Dr Jessica Bradley, Senior Lecturer in Literacies and Language, School of Education, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

Hannele Dufva, Professor Emerita, Department of Language and Communication Studies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Regine Hampel, Professor of Open and Distance Language Learning, Deputy Associate Dean (Research), Open University, United Kingdom

Leena Kuure, Researcher Emerita in English Philology, Research Unit for Languages and Literature, University of Oulu, Adjunct Professor (Docent) in Applied Language Studies, University of Eastern Finland

Vilja Laaksonen, PhD, CEO, Aava & Bang Oy/ RALLA Oy

Minna-Riitta Luukka, Professor, Department of Language and Communication Studies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Kanako Nishizumi, PhD, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Chiba University, Japan

Taina Saarinen, Research Professor, Director of Finnish Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Marko Siitonen, Professor of Intercultural and Digital Communication, Department of Language and Communication Studies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

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FRAMEWORK FOR MULTILINGUAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

Bringing forward a pedagogical perspective and assessment for learning

Lotta Kokkonen & Teija Natri

The fields of intercultural and multilingual communication are in flux, and there is a need to critically view and renew our thinking on the intercultural and multilingual communication competence being taught in higher education (HE). Despite the increasing interest in more critical approaches to intercultural communication and intercultural competence, there remains a lack of clear learning outcomes that would help learners and teachers conceptualise and verbalise what are the competencies they are expected to teach and learn. For HE pedagogical purposes, both learners and teachers would need explicit and clear learning outcomes for students to better reflect on and verbalise what they have learned and how they can operate in diverse contexts and situations after graduating from an institution that promotes internationalisation as a part of its curriculum.

In this chapter, we draw from different models, theories, and frameworks of intercultural and multilingual communication competence to create a pedagogical tool and a framework to help teachers and students better reflect, analyse, and verbalise the multilingual and intercultural communication competence needed in an ever-globalising world. We present a definition of multilingual and intercultural communication competence (MICC) and a framework where competence is divided into the elements of motivation and attitudes, skills, and knowledge. The framework also contains learning outcomes that can be applied when assessing MICC. The framework of MICC is not a measuring tool nor is it to be used for summative assessment. We view assessment as assessment for learning and giving and receiving feedback on MICC, which is a situational, contextual, and life-long process. Through this more critical approach to culture and intercultural communication, we also question the static and evaluative understanding of intercultural communication competence (ICC). The framework highlights issues of language, power, and multilingual communication as a part of the competence needed when people perceive each other as representing different cultural backgrounds and/or having different linguistic repertoires.

Keywords: Multilingual and intercultural communication competence framework, assessment for learning, feedback

Kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän ja kielitieteiden kentillä on meneillään erilaisia murroksia ja muutoksia. Näiden paradigmamuutosten johdosta kieliä ja kulttuureja ei esimerkiksi enää tarkastella ainoastaan yksittäisinä muuttumattomina kokonaisuuksina, vaan ne nähdään muuttuvina ja neuvoteltavina. Muutosten myötä kulttuurienvälisen vuorovaikutuksen ja kielten osaamisen käsitteitä on myös syytä tarkastella uusista näkökulmista. Uuden tutkimuksen valossa esimerkiksi monikielisen vuorovaikutuksen käsite on syytä nivoa osaksi kulttuurienvälisen vuorovaikutusosaamisen käsitettä.

Kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän kentällä on esitetty vaihtoehtoisia malleja ja tapoja ymmärtää ja tarkastella vuorovaikutusosaamista, mutta konkreettiset osaamistavoitteet tai osaamisen sanoittamiseen tähtäävät esimerkit ovat vielä harvassa. Korkeakoulukontekstissa ja tilanteessa, jossa opiskelijoiden ensisijaiset tarpeet liittyvät oman monikielisen ja kulttuurienvälisen osaamisen liittämiseksi osaksi muuta akateemista asiantuntijuutta, tarvitaan konkreettisia pedagogisia työkaluja ja välineitä tämän osaamisen sanoittamiseksi ja kehittämiseksi.

Tässä luvussa esittelemme monikielisen ja kulttuurienvälisen vuorovaikutusosaamisen viitekehyksen (multilingual and intercultural communication competence, MICC), jonka tavoitteena on auttaa sekä opettajia että opiskelijoita reflektoimaan, analysoimaan ja sanoittamaan opinnoissa ja työelämässä tarvittavaa monikielistä ja kulttuurienvälistä vuorovaikutusosaamista. Sen lisäksi, että luvussa kuvataan, millaisena ilmiönä monikielinen ja kulttuurienvälinen vuorovaikutusosaaminen voidaan nähdä, siinä esitellään erilaisiin tietoihin, taitoihin, sekä asenteisiin ja motivaatioon liittyviä osaamistavoitteita, jotka kaikki voivat osaltaan vaikuttaa monikieliseen ja kulttuurienväliseen vuorovaikutusosaamiseen kulloisessakin tilanteessa ja/tai kontekstissa. Viitekehystä ei ole tarkoitettu formaalin arvioinnin välineeksi, vaan viitekehys toimii osaamisen reflektoinnin ja sanoittamisen apuvälineenä. Arviointi nähdään näin ollen nimenomaan reflektiona ja vertaispalautteena.

Asiasanat: Monikielisen ja kulttuurienvälisen vuorovaikutusosaamisen viitekehys, osaamisen sanoittaminen ja reflektointi, palaute

Introduction

Higher education (HE) as well as language and communication teaching within HE is part of the accelerated globalisation and internationalisation. This process leads to a more diverse working life as well as to new requirements for professionals to be able to collaborate and work with people from various backgrounds in a world of changing values and norms. Universities and other HE institutions are realising that internationalisation requires intercultural communication competence (ICC) for successful interaction with diverse peers and a maximised collegiate experience (Griffith et al., 2016).

Increased internationalisation in HE often means a greater number of foreign students and a more culturally and linguistically diverse faculty. This change is an important element of the internationalisation process, as the presence of international students and opportunities to study abroad offer valuable potential opportunities for learning (Spencer-Oatley & Dauber, 2019). Internationalisation, however, is more than cross-border mobility. The required competencies are equally relevant even if learners never reside in another society, or even in another place within their own country. For those that will not travel the world, first "they will nonetheless encounter sojourners and need to understand their experience and communicate with them and, secondly, the very fact that they may not become sojourners means that they need the perspective that challenges what they assume is normal and natural" (Byram, 2021, p. 4).

Accompanying these shifts is an acknowledged need for institutions to respond to the needs of internationalisation and to promote ICC as part of the curriculum. Dervin (2010) has rightfully pointed out that when the concept of intercultural competence is being introduced, "one needs to develop ways of making sure that it is *developed*" (Dervin 2010, p. 156).

Researchers in sociology, anthropology, psychology, education, and communication, to name a few fields, have for decades aimed at understanding what it takes for a person to communicate effectively in diverse contexts and intercultural encounters. Different concepts, such as intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993) and *intercultural communicative competence* (Byram, 2021), are being used when studying the phenomenon. Here we use the term intercultural communication competence to highlight the idea that competence takes place and is being negotiated within interaction (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002). The intercultural situation could be defined as "one in which the cultural distance between the participants is significant enough to have an effect on the interaction/communication that is noticeable to at least one of the parties" (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 3). Yet, since we understand culture as an abstract concept (e.g., Piller, 2017), to be discussed later, we add that rather than cultural differences being "objective facts", we see interculturality as something where interlocutors have intersubjective interpretations of so-called cultural differences (or similarities) among each other. Extending Spitzberg's (2015) idea that "cultures do not interact — people do" (p. 24), we also see that cultures only matter to the extent they are "manifested in and through people in interaction" (p. 24).

Earlier research, as well as many contemporary studies, have aimed at measuring and evaluating intercultural competence by using quantitative methodology (see Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017, for an overview of the development of the concept of ICC). With the development and validation of standardised measurement tools (e.g., Chen & Gabrenya, 2021), some scholars have questioned "whether it is fruitful to use the term competence in order to describe the potential and desirable outcomes of intercultural learning" (Zotzmann,

2014, p. 168) and whether there really is a need to assess intercultural competence (Borghetti, 2017). When using the term intercultural communication competence, we realise that the discussions around the concept are not only around the different elements or factors related to ICC, but also around the ontological nature of the phenomenon. For example, whether ICC is seen as a trait, a skill, or a performance outcome is very much still debated (Griffith et al., 2016).

The critique of the existing models and theories of ICC is often focused on those references where competence is viewed only from a cognitive perspective as being subjective and hence unpredictable (e.g., Zotzmann, 2014). For example, Byram and Guilherme (2010) point out the following: "The concept of competence is often used to seize the dynamics of something fluid and unpredictable implied by an intercultural relation and communication with notions of skills, abilities and capacities, and then to describe and evaluate them" (p. 5). However, they also indicate that "the word intercultural expresses the impact of the unexpected, the surprising, the potential rather than the pre-structured, the foreseen or the expectable." (p. 5).

Indeed, many scholars view competence as inherently static and as a term that aims at capturing something that could also be seen as fluid and unpredictable (see, e.g., Byram & Guilherme, 2010; Zotsmann, 2014). However, in the field of communication other perspectives on communication competence, namely the relational approach, is being discussed and applied to broaden the understanding of what communication competence is and how it can be defined (see, e.g., Spitzberg, 2013; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2009).

Some scholars have suggested that a paradigm shift is occurring in the field of intercultural communication (Ferri, 2018; Poutiainen, 2014), or at least turbulence (Dervin & Tournebise, 2013) that reflects a broader development in the humanities and social sciences (Bauman, 2012). Many critical scholars promoting this shift see culture and intercultural communication as flexible, fluid, contradictory, political, and ideological constructs (e.g., Dervin, 2010; Halualani & Nakayama, 2011; Holliday, 2010; Piller, 2017). Instead of focusing on cross-cultural comparisons, where national cultures are viewed as predetermined explanations for human interaction, critical scholars have presented approaches that focus on the complexity of micro-level situations of communication. Here macro conditions and structures of power are at play within processes of communication (Halualani & Nakayama, 2011), and diverse prefigured cultural references are negotiated and co-constructed, "performed" (Frame, 2017) in a broader process of sensemaking (Weick et al., 2005).

The changes in the field have brought the need to move away from models and definitions of ICC that rely on national culture groups and singular cultural identities toward a fluid, dynamic, contested nature of cultures, multiple cultural identities, and intercultural interactions (e.g., Dervin, 2010; Holliday, 2016; Martin & Nakayama, 2015). Many theories have also been criticised for neglecting language as part of ICC (e.g., Martin & Nakayama, 2015; Piller, 2017).

As teachers in intercultural communication and linguistics in HE, we see in our everyday work that students need motivation, knowledge, and skills to operate in diverse environments. We also know that simply asking students to interact within culturally diverse contexts and situations could lead to undesirable outcomes and, for example, enhance stereotypes of "the other" (e.g., Holmes, 2005; 2006; Holmes & O'Neill, 2005). Despite the latest development in intercultural communication education in the context of HE (see Sommier et al., 2021; 2023) and the justified critique of many existing conceptualisations of ICC, there remains a real need for students, faculty, and administrators alike to be able to describe, reflect on and enhance the competencies required in contemporary and future studies. This need extends as

well to working life, which is inevitably becoming more diverse than before. In this chapter we present our framework of multilingual and intercultural communication competence (MICC) that aims at addressing this need.

It is possible to develop and enhance MICC in HE (see Deardorff, 2017; Olbertz-Siitonen, 2021) and our framework helps learners to reflect, analyse, and verbalise the competence they need and that is expected from them within multilingual and intercultural encounters. The MICC framework is developed first and foremost to serve pedagogical needs as well as support the learners in the HE context. The MICC framework combines elements of ICC and multilingual communication competence and emphasises the interpretative and situational nature of the phenomenon. Following the more critical approaches to culture and interculturality, we question the static and evaluative understanding of ICC but simultaneously draw on knowledge of possible different elements and learning outcomes from various existing categorisations and studies conceptualising ICC.

In this chapter we discuss assessment in relation to MICC and ways to design assessment of MICC that supports life-long learning (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004), reflects the critical understanding of interculturality (e.g., Dervin, 2015; Holliday, 2015; Nakayama & Martin, 2015), and follows the situational and contextual approach on communication competence (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002). We first offer a brief introduction of the context of learning the framework has been developed for. This is followed by a theoretical foundation of the framework and our definition of multilingual and intercultural communication competence. As the final part of the theoretical frame, we elaborate our approach concerning the assessment of MICC. In the second part of the article, we describe how the framework was developed and what different elements and learning outcomes can be used when giving and receiving feedback on MICC. Finally, we emphasise the pedagogical viewpoints we consider important when applying the MICC framework in an HE context.

Describing the context: Learning multilingual and intercultural communication as a part of university degrees

Our context for the development of multilingual and intercultural communication competence is higher education, more specifically the communication and language studies offered at the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Most of the students currently in Finnish HE have received their schooling in Finland. Dervin (2010), who is familiar with the Finnish context (see Dervin & Hahl, 2015), claims that in traditional language teaching and learning, interculturality is often confused with concepts like cross-cultural, multi-cultural or trans-cultural. These, according to Dervin (2010, p. 156), "do not take the same goals" as interculturality does when it is defined from a more critical perspective. Moreover, outside Finland traditional language teaching might be designed to offer learners opportunities to challenge their views of the singular target language and its users and reflect on possible stereotypes and prejudices concerning target-language countries (e.g., Byram, 1997; 2021). This kind of perspective might aim at explaining how so-called cultures influence communication, but not how communication affects cultures (see Halualani & Nakayama, 2011; Piller, 2017). It can lead to a students' wish to learn about other, often national, cultures as a part of their goals for intercultural learning (Siljamäki & Anttila, 2022).

In their language learning and acquiring of resources, Finnish students benefit from how Finnish educational and language policy includes two national languages (Finnish and Swedish) as well as from having at least one foreign language taught at schools. These languages taught at schools equip students with language resources, even though these resources are seen as linked to distinct and separate languages. When the students who have done their schooling in Finland enter the Finnish HE, university language policies offer them the opportunity to acquire more academic resources in these three languages or more. Naturally, university students also have linguistic and semiotic resources other than those provided by the educational system. Because students do have multiple language resources, this versatility enables, at the university level, learning and practices that are multilingual (see Pirhonen, 2023). Furthermore, in courses where intercultural communication is being taught through interactive and collaborative pedagogical methods, students have the opportunity to interact in international and multilingual groups. However, many of our students' conceptualisations of cultures and languages are naturally based on their previous experiences of learning about cultures and languages. Critical interculturality as well as multilingual communication are thus new concepts and represent novel perspectives to many of them (see Kokkonen et al., 2022; Pirhonen, 2023).

Relational and interpretative perspectives to multilingual and intercultural communication competence

Recent scholarly reviews have synthesised understandings of intercultural competence (e.g., Arasatarnam-Smith, 2017; Deardorff, 2009; Holliday, 2016; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), but the processes underpinning how individuals acquire and evaluate their ICC, and where it resides, continue to be debated. Scholars vary fundamentally in how they view the ontological and epistemological nature of the phenomenon, and for example, considerable differences exist in the approaches to the contextuality of communication competence as well as in seeing ICC as a trait, a skill, or a performance outcome (Griffith et al., 2016). What is more, the paradigm shifts in the fields of intercultural communication (e.g., Dervin & Tounboise, 2013; Ferri, 2018; Poutiainen, 2014) and linguistics (e.g., Cohen & Kassis-Henderson, 2017) have inevitably led to a more critical discussion on the aims of teaching and learning of intercultural and multilingual communication competence.

In research, a postpositivist approach to ICC continues to be dominant (e.g., Peng et al., 2020). This is understandable, since theory and measuring instruments for ICC have primarily served those wanting to test, assess, train, and screen the suitability of individuals for international assignments (see Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017 for an overview). This positivistic notion of measuring and evaluating ICC as a personal trait or ability remains strong (e.g., Chen & Gabrenya, 2021), but critical voices have also questioned the measurement of ICC (e.g., Zotzmann, 2014). Some have thus suggested other related concepts or terms to discuss the phenomenon from a different perspective, and new concepts and terminology typically surface when scholars wish to distance themselves from current scientific and possible political use of the existing concepts (e.g., Dervin, 2010).

Though many famous ICC instruments may well have a solid theoretical foundation, they can still suffer from self-assessment bias. Most individuals responding to self-reporting questionnaire items will know "how to look culturally sensitive and knowledgeable" (Kealey,

2015, p. 15) and answer in a way they consider socially desirable (see e.g., Booth-Kewley 2007). Furthermore, Kealey (2015) and Dervin (2015) have pointed out that few, if any, of the positivistic models and theories can claim predictive power. This is largely due to what Dervin (2010) calls cultural differentialism (see also Nederveen Pieterse, 2004), which is based on the idea that people are different because of the cultures they belong to, or because of their "cultural belongings". From this dispositional perspective, competence is seen as somewhat stable and as relying on personal characteristics or traits that rarely change or vary from one situation or context to another (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002). From this perspective cultural differences are also defined as traits and objective data of the other cultures and knowing them is expected to enhance one's competence, or at least the ability to predict and analyse the communication of others. However, this so-called culture-specific knowledge is often based on national stereotypes and, as Dervin (2010) points out, this approach reduces individuals "to one single identity, that of a 'culture' which is, in turn, reduced to national and geographical boundaries" (p. 157).

Since the turn toward a fluid, dynamic, contested nature of cultures, multiple cultural identities, and intercultural interactions (Dervin, 2010; 2017; Ferri, 2014; Halualani & Nakayama, 2011; Holliday, 2018; Martin & Nakayama, 2015; Nakayama & Halualani, 2012), scholars have also called for "a dynamic definition of the concept that questions universal and objective assumptions" about ICC (Dervin, 2015, p. 71). When the dispositional stance is contrasted, ICC can be considered processual (Deardorff, 2017) and "a lifelong developmental process or way of 'becoming' and 'being'" (Blair, 2017, p. 112; see also Zotzmann, 2014). This leads to the notion of ICC being situational and contextual, indicating that the consideration of competent communication can vary depending on the situation, context and/or other discussants, and on the goals of the discussion (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002, 2011). Pedagogically, this means we must agree and allow the same behaviour that is perceived as an appropriate expression of competence in one context to be subject to negative evaluation in another (Dusi et al., 2014). Thus, the process of enhancing competence "can involve gains and losses in competence over both time and cultural space" (Blair, 2017, p. 112).

Nakayama and Martin (2015) are among those scholars who embrace the process-like approach to ICC. They apply a dialectic theory of ICC that draws from Bakhtin's (1982) work on dialectic tensions within communication relationships. This theory sees intercultural relations as a dynamic, fluid, and ongoing process (Nakayama & Martin, 2015). To overcome the limitation of the traditional postpositive approach to ICC that is, according to Nakayama and Martin (2015), "based on an ahistorical, a self-centred, goal-oriented, control-centric conceptualization, assuming a social equality that actually rarely exists in human relations" (p. 106), we should aim at an inclusive ICC "that considers historical realities of centuries of cultural struggles, oppression and dominance as well as contemporary realities of globalization and transnationalism with shifting borders and shifting identities" (Nakayama & Martin, 2015, p. 106). We follow Nakayama and Martin's definition of ICC, which highlights the complexity of the process and also stresses the ethical element of ICC. Ethicality is further interlinked with the idea of contextuality, meaning that competence is connected to how individuals socially position themselves in interactions as well as to their awareness of such positioning (Martin & Nakayama, 2015).

To some extent, ethicality is also considered in those models of ICC that view competence as relational. From a relational perspective, ICC is seen as an interpretation of both appropriate and effective interaction in each situation, not forgetting the ethical aspects of communication.

Here, appropriateness means that interaction partners perceive the communication as appropriate, legitimate, and fitting to a given social context and relationship, while effectiveness refers to how interaction partners can achieve preferred or desired outcomes of social interaction (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002). Ethicality that refers to the communicator's ability and willingness to take moral responsibility and behave in a way that does not insult others or create distrust is also strongly connected to ICC (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002).

Different from the dispositional approach to ICC, the social constructivist view of ICC focuses "on the co-construction of culture as a process enacted in discourse" (Angouri, 2010, p. 209). Viewing ICC through this lens and as an interpretation means that it is not something that one can have or "be" in any given situation or context. In Koester and Lustig's (2015) words: "competent intercultural communication is not something one *does* but rather something that one is *perceived to be*. One's motivations, knowledge, and skills lead to a context-specific *impression* that desirable outcomes (effectiveness, appropriateness, and perhaps satisfaction) have been achieved" (p. 20). Following this interpretative approach to ICC we view competence as a social judgement (see Spitzberg, 2013, Spitzberg and Chagnon, 2009, Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002; 2011). This means that competence is seen as an impression, not a behaviour. It is an inference one makes, not an action one takes, and further, competence is an evaluation, not a performance (Koester & Lustig, 2015).

If ICC is assumed to be an interpretation, it leads to yet another ontological conclusion, namely, that ICC only takes place in interaction. Dervin (2015) pointed out that if ICC is viewed as the trait and responsibility of an individual, the failure or challenges within interaction can then be blamed on one participant, while in fact their competence depends on the presence of other individuals. This also means that basically there is no pre-given ICC, but it is interaction partners' interpretation in a given situation and being aware of one's own competence. Here, as suggested by Dervin (2015), "the most important aspect of interculturality is that it can only happen through interactions with another person, which has an influence on how we think, behave, perform, present ourselves, and so on" (p. 72).

Some have questioned the social constructivist approach to ICC and social reality since it seems to put individual agency at the forefront and disregard the fact that while all participants are dependent on the existence of the other, they are also being influenced by the existing privileges and responsibilities (Block, 2013; Nakayama & Martin, 2015). This means that we should also pay attention to "the larger, hidden (beneath-the-surface) and visible (what we see but take-for-granted given its naturalised appearance) aspects of power that constitute intercultural communication encounters and relations" (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010, p. 5).

Yet another critique of commonly used theories and models of ICC is that most of the conceptualisations of ICC originate in the so-called Global West (e.g., Dervin, 2015; Nakayama & Halualani, 2012; Nakayama & Martin, 2015). Despite the growing influence of critical and postcolonial scholarship, few scholars have taken up the call for research on ICC that employs a more critical and less Western view of ICC. Nakayama and Martin (2015) and Dervin (2015) are among those scholars who have offered more critical conceptualisations for understanding ICC. These authors provide holistic and comprehensive descriptions of their views on ICC as a phenomenon. Despite providing examples of what these approaches might consist of when applied to intercultural communication, clear outcomes, or the elements behind the possible interpretations of ICC, are not explicitly elaborated. However, for pedagogical purposes there is a call for clear and coherent learning outcomes and conceptualisations that help students in their learning processes.

One major element missing even in most of the critical ICC models and theories is that of language. Some scholars, however, emphasise the importance of language and of language use within ICC (e.g., Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013; Ferri, 2014; Piller, 2017). In the same tone as scholars of intercultural competence, those of linguistics and language education have studied and elaborated conceptions of language and bi/multilingualism. Voices for plural approaches in language learning exist and there is a need to understand multilingualism as a resource for learning (Auger et al., 2022).

There has been a development from the notion of language as a bounded, independent, or national system (see Cummins, 2017; Lin, 2013) taught and learned as separate entities in many national education systems to a more recent understanding of language as diverse language practices (García & Lin, 2017) or social constructions (Cummins, 2017). García and Lin (2017) recognise the importance of "named languages" and Cummins (2017) notes that social constructions produce an important material and symbolic reality like school curricula.

This movement from singular languages towards languages and languaging in the plural represents a more fluid perspective of language (Auger et al., 2022). Languaging can be defined as a "focus on the dynamics of real-time behavioural events that are co-constructed by co-acting agents rather than the more usual view that persons 'use' a determinate language system or code" (Thibault, 2011, p. 211). For Thibault (2011), the grounding of languaging is in the real-time dynamics of an interaction situation and it can be defined as a whole-body sensemaking activity which enables engaging with vocalising, bodily resources, and external aspects like environmental affordances. Furthermore, Thibault (2011) defines language as lexico-grammatical patterns that guide and constrain languaging situations. These stabilised patterns are the results of longer cultural timescales and are subjected to more normative codes and expectations at the population level (Thibault, 2011). This dual aspect of language constantly evolving but being unified at the same time by societal needs is already present in Bakhtin's (1980) notion of heteroglossia and in Dervin's and Liddicoat's (2013) definition of languages being at the same time personal and communal.

Blommaert (2010) develops the fluid perspective of languages in his definitions of resources and repertoires. He sees resources as observable ways of using languages. There is a shift from language as a system to personal truncated repertoires and resources used in communication situations. For him, the repertoire comes from biographies and wider histories of the communities of a person (Blommaert, 2010, p. 105).

The fluid perspective to languages can be seen in various studies in relation to multilingual repertoires. For some, like Thorne and Ivkovic (2015), multilingualism is an appropriate term to use on multiple linguistic repertoires and the presence of multiple languages in society. On the other hand, Blommaert (2010) defines multilingualism as a complexity of specific semiotic resources that one speaker can use in a given situation. In addition to these definitions of multilingualism, the Council of Europe has adopted the construct of plurilingualism for an individual's linguistic repertoire which includes various types of linguistic competence at different levels of proficiency. This term seems to be more in use in the francophone scientific community (Gajo, 2014).

From a language learning perspective, the term *translanguaging* is often used when researchers study how linguistic features and resources are used fluidly by individuals. As multilingualism, this term is also used for various approaches. García and Lin (2017) divide it into weak and strong versions of translanguaging. The strong version means that the

individual is using an integrated repertoire of linguistic features, not separate languages. In the weak version, language boundaries exist but need to be softened.

Considering the recent development in the fields of intercultural communication and linguistics, combined with the needs in teaching and learning ICC and multilingual communication in HE, there is a need for a definition of what we call *multilingual and intercultural communication competence* (MICC). Based on the theoretical foundation laid out previously in the chapter, we define multilingual and intercultural communication competence (MICC) as

> an interpretation of effective and appropriate communication with the use of linguistic and semiotic resources and repertoires in situations and contexts where interculturality and cultures are relevant to the interactants. MICC is situated and contextual and evolving as a continuous and dynamic process based on interaction.

We want to stress that MICC, like ICC, is processual (Deardorff, 2017) and a lifelong developmental process (see e.g. Blair, 2017). MICC entails different elements of attitudes and motivation, knowledge and skills that are intertwined and negotiated within those participating in the interaction. We view MICC as "an inference, not an ability" (Spitzberg, 2015, p. 25), and as such it is a malleable construct that may be developed through education and/or experience (Borghetti, 2017), and improved in higher education (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Olbertz-Siitonen, 2021). When we see MICC as something to be developed and enhanced, the question of assessment surfaces. To meet the need to help students to analyse, reflect, and give and receive feedback on MICC, including the language-related elements of communication, we need tools and a framework that supports this aim. Before introducing the framework and the different elements of MICC, we need to address the fundamental question of what we mean by assessment.

Assessment for learning

The role of different forms of assessment and their usability in intercultural communication competence and multi/plurilingual learning have been widely discussed (e.g., Borghetti, 2017; Saville & Seed, 2021). For our approach, formative assessment and, more precisely, assessment for learning (AfL) theories seem to be more suitable than summative assessment or assessment of learning. Formative assessment is considered to be effective if it is integrated into the learning milieu (Wiliam, 2011). Wiliam (2011) presents, among other formative assessment terms, the development of AfL. Like any other approach, AfL can be studied from various perspectives, and it can also be defined differently (see DeLuca et al., 2018; Hawe & Dixon, 2017; Heritage, 2018; Wiliam, 2011; Willis, 2011). For researchers such as Brown (2019), AfL seems to be a contradictory term. Brown (2019) does not consider AfL to be assessment but rather a pedagogical curriculum approach. We do not wish to enter Brown's discussion of the term *assessment* in AfL here, but we agree with him on the pedagogical viewpoint as well as on the idea of involving learners in defining goals and in assessing their own and their peers' work.

Klenowski (2009) defines AfL as a part of students' and teachers' daily practice for seeking, reflecting upon, and responding to information coming from various sources and thus enhancing ongoing learning. One of the central foci of AfL is the student's agency and self-regulated learning because it involves students as active agents who are metacognitively,

motivationally, and behaviourally active in their own learning (Heritage, 2018). Since we see MICC as taking place within interaction and being situational and contextual, AfL is, for our purposes, a suitable assessment approach because it activates students as owners of their own learning and it can be seen as an interactive, situated process (Wiliam, 2011). One of the aims of AfL is also to develop students' learning-to-learn skills (Heritage, 2018).

Our pedagogical thinking relies on supporting students' self-regulation and one way to achieve self-regulation is to receive external support from others, for instance in the form of peer-feedback. From this perspective, learning is indeed a communicative process (Heritage, 2018). Along with peer feedback, self-assessment is crucial because it involves comparing one's execution process with some criteria and becoming aware of what has been done (Panadero et al., 2012). Further, when feedback, for instance in the form of peer assessment, is part of the overall assessment, it consolidates the learning (Taras, 2010).

Following our definition of MICC being situational and contextual, we are drawn to Willis's (2011) understanding of learning also being situated. He follows Vygotsky's sociocultural theories that stress learning being influenced by its context and that learning, action and thinking cannot be separated (Willis, 2011). We agree with Willis that the basic unit of analysis is the process of sociocultural activity, that of participating in socially constituted practices, and not individual traits or competences of participants.

Learning can also be seen as a process of belonging to a community, becoming more expert and developing an identity. Here we can also consider AfL practices as being culturally situated patterns of participation where participants negotiate their understanding and participation (see Willis, 2011). Learners will bring to the situation their multiple identities within various communities of practice, and to participate they need to understand the cognitive and social expectations of the situation. Willis (2011) sees that peer and self-assessment help learners to reflect on and assess their learning and, in that way, help them to develop expertise. We believe that through peer and self-assessment learners will also have a chance to negotiate the norms and values that are appropriate and effective in that specific situation and/or context.

As teachers we ought to ensure that students participating in the AfL processes have a shared understanding of the aims and goals of the feedback. For peer feedback to enhance learning, students need to have sufficiently trusting relationships to give constructive feedback to each other, which is said to enhance learning (DeLuca et al., 2018). The feedback should focus on the processing of the task and self-regulation since these seem to be powerful in enhancing deep processing (Wiliam, 2011). Feedback about the task is, in turn, useful for enhancing self-regulation, while feedback about the self as a person seems to be, according to Wiliam (2011), the least effective. We must also acknowledge that giving and receiving feedback is an emotional process where previous experiences of feedback influence the way we receive feedback now (Lepschy, 2008). It is said that in the present era of competence-based curricula with a focus on soft skills and professional development, feedback is considered more essential than ever, and feedback has rightly become a focus of teaching research and practice (Wisniewski et al., 2020; see also Engerer et al., 2016). For AfL purposes, there is a need for clear learning outcomes of MICC (Kokkonen & Natri, 2023), and later we will present detailed learning outcomes for MICC. The most important characteristic of these learning outcomes is that they are meant for reflective, learning-oriented assessment and can only be used for situated and contextualised peer feedback and self-assessment purposes. But first, we will illustrate how the framework and the learning outcomes of MICC were developed.

Developing the framework to help students reflect, verbalize, and discuss feedback on MICC

Dervin and Hahl (2015) have commented on the need, for pedagogical purposes, for clear and coherent learning outcomes and goals that the students can reflect on. While searching for a suitable methodology and tools for our students to reflect on and verbalise their MICC, we found that none of the existing models of ICC and multilingual communication offered suitable learning outcomes and elements that would meet our goals. We feel that none of the models and instruments discussed in the preparation phase of the framework of MICC would be applicable without modifications. This will be addressed later in this chapter when describing the process in more detail. However, the existing literature on different elements of ICC and multilingual communication could perhaps be useful and help the students verbalise and analyse the possible different elements and conceptualisations of the interpreted competence taking place in interaction.

Literature reviews have highlighted that ICC and linguistic repertoires consist of components or elements in three domains (e.g., Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). The three common, interlinked denominators are attitudes and motivation, knowledge, and skills. Spitzberg (2013) states that "to be competent, an interactant needs to have the motivation to create a competent impression and avoid being debilitated by anxiety. Further, an interactant needs to have the knowledge relevant to the context, topics, activity procedures, norms, and the like. Having motivation and knowledge, however, may not be sufficient if the person cannot demonstrate the actual interaction and language skills required to implement their goals and understandings" (p. 131; see also Lustig & Koester, 2003; Wiseman, 2002). We see that MICC requires foundational attributes, such as individual knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which, for those involved, foster observable outcomes both internally and externally that lead to interpretations of effective and appropriate communication.

For us, the aim is not to be an "intercultural performer" who simply applies the skills, knowledge and attitudes gained in intercultural training in different contexts (see Ferri, 2014). We see MICC as a subjective interpretation of skills, knowledge, and attitudes, not an intrinsic feature possessed by someone. Further, we believe that attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to MICC can be enhanced through educational experience and that they are in use when recognising the appropriate and effective way to act in each context, situation, and relationship (Borghetti, 2017; Pakdel, 2011). Further, we believe that students acquire and enhance competence through an ongoing cycle or process of lifelong learning (see Blair, 2017; Zotzmann, 2014).

In line with the critical turn in intercultural communication, we are also aware of the limitations of theories and conceptualisations developed and tested in a limited number of contexts (see Dervin, 2015; Nakayama & Martin, 2015). Thus, as a part of MICC one needs to be aware of power relations and historical positionings of the interactants to act ethically in diverse settings. Here we lean more toward an interpretative approach of ICC that relies on ongoing negotiations within interaction (see Angouri, 2010). The macro-level privileges and historical power relationships therefore need to be acknowledged and discussed, yet we feel they should not necessarily be taken as predetermining factors automatically influencing every communication situation. Acknowledging these phenomena as well as the final conceptualisations of MICC, assessment should be based on the active participation and

engagement of those learning and involved in the assessment of MICC (see Willis, 2011). This, we hope, will encourage critical discussion on the underlying assumptions and ontological questions of MICC as well as allow the perspectives of those individuals participating in the interaction and assessment to be surfaced, whether these be Western, African, privileged, non-privileged, or any other.

The listing of different elements and learning outcomes is not a final description and conceptualisation of MICC. Rather, the lists and verbalisations are to be used as a starting point for a discussion and critical reflections among participants. By examining, critically discussing, and negotiating the suggested learning outcomes, students would have a possibility to formulate a holistic understanding of MICC. The idea is that participants themselves find those elements and learning outcomes they consider relevant in the given context and situation. The peer feedback should also be based on these discussions and agreed targets.

The creation of the MICC framework with learning outcomes and assessment took place in many phases. Our first step was an exhaustive literature review on ICC, language, and multilingual communication. As a result of the literature review, we created a definition of MICC and a list of elements that were divided into three categories: knowledge, skills, and attitudes and motivations (see Tables 1, 2, and 3). This was followed by the creation of clear and consistent learning objectives. Instead of providing a means for evaluation or assessment of learning, the purpose of listing the different elements and learning outcomes was to create a practical tool and a framework for pedagogical needs for AfL.

To create these elements and learning outcomes of MICC, we have utilised some well-known models of intercultural competence (see Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Chen & Gabrenya, 2021; Peng et al., 2020) as well as literature on critical interculturality and intercultural communication competence (e.g., Dervin, 2010; 2015; Holliday, 2016; Nakayama & Martin, 2015). Furthermore, to include the elements of multilingual communication several frameworks and models were utilised. It is not within the scope of this chapter to provide a comprehensive account of the models and frameworks of ICC nor of multilingual communication; instead we simply list the used frameworks, models, and theories here:

- Integrated Model of Intercultural Communication Competence (Arasaratnam, 2006; Arasaratnam, Banerjee, & Dembek, 2010)
- Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1986; Hammer et al., 2003)
- Intercultural Competence Model (Byram, 1997, 2021)
- Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006)
- Intercultural Competencies Dimensions Model (Fantini, 2009, 2012)
- Anxiety/ Uncertainty Management (AUM) Model (Gudykunst, 1993, 1995)
- Integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 1998, 2015)
- Cultural perspective on language learning and teaching (Kramsch, 1993, 2009)
- MAGICC conceptual framework (Modularising Multilingual and Multicultural Academic Communication Competence, project) (Räsänen et al., 2013)
- Framework of reference for pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures (FREPA) by Council of Europe (2013)
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, (CEFR), Companion volume (Council of Europe 2020).

To help us in the wording of the possible learning outcomes, we also used several references that offer conceptualisations and descriptions of ICC and multilingual communication as well as different learning outcomes (e.g., Blommaert, 2010; Byram, 1997, 2021; Jackson, 2015; Kim, 2015; Lenz & Berthele, 2010; Martorana et al., 2021; Spitzberg, & Changnon, 2009).

As explained earlier, many of the existing models and frameworks mentioned above have limitations that prevent us from applying any of them as such to our purposes. As students were our focus, after collecting all the possible elements from the literature, the list of different elements and learning outcomes was narrowed down. The first criterion was to rule out those definitions, elements, and learning outcomes that reflect an essentialist view of culture (see Dervin, 2010; Holliday, 2010). In addition, those elements that could be labelled as personality traits (e.g., Spitzberg, & Cupach, 2002) were ruled out since it is not our task at the university to aim at changing anyone's personality but to enhance multilingual and intercultural communication competence. We also combined and simplified overlapping elements. At this point, a team of Movi colleagues, as experts on the context, participated in the selection of the elements and wording of the learning outcomes within the framework. As a final step, a group of both Finnish and international university students (N = 24) worked with the framework by discussing the different elements and learning outcomes, producing suggestions for the wording of the learning outcomes. As a result of this process, our final list contains 23 elements and altogether 60 learning outcomes listed in Tables 1, 2, and 3 below.

There is a strong emphasis on the framework that even if the original selection and listing of the different elements is done by us and the team of teachers working at Movi, these different elements which are overlapping and intertwined need to be discussed, deconstructed and reconstructed (see Dervin, 2015) with those assessing the communication situation.

Table 1 Attitudinal and motivational elements of the MICC framework

Element / Aspect	Learning outcomes
Respect and interest/openness towards diversity	• Positive outlook on and interest in diversity • Willingness to withhold judgments • Motivation to learn about cultures and diversities
Empathy	• Willingness to step into someone else's shoes • Motivation to imagine as well as intellectually and emotionally participate in others' experiences • Willingness to understand others' experiences and worldviews
Motivation and willingness to engage in interpersonal relationships / communication situations with culturally diverse people and/or using different language repertoires	• Willingness and motivation to engage in interaction with people from different backgrounds • Willingness to understand different ways of initiating, developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships • Motivation to build and maintain diverse social networks
Flexibility	• Willingness to adapt one's communication to the context, situation and other participants • Willingness to question existing generalisations, stereotypes and prejudices • Willingness to take complexity into account and to avoid generalisations • Willingness to consider different forms of multilingualism
Awareness of cultural interpretations and judgments	• Acknowledging power relations such as inferiority / superiority • Willingness to critically view and level out existing power hierarchies
Confidence in culturally and linguistically diverse settings, situations and relationships	• Positive outlook and confidence in intercultural and multilingual contexts and situations • Motivation to accept and manage one's own and others' uncertainty and anxiety in diverse contexts and situations
Attitudes toward languages and linguistic repertoires	• Acknowledging the value of all language competence, even partial competence

Table 2 Knowledge elements of the MICC framework

Element / Aspect	Learning outcomes
Knowledge of communication, languages, multilingual repertoires, and different perspectives on culture(s) and language(s)	• Understanding how communication influences and shapes our understanding of cultures • Understanding that there are different perspectives on languages and language learning
Knowledge and understanding of the complexities of culture, interculturality, language and multilingual communication	• Understanding that cultures are abstract, dynamic concepts that are negotiated in interaction • Knowledge about constructing and negotiating cultural and linguistic identities
Knowledge and understanding of aspects of power in intercultural and multilingual communication	• Understanding the connections between language use, language competence and power on personal as well as societal levels (social relationships, global and political contexts) • Knowledge on priorities, privileges, power, and pride linked to cultural and linguistic identity negotiations
Knowledge of one's values, norms, behaviour, and identity/identities	• Awareness of one's own values, attitudes, norms, behaviour, and identity/identities
Knowledge of processes of othering, categorisation and stereotypes and how they are manifested in communication	• Understanding the meaning of categorisations, stereotypes and prejudices • Knowledge of othering, categorisations, stereotypes and how they are used, manifested, enhanced and challenged in communication • Understanding of how discrimination is linked to experiences of acceptance, belonging and self-esteem
Knowledge of what evokes strong feelings, such as uncertainty and ambiguity, and how to manage them	• Understanding that novel situations and contexts can evoke (strong) emotional reactions • Knowledge of how to manage strong emotions and feelings in novel situations and contexts
Knowledge of elements and principles of communication in diverse settings and contexts	• Understanding that one's own way of communicating (verbally and non-verbally) can be interpreted differently in different contexts, situations, and relationships • Understanding that effectiveness and appropriateness in communication are situational and contextual
Knowledge of language diversity and multilingualism	• Knowledge of a variety of strategies to manage the coexistence of several languages in understanding a situation and how to employ one's own multilingual profile to strengthen, enrich and diversify access to information, processing, retaining and classifying new information. • Knowledge of fluidity and dynamism of languages and ways of language use
Knowledge of languages and language learning	• Knowledge of one's own language competence and how to enhance language and multilingual competencies • Knowledge of assessing and evaluating language competencies

Table 3 Elements of skills within the MICC framework

Element / aspect	Learning outcomes
Flexibility and adaptability	• Ability to adapt one's verbal and nonverbal communication according to the situation, context and participants • Ability to take into consideration multiple perspectives • Ability to process and react to new and novel information • Ability to adapt language use to new situations and to formulate thoughts in different ways. • Ability to shift between languages in order to have situational flexibility and adaptability to contribute to understanding and the participation of members with diverse multilingual and multicultural profiles.
Emotion regulation	• Tolerance of ambiguity: ability to accept ambiguity and lack of clarity and deal with it constructively • Ability to regulate and manage one's emotions and feelings in diverse situations and contexts • Ability to support others in situations, contexts and/or relationships with high uncertainty
Interpersonal communication skills (in order to create and maintain social networks / interpersonal relationships)	• Ability to initiate, maintain and enhance interpersonal relationships in diverse contexts and with individuals from various backgrounds • Ability to listen and express listening appropriately and effectively in diverse contexts and situations • Abilities to argue and negotiate in diverse settings • Abilities to give and receive social support appropriately and effectively in diverse settings
Skills to reflect on and analyse one's own and others' communication	• Ability to understand one's own previously lived reality, values, norms and behaviour, and how these are manifested in communication within diverse contexts, situations, and relationships • Ability to reflect on different elements of communication • Ability to analyse, identify and compare linguistic elements in different languages and in multilingual interaction
Critical thinking skills	• Ability to suspend judgment • Ability to critically view things from various perspectives • Ability to critically reflect one's interpretations in communication
Language skills	• Ability to analyse linguistic data and understand how discourse contributes to the construction of information, opinions, ideas, ideologies and consciousness. • Ability to communicate appropriately and effectively in diverse contexts and situations • Ability to use reformulations, simplifications, repetitions, vulgarisation and exemplification, and translations in order to make oneself understood in the language of instruction or another common language
Multilingual skills	• Ability to use/exploit one's plurilingual repertoire, and adapt language use in plurilingual situations, e.g., breaking down the complicated information/ paraphrasing and/or restructuring to cover gaps in vocabulary or structure (flexibility) • Ability to use codeswitching and code-mixing as communicatively and contextually functional devices • Ability to manage the coexistence of several languages in interaction and to switch smoothly from one language to another • Ability to exploit interaction for language learning and enlarging one's own multilingual and multicultural profile

Pedagogical guidelines for applying the framework

In the final part of this chapter, we offer pedagogical guidelines on applying the framework. Due to the strong tradition of viewing intercultural competence as a positivistic phenomenon, we hope that the framework will be primarily seen and used as a tool for peer feedback and self-reflection and not as a measuring instrument aimed at the evaluation and assessment of learning. Returning to an established concept, like intercultural competence, which has previously been employed in essentialist scholarship, has its challenges. By reframing so-called traditional concepts to support non-essentialist claims, we still might be flirting with the positivistic thought of measuring of success. Holliday (2023) calls this "a tricky business" and points out that there is a risk of critical claims ending "with positivist methodologies, but also with the positivist desire to measure, track change and quantify apparent success to satisfy neoliberal agendas" (p. 152). For this reason, we will highlight the underlying assumptions of the framework and offer some practical advice that is derived from students' experiences and our previous research on the topic (see Kokkonen & Natri, 2023).

As stated earlier, the aim of the MICC framework is not to depict the students as "intercultural performers" (Ferri, 2014). MICC is "an inference, not an ability" (e.g., Spitzberg, 2015), and as such it is a malleable construct that may be developed through education and/or experience (Borghetti, 2017) as well as improved in higher education (Dervin, 2010; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). Even if MICC is seen as an interpretation of appropriate and effective communication in a given situation and context, the different elements of attitudes, knowledge and skills related to MICC can be enhanced through educational experience and they are in use when recognising the most appropriate and effective way to act in a given context, situation and relationship (Borghetti, 2017; Pakdel, 2011).

The framework of MICC can be applied and used as a tool for giving and receiving feedback as well as for reflecting on one's communication in a certain situation and context. Assessment is conducted through peer feedback and self-reflections. Feedback is based on the selected and discussed elements of MICC, and the situational and contextual nature of the phenomenon needs to be taken into consideration. The only ones able to assess what is being interpreted as effective and appropriate in a given situation and context are the ones participating in that interaction (Gibbs & Simpson, 2005; see also Olbertz-Siitonen, 2021). The framework and AfL need to be discussed with those participating in the feedback processes in order for them to

- get to know the multilingual and intercultural communication competence as a phenomenon and understand its complex nature;
- deconstruct as well as reconstruct the different elements and learning outcomes in order to find shared understanding of the aims and targets of the feedback and reflection;
- understand the aims and goals of AfL and its limitations (what it is not);
- be able to give and receive constructive feedback on their communication.

Our previous study on applying MICC (see Kokkonen & Natri, 2023) showed that the understanding of the contextual and situational nature of MICC was enhanced through a process that participants sometimes considered lengthy and, at times, challenging. In addition to the challenge of time and resources, students found difficulties in observing and analysing interaction, such as the abilities of others to explain one's plurilingual repertoires. On the

same note, and even if the peer feedback was not always comprehensive, many students found it rewarding that they were able to verbalise and discuss different elements and expected outcomes of intercultural and multilingual learning. It is important that the students define for themselves the different elements of MICC they consider relevant in the given context. The freedom in choosing the elements also provides them with the possibility of autonomy to negotiate interculturality, cultural identities, and appropriate multilingual practices (see Olbertz-Siitonen, 2021).

When an assessment approach is chosen carefully and the purpose of the assessment is shared, it provides information that can guide educational practices and enrich learning processes (Fantini, 2009). What students seem to find rewarding and enhancing in their learning is the combination of peer and self-feedback (Kokkonen & Natri, 2023). However, the whole process of peer feedback can be challenging, especially for those students who are not accustomed to it in their previous studies. Time and resources need to be devoted to creating and maintaining trust between the students, thereby enabling constructive feedback that enhances learning (see also Kokkonen et al., 2022).

Usually, the students participating in the assessment process are working with their groups for five to eight weeks on average. Many students seem to feel they do not have enough time with their groups to complete the assessment appropriately. This is especially a challenge in courses that are offered as basic-level courses on intercultural and/or multilingual communication. Courses on multilingual and intercultural communication typically focus on issues of critical approaches to interculturality and multilingual communication, and these alone are novel perspectives to many of our students. Students might thus have a lot to internalise in a short period of time. Moreover, peer feedback and AfL can be novel concepts for some of the students. Yet, to many of those students who were new to these issues, the process of AfL seemed to be empowering and encouraging, and enhanced their understanding that developing MICC is a life-long process (see Kokkonen & Natri, 2023).

As a solution for the HE context, we recommend that the assessment and development of MICC should be considered a part of holistic curriculum development and not just as an issue for one single course (see Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). A shift from assessment of learning to AfL requires organisational commitment to a culture of improvement rather than to a culture of performance (Watling & Ginsburg, 2019).

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Authors

Lotta Kokkonen, PhD, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3522-7788

Lotta Kokkonen is a senior lecturer at the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä (JYU), Finland. She teaches intercultural communication and her research interests include transnational social networks and belonging; immigrant families' media use; and developing multilingual and intercultural communication competence in higher education contexts. Kokkonen is involved in curricula development for home internationalization. https://movi.jyu.fi/en/contact/staff/kokkonen-lotta

Teija Natri, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6130-6295

Teija Natri is a senior lecturer of the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä (Finland). She teaches French for academic purposes and multilingual communication competence. Her specific interest in pedagogical development lies in multilingual and intercultural communication competence in higher education as well as in digital citizenship. She is involved in many national and European research and development projects, such as Digital citizenship through language education (ECML) and Enseigner et apprendre les langues par les tâches et avec le numérique (Erasmus+).

EXPLORING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' GOALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTILINGUAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

Hanna Brauer

While internationalisation in higher education has often been used in a narrow sense to mean instruction in English to attract foreign students, this understanding has been questioned in recent years. Instead, universities are increasingly looking for strategies to support students' internationalisation in a more individualised fashion. The present study explores the goals set by 64 Finnish students of early childhood education at the beginning of their bachelor's studies regarding their individual internationalisation process. When these goal descriptions are viewed through the lens of the ideal self, a conception of the kind of person a learner would like to become, they can be seen as representations of students' ideal international selves. The goal descriptions were analysed using qualitative content analysis. Drawing on the framework of Multilingual and Intercultural Communication Competence (MICC) developed at the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication at the University of Jyväskylä, I investigate what elements of the framework students most commonly ascribe to their ideal international selves, and what role different languages and multilingual competence play in their goal descriptions. In the study, the most central attributes of the ideal international self were openness to diversity and communicative confidence. Students generally showed a high level of interest in intercultural communication and "other" cultures although descriptions of the "other" were often somewhat essentialist. At the level of language learning, instead of language-specific goals, students often had goals related to multilingual competence. Where specific languages were mentioned, the most common goals were related to English, Swedish, and Arabic. The study concludes by discussing implications for language and communication studies, particularly the need to put more emphasis on raising confidence and fostering a non-essentialist understanding of culture.

Keywords: Intercultural communication, internationalisation, tertiary education, ideal selves, motivation, multilingualism, language education

Internationalisierung im Hochschulwesen wird im engeren Sinne oft durch ein englischsprachiges Kursangebot umgesetzt, das auch ausländischen Studierenden die Teilnahme ermöglicht. Seit einigen Jahren wird diese enge Auffassung allerdings hinterfragt. Stattdessen sind Hochschulen inzwischen zunehmend auf der Suche nach Strategien, die eine individualisierte Umsetzung von Internationalisierung ermöglichen. Diese Studie beschäftigt sich mit den Zielen, die sich 64 finnische Studierende in frühkindlicher Erziehung zu Beginn ihres Studiums für ihren eigenen

Internationalisierungsprozess setzen. Ausgehend vom Konzept des idealen Ichs, das Ziele der Lernenden für die eigene Entwicklung widerspiegelt, werden diese Ziele als Elemente des idealen internationalen Ichs aufgefasst. Die Zielbeschreibungen der Studierenden wurden mit qualitativer Inhaltsanalyse analysiert. Zur Kategorisierung der Ziele benutze ich das am Sprachenzentrum der Universität Jyväskylä entwickelte MICC-Modell (multilingual and intercultural communication competence) und zeige so auf, welche Elemente des Modells in den Zielbeschreibungen am häufigsten auftreten und welche Rollen sowohl individuelle Sprachen als auch multilinguale Kompetenz in den Zielbeschreibungen spielen. Die zentralsten Elemente des internationalen Ichs laut dieser Studie sind Offenheit und Selbstbewusstsein in der Kommunikation. Studierende sind generell sehr interessiert an interkultureller Kommunikation und an Kontakt mit „anderen" Kulturen, aber die Beschreibungen zeigen häufig einen relativ essentialistischen Kulturbegriff. In Bezug auf Spracherwerb kommt die Studie zu dem Schluss, dass Studierende häufig multilinguale Sprachlernziele setzen. Werden individuelle Sprachen genannt, sind die häufigsten Nennungen Englisch, Schwedisch und Arabisch. Im letzten Teil dieses Artikels finden sich Überlegungen dazu, was die Ergebnisse dieser Studie für Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft bedeuten. Insbesondere sollten Sprachlehrende das Selbstbewusstsein der Lernenden in kommunikativen Situationen stärken und die Entwicklung eines weniger essentialistischen Kulturbegriffs bei den Lernenden fördern.

Schlüsselwörter: Interkulturelle Kommunikation, Internationalisierung, Hochschulbildung, Ideal-Selbst, Motivation, Mehrsprachigkeit, Sprachunterricht

Kansainvälistymisellä on korkeakoulutuksessa usein viitattu termin suppeassa merkityksessä englanninkieliseen opetukseen, jonka tarkoituksena on houkutella ulkomaisia opiskelijoita. Tämä käsitys on kyseenalaistettu viime vuosina. Yliopistot pyrkivätkin yhä useammin löytämään strategioita, joilla opiskelijoiden kansainvälistymistä voitaisiin tukea entistä yksilöllisemmin. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan tavoitteita, jotka 64 suomalaista varhaiskasvatuksen opiskelijaa asettaa opintojensa alussa omalle kansainvälistymisprosessilleen. Tarkastelussa hyödynnetään ihanneminän käsitettä, joka kuvaa sitä, millaiseksi ihmiseksi kielenoppija haluaisi kehittyä. Tämän käsitteen perusteella tavoitekuvaukset voidaan nähdä ilmaisuina opiskelijoiden ihanteellisesta kansainvälisestä minästä. Tavoitekuvauksia analysoitiin käyttäen laadullista sisällönanalyysiä. Tutkimuksessa hyödynnetään Jyväskylän yliopiston monikielisen akateemisen viestinnän keskuksessa kehitettyä monikielisen ja kulttuurienvälisen viestintäosaamisen viitekehystä (MICC). Viitekehyksen avulla tutkitaan, mitä sen elementtejä opiskelijat yleisimmin liittävät ihanteelliseen kansainväliseen minäänsä ja millainen rooli eri kielillä ja monikielisellä osaamisella on heidän tavoitekuvauksissaan. Tutkimuksessa keskeisimpiä ihanteellisen kansainvälisen minän piirteitä olivat avoimuus moninaisuudelle ja viestinnällinen itsevarmuus. Opiskelijat osoittivat yleisesti suurta kiinnostusta kulttuurienväliseen viestintään ja "toisiin" kulttuureihin, vaikka "toisista" annetut kuvaukset olivat usein hieman essentialistisia. Kielten oppimisen tasolla opiskelijoilla oli usein tavoitteita, jotka eivät olleet kielikohtaisia, vaan viittasivat pikemminkin monikieliseen osaamiseen. Niissä tapauksissa, joissa mainittiin tiettyjä kieliä, opiskelijoiden yleisimmät tavoitteet liittyivät englantiin, ruotsiin ja arabiaan.

Tutkimuksen päätteeksi pohditaan tulosten merkitystä kieli- ja viestintäopetuksen kannalta ja tuodaan erityisesti esiin tarve vahvistaa oppijoiden itseluottamusta sekä edistää ei-essentialistisen kulttuurin käsityksen ymmärrystä.

Asiasanat: Kulttuurienvälinen viestintä, kansainvälistyminen, korkea-asteen koulutus, ideaaliminä, motivaatio, monikielisyys, kielikoulutus

Introduction

Internationalisation has become an important concept in the development of many higher education institutions, including those in Finland, where it has been a priority since the 1990s (Saarinen, 2012). Finland is rapidly diversifying both culturally and linguistically (Rissanen, 2021) and students are expected to be able to function in multicultural and multilingual environments, an expectation which obligates universities to prepare students for such a future. According to Fabricius et al., (2017), institutions' frameworks and strategies are often abstract and optimistic, yet research has identified several issues connected with universities' internationalisation processes, such as the assumption that internationalisation and development of intercultural competence will take place automatically once a programme is offered in English (see also Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). However, this approach creates several challenges.

For one, "international" in practice often appears to mean "in English" (Fabricius et al., 2017). Although the motivation to study English appears to increase in the context of globalisation (Lamb, 2004), research into multilingualism suggests that the prevalence of L2 English in a country may negatively affect the interest to learn languages other than English (LOTE) (Busse, 2015, 2017; Henry, 2010), meaning that it may ultimately become more difficult to find workers with the required language skills when these skills go beyond English (Pirhonen, 2022).

Another issue is the somewhat abstract and uncritical nature of internationalisation in higher education institutions (Fabricius et al., 2017), where the internationalisation process may have begun before an analysis of its actual benefits or its meaning to different actors (Hultgren & Wilkinson, 2021; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). For instance, programmes like student exchanges are rolled out under the assumption they will increase students' intercultural competence when this is not necessarily the case (Fabricius et al., 2017; Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Ruther et al., 2021; Sommier et al., 2021; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). Instead, "students may have different individual internationalisation projects, and these are not necessarily served by the English-fits-all model that many universities around Europe currently subscribe to" (Fabricius et al., 2017, p. 584). Responding better to individual students' needs, however, requires increased awareness of students' personal goals, the role that individual languages play in them and the aspects of intercultural competence they plan to develop. The latter is an extremely complex topic, which, depending on the approach used, can encompass a wide range of attributes, such as flexibility, suspension of judgment, mindfulness, or cultural relativity (see Arasaratnam–Smith, 2017).

This study aims to explore students' goals from the perspective of intercultural and multilingual competence and the role of individual languages. It draws on a framework of

multilingual and intercultural communication competence developed in a project at the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication (Movi) at the University of Jyväskylä (see Kokkonen & Natri, 2024, in this book). For my study, I collected students' descriptions of their goals for their own internationalisation process and analysed them using qualitative content analysis. This study aims to promote an alternative to the reductive English-fits-all model and to deepen an understanding of internationalisation in higher education that better fits students' perceived and actual needs.

Background

Multilingual and intercultural competence in the internationalisation of higher education

Internationalisation in higher education is a container concept, the meaning of which has changed throughout the past two decades to encompass aspects such as integrating an international perspective into the curriculum or making an institution more responsive to global challenges (de Haan, 2014). In higher education, it is often driven by economic and market concerns, in other words by the questions of funding and attracting international students and staff (Mortensen & Haberland, 2012; Risager, 2012; Söderlundh, 2012). In the Finnish context, a 2009 study by the Centre for International Mobility showed that the participating Finnish universities' main motivations for establishing foreign-language programmes were raising the university's international profile, fulfilling the university's strategic requirements, and preparing students for working life (Garam, 2009). Unfortunately, no updated version of the survey exists, but more recent changes, such as the introduction of study fees for non-EU students, indicate that economic concerns still play a significant role (see also Garam et al., 2014).

Within the process of internationalisation, there is often no question that an "international" programme will be taught in English (Mortensen & Haberland, 2012; Söderlundh, 2012). The same applies to Finland, where, from the bachelor's to the doctoral level, nearly all teaching not offered in the university's main language (Finnish or Swedish) is offered in English (Saarinen, 2012), to the point where a 2009 study on foreign-language programmes concluded that in Finland, "foreign-language" means "English-language" (*"Suomessa vieraskielisyys on englanninkielisyyttä"*) (Garam, 2009, p. 14).

However, during the past decade, criticism of this unchallenged enthusiasm for automatic internationalisation through English has emerged, along with the question of what it really means to be international (Hofmeyr, 2021; Söderlundh, 2012). By the time Mortensen and Haberland (2012) published their special issue on the topic of language choice in the transnational university, "there seem[ed] to be a recurring critical stance towards an unquestioning acceptance of English as the 'natural' choice of language in a world with increased transnational contacts" (p. 4). The authors in the special issue call for more space for local languages and more awareness of (inter)cultural and multilingual practices. Recent literature in the Nordic context also shows concern about the position of languages other than English (Saarinen, 2012), the lack of interest in studying other languages (Pollari et al., 2021), and domain loss of the local language (Hultgren, 2018).

There is also a growing recognition that in order to prepare students for a multilingual world, competences beyond English skills are needed (Earls, 2016; Risager, 2012). As an alternative,

researchers and institutions have developed and drawn on concepts and competences related to multilingualism such as multilingual competence (The Council of the European Union, 2018), translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2014) or translingual practice (Canagarajah, 2013). In the context of internationalisation, multilingual competence could include, for instance, appreciation of smaller languages (Earls, 2016), studying the local language even if a programme is taught in English (Earls, 2016) or code-switching and code-mixing, including in field-specific terms (Salö, 2022). Relying entirely on participants' English in an interaction rather than on flexibility in interaction and may also cause difficulties in communication and relationship-building, marginalisation and trust issues, and puts the burden for resolving those issues on speakers from non-Anglophone countries (Burdett, 2014) by forcing them into so-called "linguistic hospitality", that is into "going beyond the language of the institution in meeting the other on their own terms". (Holmes, 2021, p. 10). This reliance thus depends on everyone involved mastering English as an active linguistic resource to accommodate those who do not have other languages in their (receptive) repertoire.

Research also seems to indicate that even in English-language settings, developing intercultural communication competence requires structured interventions, reflection, and evaluation (Burdett, 2014; Fang & Baker, 2018). Otherwise, cultural and learning differences can be perceived as insurmountable: Interaction might be lacking, and anxiety about intercultural interaction can limit or entirely eliminate contact between students of different backgrounds (Harrison & Peacock, 2010). Without support and guidance, intercultural encounters might result in what Fabricius et al. (2017, p. 588) referred to as a "'them' and 'us' culture", which ultimately negatively affects students' willingness to work in international settings in the future (see Burdett, 2014; Hofmeyr, 2021; Ruther et al., 2021; Sandstrom, 2019). In spite of this shift in perception, English continues to maintain its role as the perceived key to internationalisation. For instance, a 2017 survey of European university staff's views on internationalisation only investigated programmes taught in English and referred to English-medium bachelor's programmes as "a vehicle for internationalisation" (Sandstrom, 2019, p. 13).

Studies have found that both students and staff accord a special position to both the local (majority) language and their first language and adopt a pragmatic stance on language use (Earls, 2016; Fabricius et al., 2017; Söderlundh 2012). Currently, the most common language policy at Nordic universities appears to be parallel bilingualism (Holmes, 2021; Hultgren, 2014; Soler & Vihman, 2018), that is, using English with international interlocutors and the local language with local ones, with other languages struggling for space. The University of Jyväskylä partially follows this model: It is a Finnish-language university offering international degree programmes only in English, but in its language policy, it refers to itself as a "multilingual and multicultural academic community" and as "internationally attractive" (University of Jyväskylä, 2015, p. 1). The policy, however, does also include examples of multilingual and intercultural competence, such as the ability to react flexibly and to adapt communication to the context or the readiness to deploy partially developed languages skills. It thus goes beyond the assumption that English skills are enough for successful interaction in multilingual and/or intercultural settings.

The review above shows there has been an increasing discussion of what it really means to be international. While perspectives have become more varied, the dominant position of English continues to influence teaching and language choices. Against the backdrop of this shift, it is important to investigate what role different attributes, such as flexibility or

openness, play in students' own internationalisation goals as students navigate these different influences in their concrete plans for their studies (Hultgren, 2014; Saarinen, 2012).

Students' learning goals and their ideal selves

Language-learning goals have usually been described as language specific and as closely related to learning motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Henry et al., 2023). However, multilingual and intercultural learning motivation is a complex phenomenon. For instance, research has shown that the nature of motivation differs between English and LOTEs: Although English is often seen as necessary and as an instrument for integrating into the globalized community of academia (Busse, 2015), the motivation to study LOTEs appears to be more specific and driven, for example, by hobbies, personal interests, or a desire to move to the language area in question (Huang, 2019; Wang & Zheng, 2021). It has also been argued that motivation for English negatively affects motivation to study other languages (Henry, 2010). Henry (2017) concludes that "languages cannot be conceptualized as separate, autonomous systems" (p. 551), but rather as subsystems of an overall system that also incorporates aspects of multilingual competence, such as flexibility and creativity. Hence, a desire to achieve or improve multilingual competence will affect learning motivation for individual languages (Henry, 2017).

One theoretical approach that is suitable for examining motivation for different competences at one time is Dörnyei's (2005) empirically validated L2 Motivational Self system, a conceptualisation of L2 motivation that is grounded in consideration of the self and identity (Busse, 2015; Dörnyei, 2005). The model posits that, based on the values they consider positive or negative, individuals develop possible selves, "representing the individuals' ideas of what they *might* become, what they *would* like to become, and what they are *afraid* of becoming" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 98, emphasis in the original).

Dörnyei (2005) distinguished between two types of L2 self. The first is the *ideal L2 self*, a version of oneself that is considered aspirational, represents more long-term goals and "reflects learners' vision of their future" (Cho, 2020, p. 2031). The second is the *ought-to L2 self*, a version of the self that has the traits one believes one ought to have, a less strong and a more short-term motivational influence that is more subject to extrinsic factors. These possible selves serve as powerful motivational tools: Individuals are said to constantly monitor how their actual self compares to their possible selves (Dörnyei, 2005). If a possible self is perceived to be both realistic and aspirational, people will strive to reduce the discrepancy between their actual self (their perceived current self) and the ideal self (Busse, 2015). This involves the processes of working towards desired accomplishments or achieving the desired growth, but also avoiding feared punishments or repercussions.

While Dörnyei's theory of the L2 motivational self system was developed to describe motivation in respect to one L2, the model has been adapted to describe multilingual learners. These adaptations include Henry's (2017) ideal multilingual self and Busse's plurilingual future self (2017). Unlike language-specific selves, these selves not only serve to motivate the learner in the acquisition of a specific language, but also allow them to manage, balance, and develop their overall repertoire, depending on their interests (Henry, 2010). Henry (2017) observed that learners either develop a contentedly bilingual (mother tongue + English) self or an ideal multilingual self. The latter positively impacts the acquisition of individual languages. Thus, encouraging students to see themselves as multilinguals with agency in their language choices for personal expression and turning the contentedly bilingual self into a feared self (i.e., a self that is perceived negatively) are seen to increase language learning motivation.

Busse (2017) refers to the ideal vision of a multilingual self as "an overarching plurilingual Bildungs-Selbst" (p. 578). Learners with this self see knowledge of languages as part of being an educated citizen of Europe and consider studying them to be part of their identity work as (emerging) plurilinguals. They experience intrinsic motivation, enjoy the challenge of studying a foreign language, and are more likely to do so (Wang & Zheng, 2021).

Since, according to the multilingual models mentioned above, students' ideal selves also contain traits beyond mastery of grammar, syntax and vocabulary, that is, traits such as flexibility, creativity, openness and self-efficacy, these ideal selves can also be examined from a broader perspective of multilingual and intercultural communication competence. However, little research has been done on students' learning goals for their internationalisation in general. Instead, students' motivation and goals are usually examined in the context of the goals of students participating in particular internationalisation programmes, such as student exchanges or international study programmes. This exclusive focus on participants in non-compulsory programmes is problematic, since the likelihood to participate in such programmes correlates with an existing interest in internationalisation and thus specific goals (Daly, 2011). Additionally, these programmes might not be accessible or interesting to everyone (Sommier et al., 2021), which means that current research on students' internationalisation goals tends to focus on those student groups that are more likely to participate.

A review of the literature on students' goals for participation in a student exchange shows that goals related to personal development and intercultural awareness dominate, with oft-cited goals including self-confidence, self-awareness, self-reliance, and broadening one's horizons. These are ranked higher by students than goals involving professional development, such as networking, academic career, or employability (Hennings & Tanabe, 2018; Hofmeyr, 2021; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). Pyvis and Chapman (2007) found that students with self-development goals were more resilient when facing potential issues associated with studying in international settings. Students also reported a high level of interest in developing their intercultural communication skills (Fang & Baker, 2018), although what exactly is meant by 'intercultural communication skills' is often not defined further. Another common goal for students is confidence-building in using a foreign language. In line with the findings reported above, Hennings and Tanabe (2018) found that the language in question is generally English, but also that students with a specialisation in foreign language studies also want to develop their skills in the local language. Research into students' goals for participation in virtual exchanges has come to similar conclusions: Students are mainly interested in developing their intercultural and personal skills, such as making new friends and broadening their horizons (Ruther et al., 2021). In virtual programs as well, students with personal goals often show stronger results than those who have "only" instrumental goals (Zhakarova et al., 2019).

To summarize the findings on students' goals for their participation in student exchanges, they tend to be focused on personal rather than professional development and provide more motivation if they are intrinsic goals. Unfortunately, they have previously been examined primarily within the context of particular internationalisation programmes, mostly student exchanges. In contrast, I here used goal descriptions by students who had participated in a programme that involved all students in their year group and study programme. There is currently a significant lack of research into students' goals for internationalisation at a more general level.

Methodology

Purpose of the study and research questions

Recent research into internationalisation in higher education has created space for the (re)evaluation of the importance of multilingual and intercultural competence for internationalisation, as well as for the recognition of the importance of all language competence. Research into policy implementation has shown that policies such as internationalisation "are not self-evident layers that can be added on top of national and local structures of higher education policy" (Saarinen, 2017, p. 556). Rather, they interact with the existing structures and are negotiated by the different agents. While earlier approaches to internationalisation tended to be top-down, there is now growing interest in also incorporating student voices into research (Lehtomäki et al., 2016). This study aims at making more visible the goals students set for their own internationalisation process, and the role different languages play in those goals. A future self that has reached those goals and has acquired students' desirable attributes can be conceived of as the ideal international self. I used goal descriptions made by students as descriptors of this ideal international self. My aim is not to evaluate students' present or future skills. Instead, by examining the most common traits of students' ideal international self, I also shed light on what competences students consider to be most relevant for themselves. Teachers can then use this knowledge to design learning outcomes that maximize (perceived) relevance for students.

As outlined above, previous research has revealed a move away from the dominance of English in understandings of internationalisation and towards a more nuanced understanding that includes an appreciation of other languages, as well as multilingual competence. Multilingualism is now part of the compulsory language and communication studies of all undergraduates at the University of Jyväskylä as well as a goal of the university's language policy (see the Introduction of this book by Károly et al., 2024). While students were not asked separately about their language learning goals in the context of their internationalisation, they were made aware of the link between language and culture in their work on their internationalisation plans, meaning many of them also explicitly described language-learning goals. Therefore, I decided to also focus separately on goals relating to language studies and the development of language skills. The aim of this part of the analysis was to elucidate what languages students associate with their own internationalisation. To reflect the above-described interplay between different languages within a learner, I also took into account goal descriptions related to multilingual communication.

While multilingual and intercultural competence can be conceived of in different ways, I chose to draw on the framework for Multilingual and Intercultural Communication Competence (MICC), which was the result of a development project at Movi. The framework is based on literature on multilingual and intercultural interaction and breaks down competences into the three interrelated elements of skills, knowledge, and attitudes/motivation. The framework is processual, that is, it describes a lifelong learning process. Successful communication is defined as appropriate, effective, and ethical. Instead of aiming at an objective evaluation of communication competence, it takes a situated and contextual view of communication, whereby behaviours are evaluated by participants and their evaluation can differ across contexts. MICC is not designed to be a tool for assessment, but rather helps describe and verbalize competence (University of Jyväskylä, 2023). For more on this framework, see the chapter written by Kokkonen and Natri (2024) in this book.

MICC has the advantage of being developed specifically for the context of internationalisation in higher education. Since one aim of this study was to test for the fit of MICC with students' goals, in answering my research question, elements included in students' goal descriptions were categorised using the knowledge, skills and attitude descriptors present in MICC. Thus, in addition to evaluating the role of different languages in students' personal internationalisation projects, I explored what areas of MICC students perceive as most relevant and test the extent to which the framework is useful for describing and categorizing student goals.

In this study, I aimed at answering two research questions:

Question 1: What elements of the MICC framework do the students consider to be most relevant as part of their internationalisation goals (i.e., as traits of their ideal international self)?

Question 2: What role do different languages and multilingual communication competence play in students' goal descriptions?

Participants and data collection

The University of Jyväskylä stipulates that internationalisation should be part of every student's studies. To support the development of individualised and field-specific competence relevant to internationalisation, in 2019, Movi established the development project *Monikielinen ja -kulttuurinen osaaminen kansainvälistymisen ydinkompetenssina* [Multilingual and intercultural competence at the heart of internationalisation]. This study was conducted within the framework of this pedagogical development project, of which I am a member. This project is currently ongoing.

At the beginning of their studies, BA students in participating faculties set goals for their internationalisation, reflect on how they can reach those goals in practice, and draft a personalised study plan with the help of faculty staff. They thereby recognize, develop, and then verbalize relevant competence already during their studies (Kokkonen et al., 2021). The aim of the internationalisation plan is to allow students to develop more concrete goals without forcing them into a specific mode of study. This allows for a more individualised mode of attaining relevant skills, makes internationalisation at home accessible to more students and could also increase participation in non-compulsory activities, which remains an issue (Hofmeyr, 2021). The process of working towards one's own goals should ideally be reflected upon throughout one's studies to maintain goal self-concordance (Henry et al., 2023). Additionally, it is essential that programme curricula are examined critically to make sure they allow students to work on the relevant competence. The project team, including the myself, assisted both departments and Movi's teachers in this process, but the main responsibility for this curriculum development was always with the respective teachers.

The process of making the plans differs somewhat between faculties, but since the participants in this study were students of early childhood education, in the following more details will be provided on the process at the Faculty of Education. These students were chosen because their study programme participated in the piloting stage of the development project, and since I was mainly involved in implementing the internationalisation plans at the Faculty of Education.

In the faculty, students assemble a portfolio throughout their studies. The portfolio consists of, for instance, documentation of their teaching experience, reflective texts, and their teaching philosophy. This portfolio is assembled online and, while compulsory, is not graded. The internationalisation plan is part of this portfolio. The process of making the internationalisation plan was initiated in the spring of the first year of study, in a meeting between students (in small groups) with their group advisor from the faculty. During this meeting, the students were introduced to the five internationalisation goals of the faculty, such as language-aware pedagogy, international expertise, and global and ethical responsibility. Students were invited to reflect on the ways in which these topics had been covered during their studies so far. They were also supplied with information on how to put internationalisation into practice, for instance by doing an internship abroad or taking extra classes at Movi. To acquaint students with MICC, the author and some of her colleagues made a video to be shared with students since there were too many small groups for the members of the development project to meet with each group separately. The video explained the basic structure of MICC and the core assumptions made in the framework as well as provided examples of how a phenomenon can be tied to skills, knowledge and attitudes and motivation at the same time. Students were also supplied with the MICC framework. This work was done in Finnish. After the meeting, we asked students to set three goals for themselves, based on the following questions:

- Minkälaista kansainvälisyysosaamista olet kartuttanut tähän mennessä opintojesi aikana? [What kind of internationalisation competence have you acquired throughout your studies so far?]
- Minkälaista kansainvälisyysosaamista sinun täytyy henkilökohtaisesti vielä kehittää? [What kind of internationalisation competence do you personally still need to develop?]
- Millä keinoin uskot näiden taitojen kehittyvän? [How can you develop this competence?]
- Aseta itsellesi kolme tavoitetta, joiden avulla pyrit kehittämään kansainvälisyysosaamistasi. Muista asettaa konkreettisia tavoitteita! [Set yourself three goals which you will use to work on developing your internationalisation competence. Remember to make your goals concrete!]

Several weeks after this initial meeting with group advisors, the small groups met again, this time with both the advisors and a member of the project team, one of which was the author. During this meeting, students shared the goals they had set for themselves. In small groups, they also worked to come up with practical ways of working towards their goals as well as with practical examples of situations in which their desired attribute would become visible. Before this meeting, students had shared their goals anonymously on Flinga, an online collaborative whiteboard. Participation and student work in these meetings were not assessed, but making an internationalisation plan was compulsory for students in this cohort. The following graphic provides an overview of the internationalisation path of this cohort and helps illustrate the context of the data collection:

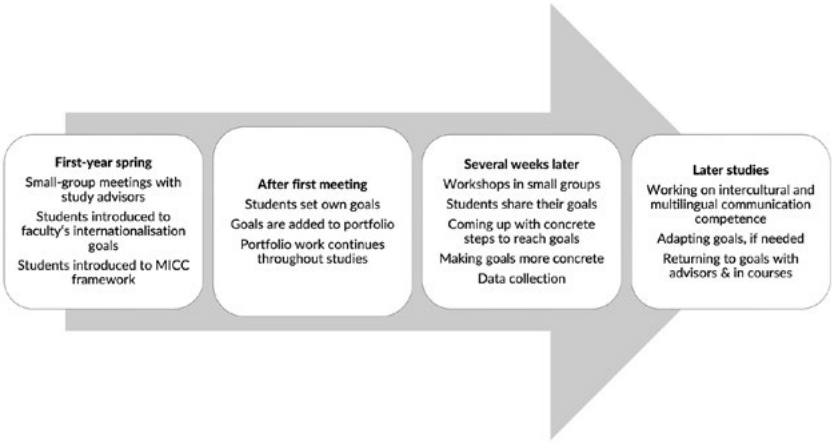

Figure 1 Overview of target cohort's internationalisation path and context of the data collection

To gain consent for the use of their data, I afterwards contacted students participating in the workshops in this cohort, provided them with a description of the study and asked them to share their goal descriptions in an online questionnaire (in Finnish) and to give consent. Since the research did not involve the question of how individual traits affect a person's goals, no information about participants other than their name was collected. A total of 64 students answered the web questionnaire, mostly providing three goals each, although some students only listed two goals. The total number of students invited to the workshops was 133, making for a response rate of 48 percent.

The collected data of students' goal descriptions can be considered a representation of students' ideal or ought-to self, depending on the extent to which the students identify with the goal of internationalisation. Due to the response format in the online whiteboard, the goal descriptions collected for this study were short, about one to three sentences per goal. All students wrote their goal descriptions in Finnish. The translations provided in this paper were made by the author, who is a fluent speaker of Finnish.

Method of analysis

For the analysis, I performed qualitative content analysis on the data. Qualitative content analysis aims at being systematic and intersubjectively comparable while also taking into account the complexity and the variability of meaning and the need to interpret text-based material (Mayring, 2010). Such analysis combines allowing participants' voices to shine through with a certain analytical rigor that enables patterns in the data to be identified. Since the analysis method of choice is qualitative, I adopted a constructivist and interpretivist worldview (Selvi, 2019). In this view, both the reader and the writer are treated as subjects with preconceptions (reader) and intentions (writer). The researcher makes interpretations of the data while reading and performing the analysis, while the writers produce the text in a particular setting, here as part of a classroom activity. In viewing the results, it therefore needs to be remembered that the data were treated as an expression of students' goals, not necessarily

as a perfect reflection of the latter. However, efforts were made at the data collection stage to mitigate this phenomenon.

Qualitative content analysis starts with the collection, description, and contextualisation of the material. Research questions are then developed afterwards. Based on the research questions, an analysis method can be selected. For this study, I chose to focus on a summarising approach (working out the main and most frequently raised points raised).

The development of analytical categories started with a deductive development of categories based on MICC. The categories were based on the descriptions provided in MICC, and sometimes covered chunks of text related to somewhat different sub-themes. For instance, the category "respect and interest/openness towards diversity" covered aspects such as interest in learning about cultures, desire to get to know other cultures, remaining open to cultural diversity and combating one's own stereotypes. I also added a category for chunks relating to specific languages. Next, I assigned elements of students' anonymised goal descriptions to categories by colour-coding after identifying an example chunk. After an initial round of identifying chunks and assigning them to categories, texts were checked again to make sure that the assignment of categories was consistent across the submitted answers. At this stage, I added some categories to reflect commonly mentioned issues that could not be assigned to any category. Finally, 152 chunks were extracted and used to identify the most central goals.

In identifying key content, qualitative content analysis can account for both intensity and frequency (Mayring, 2010). I chose to take into account both the number of chunks assigned to a category, as well as the intensity with which goals descriptions were mentioned. This allowed me to both be able to make quantitative observations on the relatively large number of participants the data came from (Selvi, 2019) and consider the context of the text chunks.

Results

Elements of MICC associated with the ideal international self

One challenge in classifying student goals according to the elements that are part of MICC is that the framework is often more complex than students' goals. This gap, at times, made goal descriptions difficult to classify. For instance, a student goal such as "erilaisiin kieliin ja kulttuureihin tutustumista" [getting to know different languages and cultures] might require knowledge, skills and motivations as varied as openness towards diversity, motivation to engage in interpersonal relationships, knowledge about stereotypes, flexibility, and interpersonal communication skills. The shortness of students' descriptions might be due to how the assignment instructions were phrased, since students were asked to only provide short goal descriptors. However, it is also possible that students were not (yet) aware of the range of knowledge, skills, and motivations that goals such as maintaining one's language skills require. During the analysis, chunks were added to those elements of MICC that best captured a goal's core content. However, due to the above-described complexity, some chunks were added to several elements.

The elements that received the most mentions in students' descriptions of their ideal international selves were "respect and interest/openness towards diversity" (part of attitudes and motivations), as well as "confidence in culturally and linguistically diverse settings, situations and relationships" (also part of attitudes and motivations). In the following

paragraphs, I take a more detailed look at how these elements showed up more concretely in students' descriptions before also providing an overview of other elements students often mentioned.

Within "respect and interest/openness towards diversity", some larger thematic clusters emerged. Overwhelmingly, students described their ideal international self as a person who "oppi[i] muista kulttuureista" [learns about other cultures] or "ymmärtää paremmin muita kulttuureja" [understands other cultures better]. These descriptions tended to focus on differences rather than commonalities, that is, there were several explicit mentions of wanting to learn about cultural differences, such as "oppia kulttuureista ja niiden erilaisuudesta" [learning about cultures and their differences], while none mentioned commonalities. Another common trait associated with the ideal international self was openness, meaning for instance "säilyttää avoimen mielen" [maintaining an open mind] or "pyrin suhtautumaan avoimesti eri kulttuureihin" [striving to have an open attitude to other cultures]. A smaller number of students also mentioned wanting to recognize and get rid of existing reservations or stereotypes, or to maintain and show open-mindedness in their future work.

The second major attribute associated with the ideal international self according to the data was confidence in culturally and linguistically diverse settings, situations, and relationships, an element that was mentioned by more than half of the participants. It is closely associated with the elements of emotion management (part of skills) and knowing what evokes strong emotions (part of knowledge). Many chunks were assigned to several of those elements, so in the interest of space, they will be covered together to identify the main themes in students' descriptions. The main thematic cluster related to confidence was self-confidence in foreign-language usage, particularly speaking. Students described, for instance, wanting to "puhua vieraita kieliä itsevarmemmin" [speak foreign languages more confidently] or wanting to "asennoitua siihen, että ei tarvitse jännittää vieraita kieliä puhuessa" [have an attitude that they do not have to feel anxious when speaking a foreign language]. Many students also mentioned "rohkaistua puhumaan vieraita kieliä" [the courage to speak foreign languages], indicating that anxiety or self-consciousness may at times prevent them entirely from using their skills in foreign languages. Interestingly, intercultural encounters were not mentioned as causing uncertainty or anxiety. There was also only little and not very explicit mention of managing others' uncertainty, even though MICC also considers this part of confidence. Confidence is thus still seen as an individual's competence, not as something that arises out of an interaction.

Other elements that were mentioned rather frequently, although not as often as confidence and openness, were empathy, flexibility, attitudes towards languages and linguistic repertoires, knowledge about languages and language learning, and skills to reflect and analyse one's own and others' communication. Empathy often shows a field-specific dimension, since in addition to expressing general interest in others' culture, several students explicitly mentioned children who speak Finnish as a second language and the desire to support their learning and integrating their home languages into teaching. Flexibility more than occasionally also relates to confidence, in that lacking foreign language confidence seems to often prevent students from using their full repertoire or participating in certain communicative situations. One student for instance stated their goal was to "tarttua tilanteisiin, jossa voin sitä [A/N: ruotsia] harjoittaa" [take advantage of situations in where they could practice Swedish], a goal that can be seen to be related to both flexibility and confidence.

The element of attitudes towards languages and linguistic repertoires also showed a strong overlap with confidence in students' goal descriptions. In the framework, part of motivation

and attitude is to also acknowledge the value of partial competences, a dimension that repeatedly showed up in students' goal descriptions. For instance, students wrote that they wanted to "päästä eroon mokaamisen pelosta" [to get rid of the fear of messing up], or that it is "parempi puhua niin hyvin kuin osaa, kuin jättää sanomatta" [better to say what one is able to say rather than not speaking at all]. Students here showed a strong focus on the partiality of their own language skills, demonstrating the link between individual elements. The element of skills to reflect on one's own and others' communication shows more varied clusters, with students for example aiming at understanding children who learn Finnish as a second language (see above), reflecting their own strengths and weaknesses related to internationalisation, or wanting to avoid and/or reflect on stereotypes and their impact on communication.

While there were few mentions of how this learning was intended to be achieved, some more concrete plans could be found in the data. Six students explicitly mentioned wanting to participate in a student exchange or internship abroad, and there were also occasional mentions of what can be considered internationalisation at home, for example "vaihto-oppilaisiin tutustuminen" [getting to know exchange students], taking "kansainvälisyyttä tukevat kurssit" [courses supporting internationalisation] or using the internet.

Aspects of the MICC framework that received little to no attention in students' goal descriptions were, for instance, understanding how language and cultures are intertwined, understanding how cultures are negotiated in interaction, acknowledging power relations, and understanding different ways of initiating, maintaining, or developing interpersonal relationships. Next, thematic clusters more related to foreign-language learning will be discussed.

Students' language learning goals

Overall, nearly 70 text chunks were classified under the category "language learning goals". This indicates a significant connection between (foreign) language skills and internationalisation. In this section, I examine in more detail what goals were associated with students' language learning for internationalisation.

By far the largest thematic cluster concerns maintaining or developing language skills in general, including for example "parantaa kielitaitoa" [improving language skills] or "kehittää vanhoja (jonkin verran osaamiani) vieraita kieliä" [working on pre-existing, somewhat familiar language skills]. The challenge with this cluster is that the language skills in question are not, more specifically, visible. However, it does show a generally high interest in maintaining and/or developing language skills in conjunction with internationalisation.

The languages mentioned the most were, overwhelmingly, English and Swedish, the two foreign languages[1] that were compulsory for students. Learning goals related to the two languages often revolved around confidence, as mentioned above. This applies to Swedish in particular, where nearly a third of assigned chunks were related to "rohkaistua puhumaan sitä" [the courage to speak the language]. Often, students aimed at using the languages (English and/or Swedish) in active communication. In addition to English and Swedish, the only non-compulsory language mentioned in students' learning goals was Arabic, which was mentioned

1. Swedish is usually referred to in Finland as the second official or domestic language. However, for the purposes of this study, it was more useful to group it under "foreign language" in the sense of "not the mother tongue" since the results for Swedish showed such a strong similarity to those for English.

by two participants. This interest might be explained by the fact that Arabic is now the third most common foreign language in Finland, with nearly thirty percent of its speakers being under the age of fourteen (Statistics Finland, 2021).

In addition to the above, two other sizeable clusters centred on interactional strategies and field-specific language skills. The former were often associated with "vaikeista vuorovaikutustilanteista" [difficult communicative situations], and students aimed at developing creativity and different strategies to handle those situations. Where field-specific language skills were further defined, they related to acquiring "alakohtaista sanastoa" [field-specific vocabulary] as well as to "kehittyä monikielisessä opettamisessa" [developing in multilingual teaching].

Discussion

Even though the participants in this study were all studying the same major with the same degree requirements, their ideal international selves show variation, which reinforces the importance of taking into account students' "individual internationalisation projects" (Fabricius et al., 2017, p. 58). In spite of those differences, patterns did emerge which shed some light on ways that institutions of higher education can support those personal internationalisation projects.

Participants in this study generally showed a high interest in other cultures and a positive disposition towards intercultural contact. This is positive in the sense that traits such as an open disposition increase the likelihood of a student participating in a programme for intercultural contact (see e.g., Daly, 2011). Many of the descriptions in the data imply, however, a somewhat essentialist and therefore limiting understanding of culture, for instance, when a student aimed at learning more about different cultures, arguing that there are a lot of examples visible on the internet. In the essentialist understanding of culture, it "is something people have…and knowledge of cultural codes enables one to predict how people will behave" (Dahl, 2014, p. 2, see also Kokkonen et al., 2022). Hofstede's (1980, p. 21) understanding of culture as a "collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" is a prominent example of the essentialist understanding of culture, which ascribes a common core, an "essence", to all members of a culture. This understanding is common particularly in foreign language classes (Holliday, 2022) and at early stages of learning about intercultural communication (Kokkonen et al., 2022; Siljamäki & Anttila, 2022).

As Siljamäki and Anttila (2022) suggest, the essentialist understanding of culture a student often holds in the early stages of their learning process may be connected to the second element that emerged as most significant in this study: This understanding of culture makes possible simple lists of dos & don'ts for individual cultures and thereby may help alleviate anxiety about intercultural encounters, as it makes human behaviour seem more predictable. However, for analysing how individuals interact in a given setting, a non-essentialist understanding may be more helpful as human behaviour is influenced by many factors other than culture, such as status, situation, purpose, and mutual relationships, and as people can activate and make relevant different aspects of themselves in different settings (Dahl, 2014). As this dynamic cultural understanding (Dahl, 2014) appears to be more abstract and is less present in students' understandings of intercultural communication competence, students may need more concrete examples of how culture is constructed and negotiated in interaction.

The aim is not to replace the essentialist understanding, but to create an alternative framework for understanding culture (Kokkonen et al., 2022).

In terms of language learning goals, describing students' ideal internationalised selves using Henry's (2017) terminology shows that Finland as an officially bilingual country makes for a special case. For most students, the language repertoire of their ideal self includes some level of competence in Swedish, making it impossible for them to be contentedly bilingual. This is probably partially explained by the fact that Swedish is a compulsory element of students' language and communication studies, meaning that a self that graduates necessarily has to be a self that is also able to communicate in Swedish. On the other hand, previous research has shown that motivation for studying Swedish correlates strongly with existing interest in the language (Knight, 2013). It is thus not possible, at this stage, to say where this role of Swedish in the ideal self stems from, but it nevertheless indicates that learning goals are influenced by the setting. The fact that English plays just as significant a role as the second domestic language showcases the continued role the language plays in the context of internationalisation.

Regardless of the foreign language in question, the main task for teachers of foreign languages appears to be raising confidence. Students often talk about needing courage to use their foreign language skills, which they then connect to language improvement. Anxiety and uncertainty are indeed important topics in speaking a foreign language and previous research has suggested numerous tools and approaches to help alleviate this phenomenon. Teachers can, for example, provide assistance in finding vocabulary, work on creating a positive classroom atmosphere and clear assessment criteria, choose topics for oral production that are familiar to students and focus on message over form (Mouhoubi–Messadh & Khaldi, 2021). At the same time, it is important to remind students they are not alone in feeling anxious about situations in which they have to speak a foreign language and that anxiety can co-exist with positive emotions such as self-confidence and enjoyment (Gregersen, 2020). In spite of students' strong focus on foreign language production as a cause of anxiety, these strategies might also help alleviate anxiety in settings of intercultural communication, since apprehension seems to mainly derive from the potential for misunderstanding (Mouhoubi-Messadh & Khaldi, 2021), which is also present in intercultural communication.

In addition, language and communication studies should also have a field-specific dimension, since many students mention being particularly interested in, for example, acquiring field-specific vocabulary (see Gregersen-Hermans, 2017; Saarinen, 2017). As the other chapters in this book demonstrate, teaching at Movi often has this field-specific dimension. The findings of this study demonstrate that students clearly consider field-specific aspects to be part of their own internationalisation path.

Conclusion

Though students appear interested in developing their multilingual and intercultural communication competence, they should continue to work and reflect on their internationalisation paths throughout their studies. For instance, both compulsory and non-compulsory instruction can help students gain deeper awareness of how culture is negotiated in interaction. It would also be important for students to be more aware of how a certain level of uncertainty and discomfort is often present in unfamiliar interactional settings, and that such uncertainty does not preclude successful communication. In line with the theory

of ideal selves, it is hoped that students' work on their internationalisation plans could also increase the motivational power of the ideal self. Since more developed selves have higher motivational power, having a learner make their self-imagery more vivid and elaborate can increase their motivation (Dörnyei, 2005).

This study found that the MICC framework is useful for describing and categorising student goals and that it contains the elements (openness and confidence) that students perceive as the most relevant for their own development. In many cases, the framework covers those elements from several perspectives. For instance, confidence can be said to be related to both emotion regulation (part of skills) and confidence in diverse settings (part of attitudes and motivations). This may be useful in helping students reflect and expand on what their goals entail and what they mean at a more concrete and detailed level. On the other hand, the framework also contains several elements that were not mentioned at all by the participants, such as understanding power structures and interpersonal communication skills. Based on the data I used here, it is impossible to say whether these were disregarded because students truly consider these elements to be less relevant for themselves, or if these elements simply are not clear to students. Overall, however, the amount of time the students in this study spent working with MICC prior to setting their goals was limited, and it is recommended that students be provided more time and space in the future to work with the framework. For instance, students could come up with scenarios in which individual elements become visible or relevant, with a focus on those elements that received less attention in this study.

Studying ideal selves is challenging in that participants who know they are being observed may share goal descriptions they believe are expected of them, that is, they provide descriptions that are more indicative of their ought-to selves (see Dörnyei, 2005). Several aspects of this study hopefully alleviate this phenomenon: The internationalisation plans are not graded and students originally made their goal descriptions for a workshop, not this study. I was at no point responsible for student grading and students were aware of that fact. Other than running some of the workshops on internationalisation goals, I also did not function as a teacher for this cohort of students.

In terms of the validity of the data collected, goal descriptions were long-term, making them more reflective of students' ideal selves. Additionally, previous studies on ideal selves have also involved data collection via interviews or questionnaires, (for more on self-reported data, see, e.g., Busse, 2017). While participation was voluntary, the relatively high response rate supports the idea that students with different levels of investment in the internationalisation process participated in the study. Nevertheless, the limitation of the author also working as a teacher at this university remains. For instance, students might be tempted to believe they are required to provide certain goal descriptions in order to pass a course. In addition, some goal descriptions were challenging to classify due to their shortness. This shortness is likely the result of the limited time available during the workshop, where students were asked to describe their goals concisely. In future research, however, a different response format could be chosen that would allow participants to elaborate on their goals.

The nature of this study was exploratory, and little research has been done previously on internationalisation without connection to participation in a specific programme. Therefore, research will continue within the project group. Possible research directions include whether students' ideal international selves vary by faculty or according to other factors, such as age, gender or previous work experience. It also should be investigated if the internationalisation plans help students verbalise their competence, how students' goals change as they progress

along their study path, and to what extent graduating students feel they have reached the goals set for themselves.

In terms of language learning goals, the descriptions used in this study were too short to also allow inferences about the reasons why specific goals were selected. Since it appears that only a few students were interested in pursuing studies in non-compulsory language as part of their internationalisation path, further research needs to be done into what motivates these decisions and how they are influenced by existing discourses about the value of different languages in the context of internationalisation.

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Author

Hanna Brauer, MA, University Teacher, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0480-1425

Hanna Brauer is a lecturer in German and English at the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Her research interests include meaning negotiation in multilingual interactions, the development of multilingual and intercultural competence, and discourses on language learning.

THE PEDAGOGICAL VALUE OF TRANSLATION
Experiences from a newly introduced elective course

Adrienn Károly

With the expansion of nonprofessional translation activities, language education has gradually rediscovered translation and mediation, seeing them not only as useful tools in language learning but also as transferable skills, useful in their own right. However, the pedagogical value of translation, as a practical activity, a theoretical topic, and a subject for critical discussion, has been less explored from the broader perspective of intercultural education, particularly in multicultural classroom settings where English is the shared language. This article reports the findings of a study conducted at a Finnish university on a recently introduced elective course designed and developed by the author. The course, open for both domestic and international students, focuses on translation and culture and has active and collaborative learning at its core. It promotes creativity, critical thinking, and self-reflection through discussions and practical tasks, while also considering the affective layers of meaning as well as broader social, ideological, and ethical dimensions of translation. The research presented here examines the pedagogical value of translation in the first two course implementations. Student data from surveys and reflections explored the participants' motivations for taking the course, their previous translation experiences, their initial views on translation as an activity and as a future study or career option, along with their individual learning experiences in the course. Student data were complemented by field notes recording my observations, thoughts, and development ideas. The research underscores the benefits of incorporating translation more strongly into multilingual pedagogies that promote intercultural learning. The implications are discussed from the perspectives of professional development and institutional-level curriculum design.

Keywords: Translation, culture-specific items, critical language awareness, multilingual and multicultural pedagogy, intercultural education, collaborative learning

A nem hivatásos fordítás terjedésével párhuzamosan a nyelvoktatás fokozatosan újra felfedezte a fordítást és közvetítést, melyek nem csupán a nyelvtanulás hasznos eszközei, hanem önmagukban is hasznos, átváltható készségek. Kevesebb kutatás vizsgálja azonban a fordítás pedagógiai alkalmazását az interkulturális tanulás és oktatás tágabb perspektívájából olyan esetekben, amikor a fordítás nem csupán gyakorlati tevékenység, hanem egyben elméleti téma és a kritikai megbeszélések tárgya is. Ez különösen igaz olyan multikulturális osztálytermi környezetben, ahol az angol a közös nyelv. Ebben

a tanulmányban egy pedagógiai kutatás eredményeiről számolok be, amelyet egy általam kidolgozott, újonnan bevezetett választható kurzus keretein belül végeztem egy finnországi egyetemen. A finn és a nemzetközi hallgatók által egyaránt felvehető kurzus pedagógiai vezérelvei az aktív és kollaboratív tanulás. A kurzus a fordítás és a kultúra metszéspontjában lévő témákra irányul és változatos megbeszélések, illetve gyakorlati feladatok révén segíti elő a kreativitást, a kritikai gondolkodást és az önreflexiót. A témák lefedik a jelentés érzelmi aspektusait, valamint a fordítás tágabb társadalmi, ideológiai és etikai dimenzióit. Az itt bemutatott kutatásban fordítás pedagógiai értékét vizsgáltam a kurzus első két megvalósítása során. Az adatgyűjtés felmérések és hallgatói reflexiók segítségével történt, amelyekben feltártam, hogy mi motiválja a hallgatókat a kurzuson való részvételre, milyen korábbi fordítási tapasztalatokkal rendelkeznek, milyen előzetes nézeteik vannak a fordításról mint tevékenységről, illetve mint jövőbeli tanulmányi és karrierlehetőségről, valamint feltérképeztem a kurzus során szerzett tanulási tapasztalataikat. A hallgatóktól gyűjtött adatokat a saját megfigyeléseim, gondolataim és a kurzus fejlesztésére vonatkozó ötleteim egészítették ki, melyeket terepnaplóban rögzítettem. Az eredmények alapján arra következtethetünk, hogy a fordítás értékes pedagógiai eszköz, amely hangsúlyosabb teret érdemel az interkulturális tanulási célokat kitűző többnyelvű pedagógiákban. A végkövetkeztetések levonása során kitérek mind a szakmai fejlődés, mind az intézményi szintű tantervfejlesztés szempontjaira.

Kulcsszavak: Fordítás, kultúraspecifikus kifejezések, kritikai nyelvi tudatosság, többnyelvű oktatás és multikulturális pedagógia, interkulturális nevelés, kollaboratív tanulás

Introduction

The FIFA World Cup 2022 awards ceremony was a memorable event for sports enthusiasts. Before the iconic moment when Lionel Messi, captain of the winning Argentinian team, was handed the gold trophy, Qatar's emir placed a black cloak over his shoulders.[1] The gesture was a sign of honour and celebration, intended to pay homage to a superstar and emphasise the geopolitical significance of the World Cup 2022. However, the range of responses this move triggered worldwide illustrates not only the complexity of contemporary global professional sport with its closely intertwined dimensions (local–translocal, national–transnational, and cultural–transcultural; Naha, 2017) but also the misinterpretations, misconceptions, misunderstandings, and ideological clashes arising from lacks and gaps of information we have about each other's and our own cultures and histories and from the resistance to embrace diversity. It is also common to dismiss or disregard the interconnectedness of cultures and "the ways in which cultural forms move, change and are reused to fashion new identities in diverse contexts", an idea captured by the notion of *transcultural flows* (Pennycook, 2006, p. 6). The Messi example epitomises the intricacies of the visible–invisible and material–non-material dimensions of culture, along with the complexities of meaning-making. It reminds us to stay open to different perspectives, identities, and mindsets without forgetting that we are connected in multiple ways.

The cultural entanglements in contemporary societies foster collaboration but also bring challenges. In higher education, the original goals of *internationalisation*, including cooperation, mutual understanding, solidarity, and harmonious international relations, have largely been overshadowed by an approach that prioritises local interests, short-term goals, and measurable outcomes, particularly with the increasing global competition since the mid-1990s (de Wit & Altbach, 2021). Unfortunately, these trends see internationalisation as a goal in itself rather than as an instrument (Latorre et al., 2024) and are underpinned by a narrow, ethnocentric understanding of culture. Perhaps as an effort to realign with the initial objectives, recent discussions on the social responsibility aspects of internationalisation call for a long-term approach oriented towards mutual learning and promoting openness, respect for diversity, cultural sensitivity, and an awareness of global connectedness. *Internationalisation at home*, including *internationalising the curriculum* (Leask, 2013), along with collaborative online international learning projects (including virtual exchange) and movements to decolonise curricula, foreground these values and advocate a shift in focus from institutional to personal responsibility, which is believed to more effectively tackle the multiple urgent crises facing us today (Latorre et al., 2024).

In 2020, as I embarked on designing a course that promotes these values, I was searching for a theme that could create meaningful learning opportunities for students from diverse cultural backgrounds. As it is closely intertwined with language and culture and has intricate social, ideological, and ethical dimensions, translation emerged as an ideal option, especially because it also aligned with my professional background and interests.

Although the University of Jyväskylä (JYU) has a long history of research into language-related phenomena,[2] only a few practical translation courses on specific language pairs have traditionally been available, mostly for language students. Thus, the idea of a course that

1. The *bisht*, a traditional Arab garment, is worn on special occasions. Its function and appearance resemble the internationally known graduation gown.
2. Language, culture, and society forms one of the university's strategic core fields of research.

combines theory, practice, and critical discussion and approaches translation from a broader perspective was new. In Finland, translation theory is part of translator training programmes offered at certain universities. In these programmes, translation is predominantly viewed as the institutionalised and norm-governed practice of professionals although it is increasingly recognised as encompassing the everyday activities of multilingual individuals, with repercussions for the whole translation industry (Dam & Koskinen, 2016).

In language education, and parallel to the growing practice of nonprofessional translation (Pérez-González & Susam-Saraeva, 2012), multilingual pedagogical approaches have been elevated to the forefront, leading to a reassessment of the value of translation (Cook, 2010). However, translation as a pedagogical resource – seen as a practical activity, a theoretical topic, and a subject for critical discussion – has been less explored from the larger perspective of intercultural education, particularly in multicultural classroom settings where English is the shared medium of communication.

Motivated by my interest in pedagogical experimentation and my background in translation, in 2020 I designed a course that considers translation broadly and focuses on topics at the intersection of translation and culture. In 2021, the course was added to the list of electives offered by the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication (Movi)[3] and since then it has been offered to all students at the university, regardless of degree programme and student status.

In this paper, I present the findings of a study that examined the pedagogical value of translation within the context of this newly introduced course. The research addressed the following specific questions:

1. What are the students' main motivations for enrolling in the course?
2. What previous translation experience do they have?
3. What are their initial views on translation as an activity and a future study or career option?
4. How did their thinking about translation as an activity and a future study/career option change by the end of the course?
5. What are the students' individual learning experiences in the course?

The research had an overall qualitative design, and as an inquiry-based study, it incorporated analytical, interpretive, and reflective elements (Babione, 2015). Data collected from the students were complemented by field notes. Although the research did not have a systematic action research design, the findings informed the pedagogical development of the course.

In the upcoming sections, I first review real-world trends and theoretical approaches central to understanding my motivations behind designing the course. This is followed by outlining the pedagogical framework of the course and describing its first two implementations. After this, I present the methods of data collection and analysis and discuss the findings, while also incorporating the perspective of course development. Finally, I address the implications and suggest future lines of research.

3. Movi's roles and responsibilities are summarised in the Introduction of this book (Károly et al., 2024).

Shifting theoretical approaches and emerging real-world trends

Towards more critical frameworks

Contemporary scholarship in various fields highlights the dynamic and multimodal nature of interaction (e.g., Busch, 2017; Pennycook, 2017; Scollon et al., 2012). Scholars also emphasise that cultures should not be equated with homogeneous (ethnic/national) entities as they encompass rich and multilayered heritages and identities and dynamic processes of meaning-making (Komisarof & Zhu, 2016). Cultural literacy is thus to be seen as meaning negotiation and identity construction rather than as a stable set of factual knowledge about a particular group (Maine et al., 2019). Along the same lines, Kramsch and Zhu (2020) suggest that intercultural communication should not refer to communication across national borders but to "participation in fluctuating networks of individual experiences, memories, and fantasies, multiple allegiances and legitimations" (p. 1).[4] In fact, Dervin (2022) argues that we all "do" interculturality every day, directly or indirectly. The main pedagogical implication of these ideas is to move beyond the traditional understanding of culture as a "collection of things" and the rigid dichotomies of self vs. other, and of my culture vs. your culture, and instead, engage with each other's heritages, identities, perspectives, and values, and explore how they intertwine (Maine et al., 2019). Despite these theoretical advancements, scholars note that intercultural education still largely relies on a narrow and static understanding of culture, contributing to the reinforcement of stereotypes, biases, and prejudices (Sommier et al., 2022).

Applied language studies scholars working in the critical paradigm emphasise that language is not merely a communication tool and argue that since power is an essential dimension of interaction today, language and communication teachers cannot dismiss broader and often challenging political, social, and ethical issues (e.g., Dervin, 2023; Ennser-Kananen & Saarinen, 2022; Kramsch, 2020; Pennycook, 2018, 2022; Shapiro, 2022). As Kramsch (2011) has pointed out, language learners' primary goal, especially at more advanced levels, is not to achieve near-native proficiency as a goal in itself, but to develop a more sophisticated *symbolic competence*, which enables them to understand the intricacies of interaction (such as underlying ideologies or multimodally and often implicitly conveyed meanings), to identify topics and perspectives that are overlooked or disregarded, and to reflect on and position themselves. These ideas foreground not just the role of the context and collective/individual worldviews in languaging and meaning-making[5] but also the poetic function of language[6]: the material aspects of communication (such as tone of voice or silence) and the cultural and affective layers of meaning (Kramsch, 2021).

A similar shift in focus is occurring in translation studies. For example, Haapaniemi (2023) advocates the reconceptualization of translation as a broader phenomenon that recognises the role of material forms, modalities, along with the social and cognitive aspects of meaning-negotiation. Affect is receiving renewed attention (e.g., Petrilli & Ji, 2022) and is increasingly seen as the interplay between intra- and interpersonal factors, that is individual emotions (including bodily sensations) and socially/culturally acceptable emotional responses (Koskinen, 2020).

4. Holliday's (2019) notion of *small culture formation on the go* captures these transient, everyday encounters in a variety of situations, when we position ourselves, engage in dialogue (or choose not to), and negotiate the rules of behaviour.
5. Cf. Bakhtin's (1981) notion of *heteroglossia*.
6. Kramsch drew on Jakobson's (1960) idea that poetics should be considered an integral part of linguistics.

Language education practices worldwide have traditionally been underpinned by a monolingual ideology, viewing languages as distinct, homogeneous, and stable entities and as code systems to master. Such a static approach, however, is disconnected from the realities of our contemporary world and disregards language users' diverse backgrounds, personal histories, identities, and individual needs. Fortunately, the growing awareness of the linguistic, social, and epistemological inequalities in education (and in academia) has sparked an interest in multilingual and culturally responsive pedagogies (e.g., Kramsch & Zhu, 2016; Laviosa, 2016; Li, 2018, 2022) and drawn attention to the mediating role of identity and emotions (e.g., Dewaele, 2010; Norton, 2013; Pavlenko, 2005). One central concept is *translanguaging*, which refers not just to switching between languages/language varieties and integrating different modalities but to creating new, hybrid meanings and identities, while still being aware of the existence and powerful impact of named languages (Li, 2011, 2018). According to Li (2018, p. 23), language learners and users bring together their personal experiences, environments, attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies, along with a range of linguistic, cognitive, and semiotic resources in "one coordinated and meaningful performance" (*translanguaging space*).

While translation as a cognitive/linguistic act takes language borders seriously and is product-oriented and linear (moving from source to target language), a translanguaging approach illuminates the creative and strategic processes involved in translation, when the translator is negotiating meaning, relying on a pool of linguistic/semiotic/sensory resources within their repertoire (Baynham & Lee, 2019). In fact, as the authors suggest, each moment during translation is a translanguaging space, where languages, language varieties, registers, discourses, cultural spaces, and semiotic modalities meet, without the translator being strongly aware of the border between them. As they argue, this approach enables us to relinquish the idea of perfect translatability and embrace the complexity of meaning and the polyphony of voices.

But most importantly, translanguaging spaces are embedded in a particular cultural and historical context with their dominant ideologies (Baynham & Lee, 2019). When considering translation as an institutionalised practice, ideologies manifest not only in policy decisions and translation norms[7] but also in the actual translation decisions made by individual translators (Munday, 2007). These decisions are influenced by personal ideologies (ethical stance, beliefs, values, motivations, attitudes) and shaped by personal histories and contexts. Thus, a critical orientation to translation is helpful, not just when revisiting fundamental concepts like language (see Sakai, 2014) or equivalence,[8] but also when considering larger cultural, social, political, and ideological issues, such as translation and power (e.g., Gentzler & Tymoczko, 2002), censorship (e.g., Díaz-Cintas, 2019; Valdeón, 2022), translation as resistance/activism (e.g., Baker, 2007; Tymoczko, 2010), as well as translators' visibility, roles, and agency (e.g., Meylaert, 2007; Sela-Sheffy, 2005).

In language education, as a corollary of the multilingual turn, there is a growing acknowledgement of the value of authentic and communicative translation and mediation

7. Policy decisions include, for example, what gets translated or who is selected as translator (Braden, 2021), while translation norms refer to reader/user expectations, professional standards, and ethical responsibility (Chesterman, 2016; Toury, 2012).

8. In her influential essay, Lori Chamberlain (1988) argued that the distinction between source and target text is modelled on the traditional patriarchal gender binary. She drew a comparison between the representation of women as inferior to men and the status of translated texts as lower than the "original", as well as between faithfulness in marriage and translation.

activities,[9] leading to a burgeoning field of research (e.g., Beiler & Dewilde, 2020; Cook, 2010; González Davies, 2004, 2014, 2015; Muñoz-Basols, 2019; Pintado-Gutiérrez, 2021). In the context of higher education, research has explored the benefits of translation for students majoring in languages (e.g., Källkvist, 2013) and for non-language students (e.g., Lo, 2016), and studies have also addressed the use of machine translation (e.g., Flanagan & Christensen, 2014; Mellinger, 2017). The findings suggest that translation as a practical activity seems to be a useful pedagogical resource with a wide range of benefits for and beyond language learning. Besides improving language competence, translation develops a range of generic skills, including critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, reflection, self-regulation, collaboration, resource use, information management, and concern for quality, along with intercultural awareness and sensitivity (Peverati, 2013). Written translation tasks also have psychological benefits, such as an intense flow experience (Mirlohi et al., 2011) and a high sense of achievement (Sewell, 2004; Washbourne, 2014). Finally, translation can connect linguistics and literary/cultural studies, the two traditionally distinct components of the modern language degree (Kemp, 2012).

The growing practice of nonprofessional translation

Voluntary and involuntary transnational population flows have resulted in unprecedented cultural and linguistic diversity in many contemporary societies.[10] Coupled with technological advances and the growing influence of the media, these trends have far-reaching repercussions for social interaction. As a result, individuals with diverse profiles today engage in nonprofessional translation and mediation (Pérez-González & Susam-Saraeva, 2012).[11] Although they have varying degrees of translation experience, they typically lack formal training and hold no professional qualification but translate on an ad hoc and/or voluntary basis, with little or no financial compensation. According to Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva (2012), nonprofessional translation practices contribute to the transformation of social interaction in different ways—a phenomenon that translation studies can no longer ignore. As they argue, these practices can not only be seen as an emerging form of civic engagement, but they are also changing the media and publishing industry amid the transition to digital culture, and result in new models of mediation in emerging spaces of cultural contact. The authors thus suggest that

9. The CEFR Companion Volume by the Council of Europe (2018) now includes mediation as a basic communicative language activity, in addition to reception, production, and interaction: "In both the receptive and productive modes, *the written and/or oral activities of mediation make communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason to communicate with each other directly*" (italics added, p. 32). Mediation is used in a broad sense, referring to the activities of mediating texts (including written/oral translation), concepts, or communication (pp. 103–104), each with its own descriptors.

10. Note that multilingualism as a social, institutional, and individual phenomenon has a long history and was the norm in most societies before the development of (mostly) monolingual nation states (see Pavlenko, 2023).

11. In translation studies, several terms are used to describe these emerging forms of nonprofessional translation in various settings: *volunteer* or *fan translation* (e.g., of cartoons, TV shows, films, video games, comics, popular fiction, song lyrics), a term overlapping with *crowdsourced translation* (e.g., of TED talk subtitles), *(online) collaborative translation*, *activist translation* (an individual/community endeavour with a political/social agenda, e.g., resistance to censorship, (self-)translation of political blog posts or tweets), *volunteer interpreting* (typically in crisis situations, often as a form of advocacy, humanitarian action, or civic engagement, but also in multilingual family or workplace settings), and various types of *community/public service interpreting* (ad hoc assistance provided by untrained staff or companions, including children, to facilitate communication, typically in asylum and migration contexts or in legal, educational, or health and social care settings). Other terms referring to this type of interpreting are *(child) language brokering*, *intercultural mediation*, or *dialogue interpreting* (see Baker & Saldanha, 2020; Pérez-González & Susam-Saraeva, 2012). *Self-translation* is another growing practice, both in literary and academic contexts (e.g., Pisanski Peterlin, 2019).

instead of trying to control these activities for fear that it damages the prestige of the profession and lowers the status of professional translators, translation studies should examine them more thoroughly.

Despite clear evidence that translation competence develops with training (e.g., Göpferich & Jääskeläinen, 2009; Toury, 2012), it is also generally acknowledged that bi- and multilingual individuals have an innate predisposition for translating and can learn it without explicit training (e.g., Toury, 2012). Research has suggested that professional translator training is not the only path for achieving expertise (e.g., Jääskeläinen et al., 2011; Sirén & Hakkarainen, 2002). The work of professional translators may not always exhibit superior quality, while untrained individuals can produce high-quality translations, especially when undertaking complex tasks requiring "non-routine mediation approaches", typically in unfamiliar circumstances or in unexpected situations that demand critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to adapt (Jääskeläinen, 2010; Jääskeläinen et al., 2011). Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva (2012) consider nonprofessionals as even "more prepared to 'innovate', play around with the material in hand, retell it in a way that is likely to be more interesting and intelligible for their audience—often because they are themselves part of the audience" (p. 158).

Notwithstanding these findings, general views about translation and translation competence are often overly simplistic (Pérez-González & Susam-Saraeva, 2012). In professional contexts, those who commission translators typically require expertise (qualification/training), but outside this context, the complexity of translation can easily be downplayed, with practical considerations taking precedence. Especially those without formal training or experience (both commissioners and translators) may not fully understand the challenges involved in different types of translation and may assume that a good level of language proficiency is sufficient. In doing so, they overlook the intricacies of meaning-making and interpretation and/or important ideological or ethical considerations. Thus, it seems to be beneficial for everyone, but especially for future language professionals, to have a deeper understanding of translation as a complex activity beyond the linguistic level.

The pedagogical design of the newly developed course

The new course embraces translation as a pedagogical resource (e.g., Carreres et al., 2021; Galante, 2021; González-Davies, 2017), seeing it not just as a practical activity but also as a theoretical topic and a subject for critical discussion. With active learning (Børte et al., 2023) and student engagement at its core, including support for autonomy, relevance, and enthusiasm[12], the course promotes collaboration, self-reflection, and discussion, while also relying on student-generated discussion questions (Aflalo, 2018). One main goal is to help students explore multiple layers of meaning during translation, especially when addressing the challenges involved in the translation of culture-specific items. Additionally, the course addresses larger cultural, social, ethical, and ideological issues inherent in translation. Regarding criticality, it is crucial for teachers teaching culturally diverse groups to examine their own expectations and be aware that students' language competence, family circumstances, educational experiences, and the sociopolitical environment in their home country strongly influence their familiarity and comfort with critical thinking (Aston, 2023; Bali, 2015).

12. These elements are emphasised in theories of achievement motivation, such as expectancy-value theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020) and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020). For an overview of these theories, see Robinson et al. (2024).

The course design is grounded in *Critical Language Awareness (CLA)* pedagogy (Curtis et al., 2023; Shapiro, 2022), while also incorporating principles of *culturally relevant pedagogy* (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 2014) and *culturally responsive teaching* (Gay, 2018). These are reflected in the consideration of the students' diverse backgrounds, identities, and experiences, and in the inclusion of culturally/personally relevant topics. Such a learning environment is expected to create meaningful opportunities for intercultural interaction, leading to transformative learning experiences (Fielding et al., 2023). By engaging in discussions and collaborative project work in culturally diverse teams, students can also increase their cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Shirley and Hargreaves (2021) emphasise five aspects of student engagement. *Intrinsic value* is tied to nurturing and sustaining students' curiosity and enthusiasm – aspects strongly linked to teacher emotions/attitudes (Cavanagh, 2016; Keller, 2016). Initial motivation is not a concern as the course is elective, and I try to maintain students' interest by using activities that require creativity, critical thinking, or problem-solving, along with a range of discussions that build on prior knowledge and allow sharing personal examples, stories, views, perspectives. *Importance* is connected to personal and societal relevance. The course invites students to discuss personally and socially meaningful topics and reflect on their future career. *Association*, linked to the feeling of inclusion and belonging, is essential throughout the whole course, but especially during the collaborative project work, while *empowerment* refers to making the students feel heard and valued, and giving them agency through choices. Finally, *mastery* is tied to a sense of accomplishment through commitment and persistence – key elements of the project work.

Although the focus on culture-specific items may imply a traditional, narrow approach to culture, this is not the case. Without denying the powerful impact of the current global geopolitical system based on nation-states and defined borders, the course problematises the idea of cultures as isolated, static, and homogeneous entities, highlighting the issues with such an oversimplified approach.[13] Rather than seeing the students as representatives of a particular (national) culture, I consider their diverse, multilayered, and dynamic identities and the complex emotions attached to them. Admittedly, implementing this in practice can be challenging. As Lee (2015) pointed out, even when our aim is to move beyond essentialising discourses, in informal classroom talk, teachers and students tend to (unconsciously) return to monolithic and reductionist approaches, leading to stereotyping and othering ("doing race" through "doing culture"). Therefore, I need to be mindful of my language use and the way I apply the concept of culture, while also encouraging students to do so in their classroom interactions and beyond. This is crucial as we also discuss culture-specific items, which are traditionally approached from a narrow, ethnocentric understanding of culture. The idea is to move beyond merely discussing cultural similarities/differences and utilise culture-specific items as tools to explore and reflect on the richness of cultures, the dynamic and complex nature of meaning, cultural entanglements as well as deeply ingrained beliefs and assumptions (such as cultural uniqueness).

Culture-specific items[14] are mostly lexical items, including proper names, which have additional shared meanings within a culture, and which often lack a referential equivalent in

13. For an overview of the various approaches to culture from the perspective of translation studies, see Katan (2020).

14. Several other terms are used to refer to these elements (sometimes with differences in scope), such as *culture-/culturally bound references/elements, cultural references, cultural (key)words, cultural bumps,* or *realia*, but Agar's (1994) term rich points also captures this idea. Note that culture-specificity is not an absolute category but is determined by the two cultures in question and cultural contact also influences how well a cultural reference is known outside the "source" culture (*transculturality*; Pedersen, 2011).

a particular other culture (Heltai, 2013; Pedersen, 2011; Pusztai-Varga, 2022; some examples from the Finnish language are *penkkarit*, *pakkoruotsi*, *takatalvi*, or Huuhkajat). Since their meaning is closely tied to a specific cultural context, including the material/visible/tangible and/or nonmaterial/invisible/intangible dimensions of culture, they frequently cause communication problems, surprise, or misunderstanding in intercultural interaction and pose considerable challenges for translators (Heltai, 2013). Encapsulating the knowledge, experiences, material objects, concepts, and the cognitive/emotional schemes of a cultural community, they require linguistic, historical, cultural, or social knowledge about this community (Valló, 2002). In fact, translators need a deeper understanding of both the source and target language and cultural context. Note that not just its denotative meaning can make an item culture-specific but also its intricate web of connotations, sociocultural associations, or intertextual references (Heltai, 2013; Pusztai-Varga, 2022). In short, these items invite students to consider multiple layers of meaning, including embodied meaning (Gibbs, 2003), and the interplay between the personal and sociocultural dimensions of meaning (Koskinen, 2020). Since their translation presents an authentic problem-solving task and requires creativity, they are well suited for analysis and discussion in multicultural classrooms (González Davies & Scott-Tennent, 2005).

The first two course implementations

Due to the restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the course was first arranged remotely, consisting of eight 90-minute synchronous online weekly sessions. Of the 30 students registering for the course, I accepted 25, of whom 23 completed the course. The course mainly attracted language and communication students, 19 of whom were domestic students in language-oriented degree programmes at the bachelor's or master's level. The four international exchange students were studying in various programmes in the humanities and social sciences. Applying the labels "domestic" and "international" was not always straightforward as some students had a bi- or multilingual/cultural background or belonged to a linguistic/cultural minority. Also, some domestic students had studied outside their home country and had rich intercultural experiences.

In 2022 the course was organised face-to-face and consisted of ten 90-minute weekly sessions. Twenty-two students registered for it, all of whom were accepted. Of the 21 students who successfully completed the course, 12 were domestic students studying predominantly at the master's level in language-oriented programmes, while the nine exchange students studied in various programmes in the humanities and social sciences.

Key content

The central topics addressed in the course are summarised in Appendix A. Besides the two general reference sources (Baker & Saldanha, 2021; Munday, 2016), I use scholarly and popular articles along with a range of multimodal resources (short movies, TED talks, images, songs, interactive online resources). I also recommend practical tools for translators (dictionaries, terminology databases, online resources) as well as scholarly journals, books, and articles focusing on translation. Students' examples of culture-specific items are collected in an online collaborative whiteboard (Flinga).

Throughout the course, students work in culturally diverse teams on a longer project focusing on the translation of culture-specific items in self-selected authentic texts written in their first languages, and at the end of the course, they present their projects to the others. Several genres have been explored so far, including poems, fiction, folklore, movies, and songs. Students also brought examples from minority and popular cultures, which were particularly noteworthy as they were characterised by specific linguistic features and a high degree of transculturality and intertextuality. In the final presentation, the groups provide background information about the texts (e.g., author, genre, topic, language/language variety, date, lexical/stylistic features, texts with a similar function in another culture, related literary/artistic works, or other relevant information), explain the layers of meaning of the selected culture-specific words and phrases, specify the translation challenge, and provide a translation solution for each (into English and the languages spoken in the group), with a specific target audience in mind. Students are expected to justify the chosen translation strategies, describe the processes of meaning-negotiation and problem-solving, and indicate the tools and resources they consulted (general/specialised dictionaries, etymological or cultural dictionaries). I also encourage them to discover whether the meaning has travelled across languages.

At the end of the course, students submit a written reflection on their overall learning experience.

The value of practitioner research

Developing a course that aligned with my professional background and interests allowed me to enact my professional agency in its three key aspects: influencing at work, developing work practices, and negotiating professional identity (Vähäsantanen et al., 2020). Additionally, conducting research on my practice offered a unique opportunity for research-based development of my teaching through pedagogical experimentation, leading to a stronger feeling of being an "agent of change" (Kusters et al., 2023). Edwards (2021) highlighted several benefits of pedagogical action research for language teachers from the perspective of professional development. Although the research reported here did not have a systematic action research design, it proved to be a highly valuable experience, the implications of which are discussed at the end of this paper.

Methods

Setting and participants

Data were collected from the first two course implementations (2021 and 2022). All 47 students who attended them (25 and 22 respectively) were invited to participate in the research. In the first offering of the course, 10 students returned the pre-course survey (40% response rate [RR], seven domestic and three international students), and 13 filled in the end-of-course survey (56.5% RR, 11 domestic and two international students). In the second iteration, 17 students gave permission for me to use their reflection papers (77.2% RR, ten domestic and seven international students). Participation in the research was voluntary, and students were shown the research notification describing the study and the privacy notice informing them about the processing of personal data.

Instruments of data collection

In the first course, data were first collected by an online survey sent to the students before the start of the course. It comprised 10 questions (open- and closed-ended), five eliciting demographic background information, and five focusing on previous studies related to translation, translation experiences, motivations to take the course, initial views on translation as an activity, and plans on studying translation in the future (Appendix B).

At the end of the first course, data were collected through the official anonymous Webropol course feedback survey. Three open-ended questions (Appendix C) were added to the survey template used at the university to explore students' learning experiences and the changes in their thinking about translation as an activity and future career option.

In the second iteration, data were collected only at the end of the course. As a main assignment, all students taking the course wrote a reflection based on six guiding questions (Appendix D) focusing on positive and negative learning experiences in the course, changes in thinking about translation as an activity and a future career option, and prior translation experiences. Those who agreed to participate in the research submitted their reflections in a separate folder on the course learning platform.

Data collected from the students were complemented by my observations, reflections, and development ideas recorded as field notes.

Methods of data analysis

Responses to the closed-ended survey questions were analysed in Webropol. On the responses to the open-ended survey questions and the student reflections, I conducted a thematic analysis. When analysing the survey questions, I followed Robinson's (2020) approach developed for brief texts. The student reflections were analysed in ATLAS.ti. Coding was done manually, by the author, guided by the specific topic asked in each question. During the initial coding, I used either an inductive (data-driven) or a hybrid (oriented by the existing literature) approach, except for one question, when I used the PACTE (2003) model of translation competence. During the analysis, I first assigned descriptive codes to segments of data related to each question addressing the same topic. In the subsequent coding cycles, the codes were reviewed, refined, and grouped into broader categories and themes. In certain instances, code frequencies were also calculated.

Results

Students' motivations for taking the course

Students cited a variety of reasons for enrolling in the course (Table 1), related mostly to personal interests, learning goals, and future career plans.

Table 1 Student motivations for taking the first course (n = 10)

Student motivations	Frequency, n
General interest in translation	8
Translation as planned/potential career path	6
Learning about other cultures	4
Exploring culture-specific words/phrases	3
Learning about practical aspects of translation	3
Interacting with students from other cultures	3
Learning about theoretical aspects of translation	2
Interest in multilingual pedagogy	1

Some international students reported that no similar courses existed at their home university, and some domestic students emphasised that the course filled a gap in the available course offerings at JYU:

> I think it would be beneficial to offer some translation courses in our programme, because it is very likely that a foreign language major will encounter in the working life tasks that are related to translating.

> Just wanna say that I was hoping before that a course like this would be arranged at some point, so I'm glad it finally happened!

Students' previous translation experiences

Several students had some translation experience before taking the course, mostly unpaid/voluntary forms of nonprofessional translation (Table 2). Many of them engaged in various types of mediation to help family members, friends, colleagues, or even teachers, some had translated written or audiovisual material for personal enjoyment (hobby or fan translation),[15] and some mentioned having had a (side) job focusing on or involving translation.

Table 2 Students' previous translation experiences

	Frequency, n 2021 (n = 10)	Frequency, n 2022 (n = 17)
Mediation, to help others	8	16
For personal enjoyment	5	6
As a paid job/side job	2	3

Regarding previous courses, in the first course, only two students reported having taken a practical translation course on a specific language pair. In the second course, one international student was majoring in translation studies, and five other students had completed practical translation courses at JYU, the Open University, or their home university.

15. The text genres mentioned included children's stories, knitting patterns, video subtitles [TED talks, Coursera materials], anime movies, song lyrics, and poems.

Students' initial views on translation as an activity and a future study or career option

Initial views were investigated directly only in the first course (n = 10).[16] Concerning their views on translation as an activity, all students mentioned the importance of language competence, four referred to cultural and field-specific knowledge and four emphasised translation tools/resources. Only two students mentioned cognitive/affective/attitudinal elements, citing attention to detail, curiosity, passion, interest in other cultures, creativity, resilience, collaboration skills, and commitment to lifelong learning. Knowledge about translation as an activity and professional practice was mentioned only by two students, who emphasised the importance of knowing specific translation strategies, and considering the target audience, and the influence of the larger professional context (translation commission, time pressure). While strategic competence is a key element in the PACTE (2003) model,[17] only one student explicitly referred to it, highlighting organisational skills.

Regarding their future goals, two students reported being certain to pursue further studies in translation and planning to find employment in translation, to four it was highly probable, and four was undecided, without ruling out the possibility.

Changes in students' thinking about translation as an activity

At the end of both courses, nearly all students reported having gained a deeper understanding of translation, as illustrated by these two comments:

> This was entirely a different experience as the translation I have done previously has always been quite "mechanical", whereas this was a lot more creative.

> I used to think very one-dimensionally that translation is just translating literally what is said or written. But there is so much more you need to take into consideration.

Specific aspects that were referred to most included becoming more aware of the complexity of meaning and acknowledging the challenges of conveying the intended meaning or interpreting meaning. Regarding translation competence, many of them reported having developed a deeper recognition of cultural background knowledge, specific translation techniques, and various tools and resources. Several students underlined the vital role of interaction and collaboration during translation, and many became more aware of the social/ideological issues linked to translation:

> What never occurred to me before (and changed during the course) is that it takes a lot of time and effort to choose the "right" translator for a certain topic because a translator holds a lot of power.

Some students started thinking about the role of translation in their everyday life and in cultural exchange. Finally, a few students began reflecting on the value of translation in language education, related to their future career goals as teachers.

16 In the second iteration, in the end-of-course reflection task, students frequently referred to their initial views when discussing the changes in their thinking.

17 It encompasses the entire problem-solving process from planning to evaluation and activating the other sub-competences.

Changes in students' perspectives on translation as a study or career option

Changes in the students' study or career aspirations are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Changes in perspectives on translation as a study/career option

Perceived change	Frequency, *n* 2021 (*n* = 13)	Frequency, *n* 2022 (*n* = 17)
Became even more interested in translation as the primary career goal	3	3
Became less sure due to the challenges recognised, but still generally interested in translation as a career option	6	5
Undecided, translation is one possible career option	4	5
Not interested in becoming a professional translator	0	4

One student reported the following:

> I was considering becoming a professional translator in the future already before I attended this course, and now I am even more convinced that this would be a very fitting career choice for me.

The four students in the second course who had no interest in becoming a professional translator cited various reasons: the work being too demanding and the field too competitive, lacking genuine passion, or not speaking additional languages. However, they added that their future job may still involve translation/mediation.

Students' individual positive and negative learning experiences

Students' positive learning experiences were related to three dimensions of course design: structure, learning events, and learning materials and environments (Appendix E).

In terms of the course structure, almost all the participants named the opportunities for intercultural interaction as the most highly valued aspect. Students highlighted that these opportunities enhanced their critical thinking, self-reflection, and expanded their knowledge about other languages and cultures. Students also liked the elective format and emphasised that the content was personally relevant to them and aligned with their interests.

Students identified the project work as the most valuable learning event. It was described as "exciting", "intriguing", "educational", "insightful", "motivating", "productive", "fun", and "different". As one Finnish student wrote:

> I often find group work very tiring and without a purpose (group work just for the sake of having something to do), but this time it felt very purposeful as everyone on the team had something to actually contribute.

Some international students reported that this was the first time they ever did group work or expressed their own views.

The class discussions were generally considered engaging and thought-provoking, and many students appreciated the small pre-tasks asking them to look into a real-world case, activate prior knowledge, or brainstorm ideas. On the other hand, students differed in their preferred

learning approach. Some favoured practical tasks and sharing personal experiences, while others valued conceptual discussions and exchanging views. This was also reflected in topic preferences. Many found Pedersen's model of transfer strategies the most useful, especially due to the illustrative examples and the opportunity to apply the theory in the project work. Others, however, liked discussions on the notion of culture, the social/ideological/ethical aspects of translation, or translation as a professional practice:

> This was the first course where Hofstede's ideas were questioned. In [the student's minor], his ideas are pretty much taken at face value, and we were not encouraged to question them.

> The conversation about who gets to translate or is allowed to translate something was also very eye-opening.

> It was fascinating to learn more about the reality of translation work and look at the different ways translation competence has been defined by researchers.

The discussion on dubbing and subtitling was seen as particularly illuminating due to the diversity of perspectives addressed:

> As someone who really enjoys hearing the original voices of actors and voice actors and grew up with mostly subtitled shows, I had never really thought about the positive sides of dubbing.

Concerning learning materials/environments, students appreciated multimodal materials and the use of Flinga. In addition, the extra materials, tools, and resources shared during the course were valued highly, especially by those planning further studies in translation.

Students also brought up the affective/attitudinal dimension of learning. For example, they mentioned that the relaxed class atmosphere and the conversational tone during open discussions increased their overall engagement. Another frequently mentioned aspect was the interplay between teacher and student emotions and motivation:

> The teacher seemed to be really enthusiastic about the topic which I think always enhances the overall course atmosphere. . . [it] made me more interested in the topics discussed.

The course positively influenced some students' international mindset as well. A few of them reported having made international friends and agreeing to keep in touch even after the course. One student wrote the following:

> It was because of the people I met during this course that I had the courage to apply for an exchange in Japan. If that dream comes true, I'll credit it partly to this course.

The course made some participants think about the importance of speaking many languages, and a few of them noticed becoming more positive towards English as a lingua franca. Some students appreciated the opportunity to practise their English and even other languages, a few acknowledging that the course helped them address their language anxiety. Being allowed to bring in their own language/culture also triggered positive emotions:

> It was a completely new experience for me to use my [student's first language] in an "English class" and talk about my culture or just freely say what I think.

All in all, the course was generally well received. As one student evaluated it:

> All in all, the course was very informative, and it made me want to learn about translation even more. I believe the amount of information taught was good for an introductory course. It gave a good overview about what translation is actually about and how it is done, and the group project also worked very well with the content of the course.

Students, however, also reported less positive learning experiences, mostly related to the course structure (low amount of credits, short duration of the course).[18] Challenges also arose from the size of the project teams and the design of certain learning events. The next section addresses these issues, which are directly related to the pedagogical adjustments already implemented or planned.

Discussion

The pedagogical value of translation

The findings support previous observations about the popularity of translation courses among language students (Sewell, 2004). Translation and mediation, especially in informal situations and/or linked to personal interest, seem to be a natural part of students' everyday life and are largely seen as personally fulfilling, creative activities with a real-world value. Translation is also an attractive or possible career option especially for students who study for a language degree but do not plan to become teachers. Being aware of the competition characterising the translation market, these students commonly feel the need to study further, in professional training programmes, to become a "good"/professional translator. These findings are particularly interesting in light of the current discussion in translation studies on the status of professional "insiders" and nonprofessional "outsiders" (Pérez-González & Susam-Saraeva, 2012). The debate is linked to the shifting views on translation competence and the development of expertise, reflecting the changing landscape of the translation industry (Jääskeläinen et al., 2011) and the growing practice of nonprofessional translation (Pérez-González & Susam-Saraeva, 2012). The findings also point to the issue that only a few translation courses are available at JYU (mainly practical courses on specific language pairs), suggesting that a course that approaches translation more broadly is highly useful for students in various degree programmes oriented towards languages and cultures, especially because translation can serve as a bridge between these two themes (Kemp, 2012).

The results also confirm previous observations that those without formal translation training often have a relatively narrow view of translation competence with a focus on linguistic aspects and cultural background knowledge (Göpferich & Jääskeläinen, 2009; Toury, 2012). However, a single and relatively short course seems to be able to bring about changes in the students' approach: rather than viewing translation as automatic linguistic transfer, they began to see it as a creative and problem-solving endeavour embedded in complex social/cultural/ideological contexts (Baynham & Lee, 2019).

The findings on student learning experiences suggest that the course, by aiming to move beyond an essentialising and power-evasive approach (Ennser-Kananen & Saarinen, 2022), seems to encourage students to consider/do culture from a more critical perspective (Kramsch & Zhu, 2020). It also challenges them to examine ingrained patterns of thought and

18. These issues were addressed in the most recent update of the curriculum. The changes will apply from the 2024–25 academic year.

previously acquired knowledge (such as Hofstede's [1984] framework,[19] which, apparently, may still remain unproblematised). Discussions related to the social, political/ideological, and ethical dimensions of translation seem to effectively promote critical language awareness (Shapiro, 2022) and self-reflection, key aspects of intercultural learning, which are essential in today's crises-laden climate that requires individuals to act responsibly (Latorre, 2024). When discussing culture, however, teachers need to be mindful of their language use and avoid racialising, stereotyping, and othering discourses (Lee, 2015).

Using translation as a resource in culturally responsive/relevant pedagogies (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2014) seems to have multiple benefits, especially when the principles of active, collaborative, and problem-based learning are applied. Making students feel that their diverse (and dynamic) identities are acknowledged and respected (Komisarof & Zhu, 2016; Peskoller, 2022) contributes to transformative intercultural experiences (Fielding et al., 2023). In the translanguaging spaces (Baynham & Lee, 2019; Li, 2018) created, students can examine and negotiate multiple viewpoints and meaning, reflect on themselves, and develop their symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2011). The focus on culture-specific items enables students to zoom in on the microdetails of the translation process and illuminates the complexity of meaning along with the intricate creative and dynamic processes involved in meaning negotiation. However, since some students may be unfamiliar with certain pedagogical approaches/methods and thus experience discomfort, even if they do not explicitly bring this up, there is a need for caution when using teamwork or when expecting students to openly exhibit critical thinking in culturally diverse classrooms (Bali, 2015).

The results also confirm previous findings about the importance of considering multiple aspects of student engagement (Shirley & Hargreaves, 2021) and the relationship between teacher and student attitudes and emotions (Cavanagh, 2016; Keller et al., 2016).

Course development

The basic pedagogical design of the course seems to be effective, but there is certainly room for improvement. In the current update of the curriculum (2024), I have made changes to both the structure and content. Besides revising the course description and learning outcomes, I have raised the number of credits from two to three, added more class sessions, and extended the duration of the course. The aim is not to delve more extensively into translation theory but to enable deeper critical discussions based on topics currently discussed in translation studies and recent real-world cases as well as offer a broader range of tasks with even more opportunities for interaction. I also removed the phrase "culture-specific items" from the name of the course because it may suggest a traditional, limited approach to culture and imply a narrower perspective than what the course actually has.

While the project work was generally well received, a few students did not particularly enjoy it, partly due to their learning preferences and partly linked to various issues within the group, particularly time management. In the future, I will dedicate some time in the regular class sessions to the project work, thus reducing the need for students to arrange meetings beyond the course schedule. Determining the group size and team composition has also

19. Hofstede aimed to understand cultural differences based on six key dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism–collectivism, masculinity–femininity, and time orientation. His theory has been widely criticised not just on the grounds of research methodology but also for its oversimplified, static, and deterministic approach to culture.

posed challenges as these are often dependent on the number of domestic and international students in the actual course. Still, I found it important to set a maximum of four as the group size. Extending the time frame for each group presentation is expected to allow a deeper examination of the topic and more meaningful post-presentation discussions without feeling pressed for time. To address the issue of teamwork being an unfamiliar learning method to some students and to increase the transparency of teamwork, I have introduced the CATME rating tool to help students evaluate themselves and their peers (Ohland et al., 2012).

One specific activity that needs more careful planning is the discussion on dubbing and subtitling. While not designed as a traditional debate, in the second course this activity had a competitive tone. This may have to do with the face-to-face format or the nature of the pre-task, in which students were divided into two groups and collected arguments for one mode and against the other. Anyhow, since debates have social and cognitive risks resulting from the competitive atmosphere (Asterhan & Babichenko, 2015; Asterhan & Schwartz, 2016), I need to change the instructions and ensure that the discussion remains collaborative and constructive with the overall goal of comparing and contrasting ideas, exploring perspectives, and/or reaching a consensus.

Although the course is not a translation course per se, and students are not translating longer passages of text,[20] many students expressed the wish to do more actual written translation. One concrete idea is to translate short texts into English, the shared language, and/or from English into the participants' first languages. In this activity, students could also try out free machine or AI-assisted translation tools (e.g., Google Translate, Bing Microsoft Translator, DeepL, Reverso; see Flanagan & Christensen, 2014), and we could discuss their value and limitations. Such a task could be particularly motivating if participants' own texts are used as source materials (e.g., a poem, a short story, song lyrics, or anything they are willing to share) or when attempting to translate intralinguistic cultural references, such as idioms, proverbs, sayings, collocations, jokes, or puns. A similar idea was piloted by Łoboda and Mastela (2023), where students evaluated and post-edited machine-translated culture-bound texts (Polish legends).

It would also be beneficial to invite a guest – an experienced translator/interpreter with/without professional qualification or a someone from a minority culture in Finland – and have an interactive discussion about their work and their views on expertise/competence, about languages and cultures, and about social/political/ideological issues they encountered.

Finally, although the principle of multimodality is already reflected in the course, I am planning to highlight the semiotic diversity of meaning-making even more (Pennycook, 2016). For example, students could bring thought-provoking pieces of art/music related to their cultures (again, in a broad sense), which could trigger intriguing discussions about the complexity of culture, identity, and (intersemiotic) translation. As Lautenbacher (2024) has pointed out, engaging with images and multimodal texts is an increasingly common aspect of translation today (translating image titles/captions, audiovisual translation, audio description, etc.), but translators need to be aware of the effect of their own personal interpretations of the visual message. In the course, we could try this out by utilising students' own photographs, which, evoking personal emotions and experiences, could provide material for meaningful conversations.

20. Since the participants (and the teacher) do not necessarily speak each other's first languages, assessing longer written translations could be challenging. Regarding live oral translation/mediation activities, even though they would be highly useful, I do not plan to use them as they may cause unnecessary anxiety in some students.

Conclusions

The research presented here offered insights into the pedagogical value of translation. Given its complex cultural, social, ethical, and ideological dimension, I argue that to harness its full pedagogical potential, translation should not be considered only as a practical activity but also as a theoretical topic and a subject for critical discussion. Approached like this, translation deserves a more prominent place in multilingual pedagogies that also incorporate intercultural learning objectives.

Since the research reported here was a small scale, localised study, focusing on a single course, the findings cannot be automatically generalised to other contexts or settings. The research was also limited in several ways. Due to various factors, the data collection methods differed in the two iterations. Moreover, since I conducted the research on my own practice independently, I must acknowledge the potential influence of my personal involvement. To avoid confirmation bias, I tried to remain mindful of my position, perspective, and biases and to actively reflect on the results, while also discussing them with a colleague. Another limitation, inherent in practitioner inquiry, is that the participants were my own students, making transparency and commitment to ethical principles crucial. To minimise social desirability bias, I emphasised that participation in the research was voluntary and reassured the participants that their perspectives would not influence their course assessment in any way. I also underscored the importance of providing balanced and critical feedback with a view to improving the learning experiences of future course participants.

From the viewpoint of my professional development, engaging in pedagogical experimentation and inquiry-based research provided an extremely rewarding experience. The benefits can be identified mostly at the individual level, including increased cultural sensitivity, motivation, and enthusiasm, a higher sense of autonomy, self-efficacy, and agency, and a stronger identity as a teacher–researcher. However, as Edwards (2021) highlighted, the benefits of practitioner research go beyond the level of individual professional development. The course has generated interest among my colleagues and has paved the way for potential future collaborations.

In short, translation appears to be a valuable resource and is well-aligned with the pedagogical approach embraced by Movi. It also seems to be beneficial to integrate translation, as a practical activity and/or a critical discussion topic, into the curriculum of various degree programmes. In addition to language and communication studies (including journalism), translation has relevance for music, art, and culture studies, programmes within the social sciences, education, IT, history and ethnology, sport and health sciences, public administration, and business and economics.[21]

In the future, research could more extensively explore students' views on translation as an activity and future study/career option, students' and faculty members' nonprofessional translation experiences, as well as lecturers' perspectives on translation as a pedagogical resource. Systematic action research could assess the value of integrating translation into pedagogical practices at various levels, even in monocultural classrooms. Finally, design-based studies could focus on creating and evaluating innovative and evidence-based pedagogical solutions, including courses or programmes utilising translation as a pedagogical resource, whether limited to a single field or encompassing multiple fields or disciplines.

21. I have already incorporated the topic of translation in research and publishing in multilingual academia into the content of my doctoral courses (Károly, 2022).

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Author

Adrienn Károly, PhD, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3218-3206

Adrienn Károly is Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Multilingual Communication at the University of Jyväskylä. She teaches English research communication courses for doctoral students and is a member of a team responsible for a pedagogical professional development programme for staff. Her professional and research interests include critical, multilingual, and culturally responsive/sustaining pedagogies and broader issues related to societal impact as well as linguistic and epistemological equity in academia.

Appendices

Appendix A

Key Topics Addressed in the Course

- Translation studies as an independent discipline: main approaches, major turning points
- Types of translation, professional vs. nonprofessional translation
- The concepts of translation and mediation
- Approaches to culture in intercultural communication and translation studies, visible and invisible layers of culture, culture and identity, translators and interpreters as cultural brokers/mediators
- Common (mis)conceptions about translation ability, the relationship between language competence and translation competence, translation competence models; the development of translation competence: novice vs. experienced translators; translation competence and generic competences
- Understandings of culture, approaches in various disciplines including intercultural communication studies and translation studies
- Recent trends in researching audiovisual translation, dubbing & subtitling, cultural norms and individual preferences, practical, ethical, ideological aspects
- The multilayered nature of meaning, including the role of the sociocultural context and personal dimensions, translation and affect
- Culture-specific items: conceptualisations, taxonomies, translation strategies
- Translation as a profession, translation norms, breaking the norms, translators' roles, translation, resistance, and activism
- Choosing the translator, translator identity and (in)visibility, the Amanda Gorman case, exclusion in translation as a profession, translation and authorship, relationships between translators and authors
- The multilingual turn in language education, symbolic competence and the multilingual mindset, the value of translation and mediation in language learning and teaching

Appendix B

Pre-Course Online Survey Questions in the First Course Implementation (Following Demographic Questions)

1. What is your age?
2. What is your current study right at the University of Jyväskylä?

- Degree student (BA level)
- Degree student (MA level)
- Exchange student

3. What are you currently studying (main subject, specialisation, minor)?
4. What is your nationality?
5. What is/are your first language(s)?
6. Have you previously taken any course related to translation?

- Yes (please specify)
- No (please specify)

7. Do you have any real-world, oral or written translation experience outside of your studies?

- Yes (please specify)
- No (please specify)

8. Why did you decide to take this course? What aspects of the course or topics captured your interest?
9. What do you think makes a good translator in general?
10. Are you planning to pursue further studies related to translation in the near future (in the next five years)?

- Definitely not
- Probably not
- Maybe
- Very probable
- Definitely yes

Appendix C

Additional Questions Used in the JYU Official Webropol Course Feedback Survey at the End of the First Course Implementation

1. What topics, activities, and modes of learning did you find interesting, enjoyable, thought-provoking, or useful for your own learning?
2. Is there a topic that you would have liked to discuss but was not covered in the course?
3. Has your thinking about translation as an activity and as a future career option changed in any way during the course? If so, how?

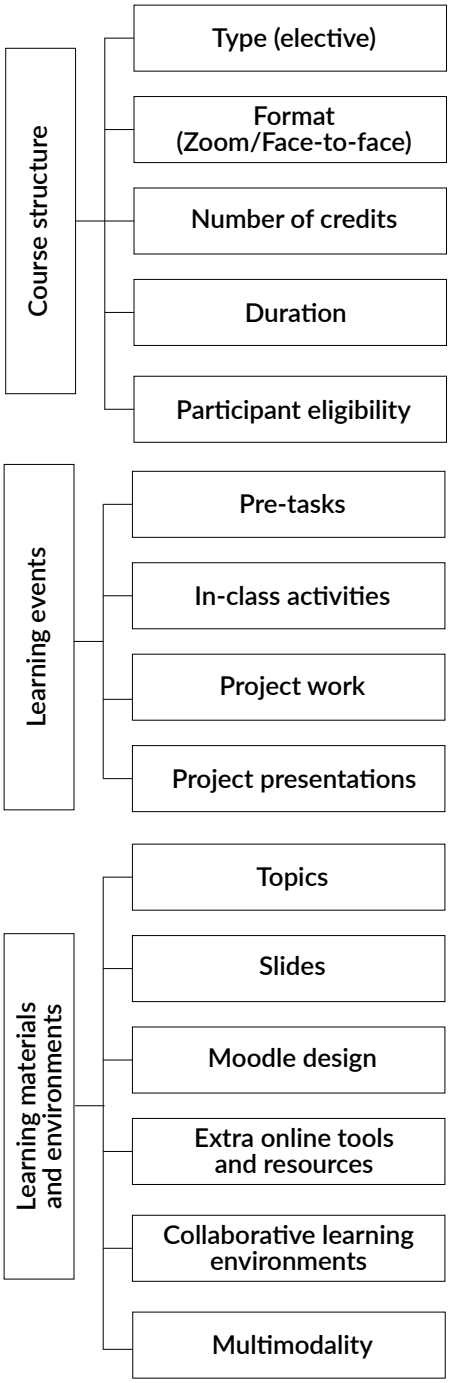
Appendix D

Questions in the Reflective Task Used at the End of the Second Course Implementation

1. What were the most positive aspects of the course? What helped you to learn / what worked particularly well for you?
2. What topics, activities, or modes of learning did you find most interesting, enjoyable, thought-provoking, or useful for your learning?
3. How did the group work go?
4. What aspects of the course did you like the least / what issues did not support your learning?
5. Has your thinking about translation as an activity and a future career option changed in any way during the course? If so, how?
6. Did you have any real-world translation experience before taking this course?

Appendix E

Main Aspects of Student Learning Experiences



PEER FEEDBACK IN TEACHER TEAMS

Teachers' experiences and possibilities for development

Karoliina Ahonen & Jani Ylönen

Co-teaching has become more popular in higher education recently. Such teamwork requires a variety of competences, including an understanding of team dynamics and effective team interaction. Studies show that feedback is integral to teamwork and the professional development of team members. However, while teachers are used to giving feedback to students, they may require support with feedback in teacher teams.

Our study examines how teachers of multilingual communication and language studies describe received peer feedback in their teams: what meanings they attach to it, what its contents are, and what could be developed. The data were collected via an online questionnaire and analysed using thematic analysis. The results indicate that even though teachers are generally satisfied with the feedback they receive, they wish there would be more. Teachers receive positive comments on their joint activities, but this could be complemented with more constructive feedback. Teachers asked for feedback practices to be jointly developed, both within their teams and together with the administration.

The results emphasise the importance of feedback for team interaction, integration of new members into the team, and pedagogical development. As co-teaching becomes more popular, the results of this study offer insight on how to develop team feedback interaction that support it.

Keywords: co-teaching, co-planning, feedback, multilingual pedagogy, professional development, teacher team, team teaching

Yhteisopetuksen suosio on kasvanut korkeakoulutuksessa viime aikoina. Tällainen tiimityö edellyttää monenlaista osaamista, kuten tiimidynamiikan ja tiimin tehokkaan vuorovaikutuksen ymmärtämistä. Tutkimukset osoittavat, että palaute on olennainen osa tiimityötä ja tiimin jäsenten ammatillista kehitystä. Vaikka opettajat ovat tottuneet antamaan palautetta opiskelijoille, he saattavat kuitenkin tarvita tukea palautteeseen opettajatiimeissä.

Tutkimuksessamme tarkastellaan, miten monikielisten viestintä- ja kieliopintojen opettajat kuvaavat tiimeissään saamaansa vertaispalautetta: millaisia merkityksiä he siihen liittävät, mikä on palautteen sisältö ja mitä palautevuorovaikutuksessa voisi kehittää. Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin verkkokyselylomakkeella, ja se analysoitiin temaattisen analyysin avulla. Tulokset osoittavat, että vaikka opettajat ovat yleisesti ottaen tyytyväisiä saamaansa palautteeseen, he toivovat saavansa sitä enemmän. Opettajat

saavat yhteistyössään positiivisia kommentteja, joita voitaisiin täydentää rakentavalla palautteella. Opettajat kaipaavat sekä tiimien että hallinnon kanssa yhteisesti kehitettyjä palautekäytänteitä.

Tuloksissa korostuu palautteen tärkeys tiimin vuorovaikutuksessa ja tiimiin integroitumisessa sekä pedagogisessa kehittämisessä. Tämä tutkimus tarjoaa tärkeää tietoa sellaisen palautevuorovaikutuksen kehittämiseksi, joka tukee yhä suositumpaa yhteisopettajuutta.

Asiasanat: yhteisopetus, yhteissuunnittelu, palaute, monikielinen pedagogiikka, ammatillinen kehitys, opettajatiimi, tiimiopetus

Introduction

Co-teaching and the co-planning of curricula and courses have become common in higher education in recent years (Dang et al., 2022; Fluijt et al., 2016; Voogt et al., 2016). The factors driving this change include the growing number of students, the requirement to offer multidisciplinary courses (Dang et al., 2022), and the diversifying needs of students (Fluijt et al., 2016). Teachers working in multidisciplinary teams need to negotiate their subject-specific perspectives and pedagogical views, which are also shaped by individual preferences, to create a coherent curriculum and instruction alongside a logical learning progression for students. This change from traditionally independent teaching is not without challenges, however. These include the need for additional resources and feelings of vulnerability (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018; Knights et al., 2010). Hence, teachers need specific competences related to cooperation and teamwork more than ever. As previous studies indicate (for a review, see London & Sessa, 2006), feedback is an integral part of teamwork that can help teams develop, critically reflect on their work, and strengthen their identity as a team.

In this article, we focus on the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication (Movi) at the University of Jyväskylä, where the majority of teaching, planning, and curriculum design takes place in teacher teams. Teachers in these teams represent different disciplines, therefore it is an ideal site to explore team members' experiences and views on peer feedback. Team-teaching is particularly common at the undergraduate level, where it is part of Movi's restructured, integrated, multilingual, and discipline-specific language and communication studies (often referred to by the acronym UVK; see the Introduction of this book by Károly et al., 2024). These studies, typically consisting of three to four courses, form a mandatory part of every bachelor's level degree programme, and their curricula are designed and developed in programme-specific teams, in collaboration with the relevant departments. Each team consists of language and communication teachers in Finnish, English, Swedish, and other languages.

This system is intended to be flexible and can be modified to meet the evolving needs of students, working life, and society. Every team plans the curriculum and the studies together but may have different teaching arrangements: in some teams the teachers regularly co-teach in the classroom, while in others the actual classroom teaching is done more independently. Most teachers belong to two or more teams, some to as many as five. The team sizes vary from four to around 20 people. Some teams are more permanent with less turnover, while others experience more constant change. In short, the teams may be very different in terms of composition, which influences their interaction and feedback practices. All teams are divided

into several sub-teams. Each has a three-to-four-person "X team" that coordinates teamwork, and each individual course has its own teaching team. Courses also have responsible teachers that oversee the administrative aspects.

The change in Movi from a more traditional teaching organisation to a UVK team organisation has taken place over the past nine years, with the newest teams starting in 2022. Some teachers have worked in a more independent manner for decades previous to this change, while others have started their careers in these teams. This range of experience, along with the varying educational backgrounds of the teachers working in Movi, provides multiple perspectives teams can use to enrich their planning and teaching, but this variety is also likely to introduce additional considerations. In such a multidisciplinary setting, teachers need to renegotiate their professional identities and competences as they bring their own disciplinary perspectives on communication, regardless of the language they focus on. For example, an English teacher is no longer the only expert on communication on a course since there are communication teachers sharing or challenging their views and vice versa.

Because the teams work in a self-directed manner without rigorous supervision, feedback from administration, such as an immediate supervisor, has a less prominent role. Teachers receive feedback on the content and instruction in individual courses as well as on the logical progression of learning within a UVK path from the students and from the collaborating teachers in different departments. However, this feedback is limited in that it does not include feedback on intra-team issues, such as communication practices. Peer feedback within teacher teams would thus have the potential to help teams develop their teaching and teamwork.

In this study, we focus on peer feedback within teacher teams at Movi. With the help of data collected through an online questionnaire, we explore what kind of peer feedback teachers receive, how they perceive that feedback and how feedback interaction in their teams should be developed. We understand peer feedback in teams as an interactive process. It includes seeking, offering, giving, receiving, and utilising feedback. However, this study focuses on the aspect of receiving feedback for two reasons. Firstly, individuals tend to overrate themselves when they evaluate their own performance (Dunning et al., 2004). Feedback received from others may therefore provide a less biased evaluation of one's performance than self-evaluation does. Additionally, it allows us to examine individual understandings of the notion of feedback, different views on the importance and role of peer feedback, individual preferences as to the content of feedback, as well as internal team feedback practices.

Peer feedback in teacher teams

A significant part of work in different fields and organisations is done in groups or teams. Higher education is no exception, and functions such as teaching and course and curriculum design are increasingly done in teams of two or more (see, e.g., Lock et al., 2016; Voogt et al., 2016). The terms co-teaching and team teaching are often used interchangeably in the literature. Both practices can be defined as two or more instructors teaching a group simultaneously and cooperating on other aspects of the teaching process, such as planning and assessment (Barahona, 2017; Lock et al., 2016). The teacher teams in this study may co-teach in the classroom simultaneously, but most importantly, they co-design the curriculum and the courses. For the purpose of this article, we use the terms co-teaching and co-planning to describe the various activities that teacher teams perform in order to design, implement and assess curricula and courses.

According to Niemelä (2008), satisfying teamwork is related to general satisfaction in working life. Well-functioning teams have more independence and more opportunities to use their expertise than do non-functioning teams. Additionally, the members of well-functioning teams experience their work to be more meaningful, and they have better relationships with their co-workers. Co-teaching, or any kind of teamwork, does not automatically lead to positive results, and working in a poorly functioning team can also be burdening and stressful (Niemelä, 2008). Issues that teacher teams face can vary from practical aspects, such as time constraints, to emotional ones, such as feelings of vulnerability related to teaching expertise, or a feeling of being "forced" to co-teach (Knights et al., 2010).

Voogt et al. (2016) have considered teachers collaboratively designing curriculum as a "specific form of a professional learning community" that can affect both curriculum and the professional development of teachers (p. 123). A well-functioning teacher team working together in curriculum and course design requires, first and foremost, communication competence from all team members. The communicative tasks teacher teams can include tasks that are *coordinative*, such as work distribution and scheduling; *operative*, such as problem-solving and decision-making; *innovative*, such as creating ideas; *relational*, such as social support; and *developmental*, such as assessing and developing the team (see Raappana & Valo, 2015 for the categorisation of communicative tasks in virtual teams). To complete these tasks, especially developmental ones, teams need to reflect on their processes and performance, which can be done through feedback.

There is extensive research about feedback in education, but it mostly focuses on teacher–student feedback (e.g., Evans, 2013; Henderson et al., 2021). The concept of peer feedback in the context of higher education typically refers to student-to-student feedback (e.g., Nelson & Schunn, 2009), and less often to teacher-to-teacher feedback. Research investigating feedback between co-teachers has focused, for example, on feedback on novice teachers' teaching skills (e.g., Eck & Ramsey, 2019; Wennerberg & McGrath, 2022). In their study, Wennerberg and McGrath (2022) found that collegial peer review was received as a mostly positive practice that resulted in less isolation, better understanding of what was going on in the department, strengthened their understanding of themselves and others as teachers, as well as further collaboration between individuals. They also recognised some tensions when giving feedback to a more experienced teacher or if the receiver was not open to feedback.

Teams' overall performance can increase significantly with the help of intra-team feedback (Rasker et al., 2000). In a review of the effects of feedback on teams by Gabelica et al. (2012), feedback was also seen to help teams focus on their processes, adjust their goals, critically reflect on tasks and situations, and introduce new ideas. Furthermore, feedback has the potential to enhance team learning since it can help teams to monitor and regulate themselves. In addition, according to London and Sessa (2006), feedback can promote the development of the group, strengthen its identity, as well as help change roles, responsibilities, and behaviour patterns. On an individual level, feedback has the capacity to increase the sense of commitment to the group and one's personal capability. Therefore, we suggest that in teacher teams with long-term goals related to pedagogical development, feedback that considers issues other than classroom teaching skills, such as teamwork or pedagogical planning, may be relevant.

For feedback to function well in teams, it needs to be supported by certain organisational and team-level conditions. Baker et al. (2013) suggest that organisational feedback practices are slowly changing from task-related feedback to dialogue and a more "feedback-friendly culture". They also propose that such a culture has three prerequisites: first, the management

must recognise and promote the added value of a learning organisation; second, the workplace must be psychologically safe and trustworthy; and finally, dialogue and flexible communication should be the norms across the organisation. In addition to organisational support for feedback, team characteristics also matter. In their study on teacher teams, Dang et al. (2022) found that a supportive and collegial, noncompetitive environment helped teachers cope with contradictions and challenges related to co-teaching. They also observed that teams needed rules on organisation, planning, and communication to enhance team coherence and mutual understanding. Feedback can be an important tool for negotiating challenges, reflecting, and making team rules explicit for all team members. Trust within a team is also an important precondition for successful feedback interaction. For example, Peñarroja et al. (2015) found that information processing and learning improves when team members receive feedback about their actual performance and their processes, but only when team trust is high. Furthermore, Peterson and Behfar (2003) suggested that teams that have not established trust before receiving negative feedback are more likely to experience high relationship conflict and perform poorly.

Feedback interaction in teams is a process consisting of multiple phases and shaped by various factors. Feedback can concern individual team members or the whole team. Feedback received as a group may be scrutinised more than when it is received individually, and it can more often lead to motivation to learn and develop, which can improve the overall group performance as well (London & Sessa, 2006). As mentioned earlier, feedback in teams can include different aspects, such as seeking, giving, receiving, or processing feedback. In fact, many studies do not explicitly refer to the notion of feedback but use such concepts as collaborative professionalism (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018), reflective practice (Bradbury et al., 2010), or team reflection (Fluijt et al., 2016) that can help us understand the phenomenon more thoroughly. For example, team reflection can help teams or team members focus on their performance in order to achieve mutual pedagogical goals through collaborative sensemaking (Fluijt et al., 2016), similarly to feedback.

Feedback can occur in a dialogue (see, e.g., Carless, 2013), when creating a common understanding is important, or it can be offered as a one-way message (see, e.g., Molloy & Boud, 2013). In this study, we define peer feedback in teams as an interactive process between two or more team members, with the goal of sharing information, which can be used to reflect on the actions, behaviours, practices, processes or performance of an individual team member, multiple members, or the whole team. In this study, we focus on the feedback teachers received from each other. As Ashford and Cummings proposed already in 1983, individuals seek feedback in two ways: by monitoring, that is observing the behaviours of others for cues that can be interpreted as feedback, and inquiry, that is directly asking for information from someone. Therefore, in a context where teachers constantly collaborate in teams, it is interesting to find out what exactly is perceived as feedback.

Methods

Data collection and participants

The questionnaire we used in the research (Appendix A) had both qualitative and quantitative questions, with an emphasis on the qualitative. It also included background information (length of career in Movi, subject group, number of teams). We sent the online questionnaire

to all of the teachers in Movi, (approximately 110) via email with a request to participate if the teacher had worked in a UVK team during the past academic year. This narrowed the potential number of participants to about 80. It is difficult to estimate exact numbers since many teachers belong to several teams and there is turnover in both Movi and the teams. The participants had a choice to answer the questionnaire in Finnish or English.

Thirty-two teachers out of the approximate total of 80 responded to the questionnaire, for a response rate of 40%. Twelve participants had worked in Movi for 2 years or less, five had worked there for 3 to 6 years, six for 7 to 10 years, and nine for 11 years or more. The majority of the participants, 19 belonged to one or two UVK teams, 12 belonged to three or four UVK teams and five to four or five UVK teams. Fourteen teachers had English as their subject group ten had written communication, five had Swedish, four had other languages, and three had speech communication, while four participants had two subject groups. The data contained both Finnish and English answers. For the sake of anonymity of the participants and consistency, we translated the Finnish responses used in this article into English.

As we also work in Movi and conducted the research among our colleagues, we had to be aware of our biases and make additional ethical considerations. The online survey allowed the collection of anonymous responses, and we did not collect demographic information which could have risked anonymity. As insider researchers we also benefited from all the background information and our own experiences of these teacher teams.

Analysis

We used the quantitative data collected via the questionnaire to describe the participants' overall experiences of the amount of and satisfaction with the feedback. We analysed the qualitative data using thematic analysis. We chose this method due to its flexibility, which allows the investigation of a wide variety of datasets and does not require following a specific theoretical frame (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Kiger & Varpio, 2020) or preformed questions (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). We used an inductive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and coded the data through a cyclical coding process (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The coding process was repeated several times with intermittent discussions between the researchers. For example, the part of the response in Table 1 was initially coded under the example codes "team size" and "team differences".

Table 1 Example of a code

A sample of a response	Examples of codes
My other team is relatively small so we have a good connection and things work. My other team seems to expand all the time and there the connection disappears from time to time and it's difficult to figure out what are the jointly agreed policies.	Team size Team differences

After comparing, contrasting, and graphically mapping the codes, we arranged them into themes. For example, the codes in Table 1 were categorised under the theme "team characteristics". We analysed the emergent themes using assisting questions, asking, for example, if the data support the theme and do the themes overlap (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). We selected a coherent set of themes to be discussed in this article considering their

prevalence and variety. We defined and described the main themes as the meanings of feedback, the content of feedback, team characteristics and resources, and feedback practices. Finally, we reported, analysed, and discussed the themes in this article.

Results

This section presents selected data gathered via the questionnaire. First, we introduce the main numerical results. Then we discuss the central themes that we formed as a result of our analysis.

All participants indicated that they received at least some feedback from the members of their team (Figure 1). A total of 24 participants reported that they received either some or a moderate amount of feedback and only 8 said they received plenty or a great deal of feedback. None of the participants reported receiving no feedback.

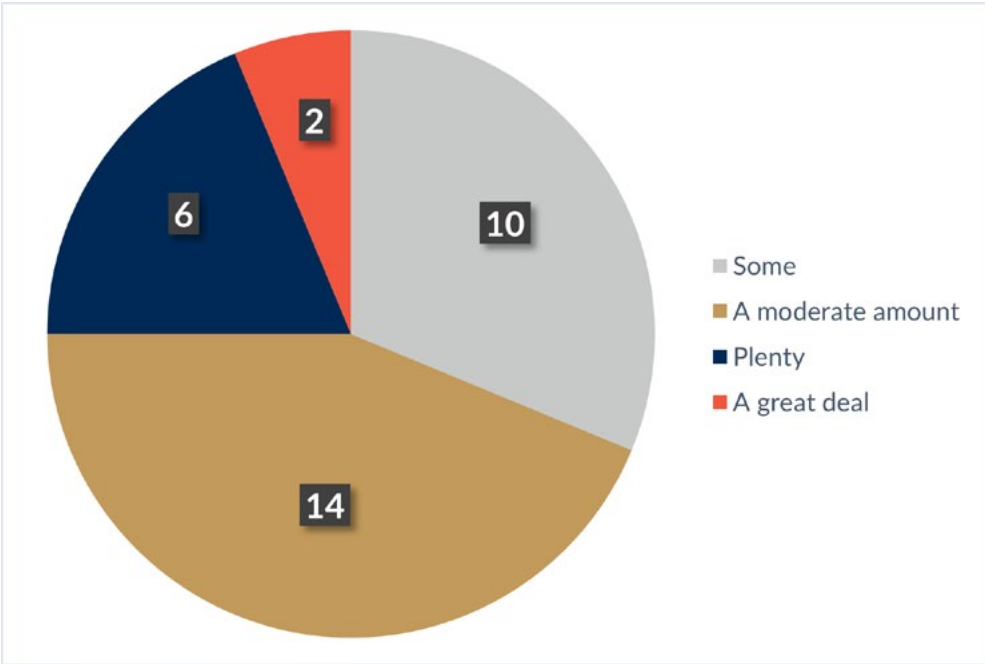


Figure 1 Amount of feedback received from team members, *n* = 32

In response to the question about how satisfied they are with the feedback they receive, 22 participants chose one of the two highest levels of satisfaction (Figure 2). Nine participants indicated they were neither satisfied or dissatisfied, no participant chose the option slightly dissatisfied, and only one answered that they were very dissatisfied.

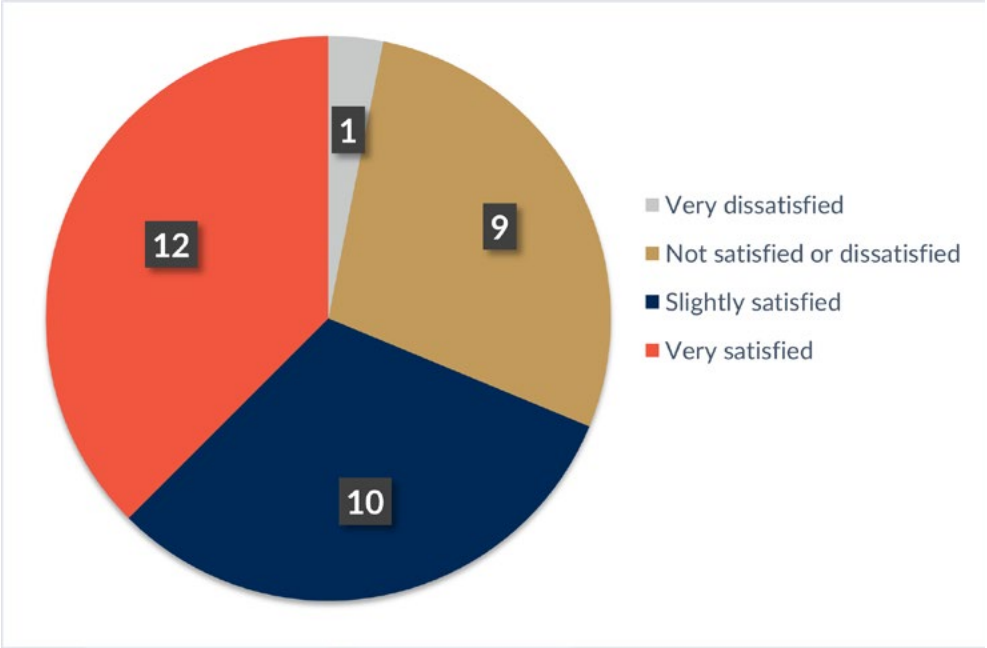


Figure 2 Satisfaction with received feedback from team members, *n* = 32

Regarding who gives feedback in the teams, several groups stood out. However, the most common group was clearly members of one's own subject group, with 25 instances. The next most common sources of feedback were other teachers of the course, with 22 referring to them, and members of other subject groups, mentioned by 16 respondents. It should also be noted that these categories may overlap for some of the teachers.

Meanings and content of feedback

Two interconnected themes in our analysis of the qualitative data were the meanings attached to feedback and its content. We will first discuss the meanings, which include the subthemes feedback as support, encouragement or motivation, and feedback creating the meaningfulness of work.

Most participants expressed satisfaction with the feedback they receive, but answers to the open-ended questions also reflected appreciation of feedback in general. Participants used evaluative words conveying appraisal, such as "nice" and "cool" to describe how they felt about receiving feedback, but also saw it as "important", "relevant", and "motivating". As one participant remarked, "Every feedback develops and motivates." Nevertheless, it was also pointed out that the amount of feedback could be increased by "reminding how important receiving and giving feedback is for working as a teacher and for well-being at work."

However, while participants emphasised the importance of feedback for teamwork and the functioning of the team, with one even claiming it as "one of the best things about working in a team", many also reported that feedback plays a minor role or is often forgotten in their teams. The written answers therefore also reflected the result that the amount of received feedback was relatively low.

Some of the participants also highlighted how feedback can enhance the meaningfulness of work and cooperation within a team. Especially teachers early in their career emphasised that feedback, particularly positive feedback, led to feelings of "belonging and being appreciated." As such, feedback was strongly connected to personal and pedagogical development as well as teacher identities. Positive comments on a pedagogical choice were seen to reinforce professional identity as well as the sense of belonging in the profession. One participant remarked how they had

> also received general, for example, encouraging comments about my own presence in the class if I have been unsure about my own teachership. In close co-operation feedback is constant. Really, I feel that UVK co-teaching has been an apprenticeship in pedagogical thinking :D

While most saw feedback as an opportunity for improvement, a few participants also expressed wariness towards it. Their comments addressed a view that since teaching is closely attached to personality, feedback on teaching might be seen as unwelcome personal criticism. Conversely, some mentioned that feedback or opportunities for feedback can also be seen as important for creating understanding the personal differences and strengths of different team members.

The content of received feedback was described by the majority of the participants as mostly praise or positive feedback. Other themes that appeared in our data were feedback related to teaching, working methods and cooperation, and the desire for more development-oriented feedback. Positive feedback was described as general compliments, thanking a coworker for doing something, or "just a compliment, not really feedback". One participant expressed the importance of praising and thanking coworkers regularly:

> Well, it is of course cool to get positive feedback, and now that I started to think about these things, I've received lots of thanks and praises from my colleagues. I don't recall receiving constructive/critical feedback, except perhaps development ideas for tasks that we plan together. Positive feedback obviously makes me feel good as it makes me feel that I've done something well and maybe helped others.

However, the desire for more substantial development-oriented feedback, such as constructive criticism, was frequent in our data. Such feedback would help the teachers develop their teaching, pedagogical planning, teamwork, and themselves as professionals. As one participant described:

> It is important to say out loud when there is something to praise and things work well. … Maybe the teacher teams could think about what to develop more often and I could also receive concrete feedback about these things. … Now (at least based on my own experience) the feedback I receive is related to successes even if there are areas of development in my own work for sure.

More specifically, the feedback the participants received most was related to pedagogical planning and course administration. They received feedback on tasks, materials, and other pedagogical solutions: "materials created for shared use, Moodle spaces, tasks and instructions, exceptional situations with students (support / help for planning the reaction)".

In teams where classroom co-teaching occurs or the team members follow each other's lessons in other ways, feedback concerning classroom interaction was also offered. For the majority, however, it was not available, which many saw as an impediment to their personal professional development:

> I receive little personal feedback related to my teaching or my way of teaching, so I don't get to develop my teaching. Of course, every meeting, discussion etc. develops it in between the lines. I can't think of concrete situations. It would be nice to receive more feedback from peers and so-called mentors when you're at the beginning of your teaching career.

A few participants had received feedback on working practices and cooperation. However, considerably more felt the need for such feedback and connected this need to development as a team and individually as a team member:

> I would like to receive feedback on my interaction with the students … On the other hand, I'd like to hear how I work as a colleague: What is it like to work with me? How do the members of my team experience my efforts? What good do I bring to our team in their opinion?

Team characteristics and resources

Our examination of the themes of team characteristics and resources also revealed factors that encouraged or inhibited feedback interaction in teams, including team size, trust, and atmosphere. In some teams, feedback already seemed to be an agreed practice, while in others it had a less prominent role. The responses indicate that the characteristics of their teams influenced their feedback interaction. They reported that feedback practices were affected by the team size and that feedback interaction worked better in smaller and stabler teams compared to bigger and constantly changing teams:

> My other team is relatively small so we have a good connection and things work. My other team seems to expand all the time and there the connection disappears from time to time and it's difficult to figure out what are the jointly agreed policies. Sometimes someone might make a decision concerning the whole team by themself, which doesn't work in the long run.

Participants also described how team composition and continuity affected feedback and collaboration:

> I had different experiences in other UVK teams, but it is strongly linked to the actual setup of the team, the length of teacher collaboration (how long has that UVK been running). All UVK teams evolve and develop, and so do team dynamics – which (probably) affects feedback (readiness to give and openness to accept feedback).

Trust and relationships between the team members also influenced feedback practices: "The levels of trust between individuals in my teams is different so I guess I'm more open to feedback from the team members I trust the most." The personalities and competence of team members were also seen as shaping feedback interaction. Several participants remarked that the atmosphere in their teams was open to feedback, which corresponds with our earlier observation that the participants view feedback positively. In particular, positive feedback in the form of compliments and praise was offered freely and spontaneously.

While many expressed a positive attitude towards feedback and commented on the positive atmosphere for feedback in their teams, several participants also explained that the lack of feedback was often felt as a matter of resources. As one participant wrote, "People seem to be in a hurry all the time and there is no time for meaningful and constructive feedback interaction." Another participant expressed a desire for further resources for the purpose of

feedback: "It would be wonderful if we had resources reserved for discussions on pedagogy and working methods more often." Participants were aware of the benefits of feedback for personal and team development, but the feedback had to be balanced with other needs due to the felt lack of resources. As one participant stated, "In principle, I would like to be able to have discussions on developing my own work as well as co-working, but I doubt whether I would have the time or energy with the current resources." Some participants suggested new channels and practices as solutions for increasing the amount of feedback in their teams. They also observed that the lack of resources had an impact not only on the individual level but also on co-planning. As one participant remarked, "Often the actual feedback phase is left out because people are busy and other work is piling up."

Feedback practices

One theme that appeared in our data extensively was feedback practices and channels. Several participants wished the teams could discuss feedback practices more openly and that it would become a more integral and natural part of their cooperation:

> Teams are certainly different. … Feedback works well when it's a natural part of discussion and co-planning but when an idea for feedback arises in another context, it's harder to separately communicate that this has been bothering me. Maybe that's why close cooperation is good because there are so many opportunities to bring something up.

Feedback practices were also often mentioned when discussing the joint activities of a team. For example, a participant thought there was "an openness towards sharing and complimenting in teams, which is nice". However, the same participant also remarked that "nevertheless, there could be more channels and ways of giving feedback, and I myself should remember to both ask for feedback and praise others."

Several participants indicated that joint planning is a common part of work. As a participant stated, "We plan teaching content mostly together, whether in subject groups or UVK teams, [and] feedback is given mainly during that joint activity." However, feedback for teaching mostly happens in teams where teachers operate in the same classroom. Otherwise, some participants expressed a hope for more concrete structures for feedback, such as a more scheduled approach:

> Maybe include a reminder at intervals in the academic year or life of a course to solicit/provide feedback. Perhaps write a protocol for asking and offering feedback, the same principle as for asking for lesson observation. Define the scope of what you think feedback is. Is a smile feedback? An annual performance evaluation? Avoid bureaucratizing it. Make time for informal feedback from students before the course end.

Aside from planning the feedback in their teams, several participants also suggested that feedback practices could be more generally agreed on:

> We haven't formalized or agreed on any feedback for one another in my UVKs so I can't complain about not receiving it. I do get feedback the odd time about pragmatic things but I don't think we really give much or any pedagogical feedback to one another. So while I'm not dissatisfied, I think we could organise something more substantive in the future and that would be welcome.

In addition, many wished for more channels, even anonymous ones, to encourage giving feedback:

> There could be more clearly marked practices and channels for [feedback]. The culture of complementing could be developed and facilitated, for example, have sessions for praising or build Flingas for anonymous compliments. In addition, ways and principles for development-oriented feedback could be developed in a manner where problems could be discussed in pairs or small groups in a good spirit.

Even though our study focused mainly on experiences of received feedback, feedback was seen as an interactive process. Several participants also reflected on other aspects of feedback besides what they had received. For example, one participant wrote that "[feedback] is interaction so I also give feedback to others." Some participants wondered whether they or others have enough courage to give constructive feedback to each other regarding, for example, teamwork skills:

> I do wonder whether people have the courage to give enough constructive feedback, but maybe it is part of the development ideas when we co-plan a course or a task. Maybe no one dares to tell me directly that could you be quieter in meetings or point out my insufficient group work skills. :D

Some also mentioned that they felt they needed encouragement to give feedback to others: "If more encouragement or channels were offered, maybe?" Some participants also wrote about everyone's own responsibility, not only in giving more feedback, but also in seeking it. As a participant observed, "I could remember to ask for feedback myself and also praise others." A few participants commented that their satisfaction with feedback was connected to the fact that they ask for feedback when they need it, even if they might not otherwise receive much. This sense of personal responsibility was also raised as a few teachers suggested that teachers should seek feedback more. On the other hand, as one participant remarked, there could be more support and channels for seeking feedback that might change the current situation: "Referring to feedback on teaching approaches and strategies, I suggest that teachers be encouraged to ask for feedback if they want it."

Most typically, participants mentioned they received feedback especially from their co-teaching partners:

> I receive feedback especially from the teachers I directly teach together with (i.e., co-taught lessons). This feedback has usually been related to smooth cooperation. E.g., coordinating and planning, creating the atmosphere in the classroom and encountering students and the fluency of co-taught lessons in general.

Co-teaching in a classroom is seen as a natural environment for feedback discussions that can help teachers develop classroom interaction. Several participants mentioned that they would like more co-teaching or more cooperation between teachers teaching the same groups:

> I am not sure, but maybe observations could be a way for teachers to better get to know each other as teachers (if they are not co-teaching already?) and automatically get some feedback? Whenever I went to observe a colleague last autumn it always ended up in a combined feedback / professional development moment, in which I shared my thoughts on the lesson and how it went, and at the same time got ideas for my own lessons or a better understanding

> on the content of the lesson. Sometimes you need to see things in practice to be able to understand them and give constructive feedback.

Some reported their teams had given up co-teaching in the classroom entirely and felt they could not get the feedback they needed regarding classroom interaction: "I'd like to receive feedback on teaching and, e.g., classroom interaction but I can't get that because co-teaching has been left out entirely."

Overall, these results were mostly similar to each other in terms of the positive attitudes towards feedback, the content of the feedback and areas for development. The differences between teams were visible in how the team characteristics and practices varied, which created a range of conditions for feedback interaction.

Discussion

Our results support earlier studies on peer feedback in teams: Feedback is mostly viewed positively (e.g., Baker et al., 2013), and its importance to both personal and team development has been recognised (e.g., Gabelica et al., 2012). Despite the perceived importance of feedback, these attitudes were not always reflected in the everyday practices of individuals or teams.

From positive comments to development-oriented feedback

Overall, the results showed that while the teachers' satisfaction concerning the feedback they received was considerable, they also desired more of it. Furthermore, they indicated clear possibilities for improvement. This discrepancy may be partially explained by what previous studies have illustrated, and which was also reflected in our results, that praise and compliments are appreciated but may not be as effective for development as other types of feedback are (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). However, the findings also demonstrated that the praise was often connected, for example, to task performance, effort, and engagement, which, according to Hattie and Timperley (2007), are connected to more significant benefits in achievement than praise about one's self. As they further proposed, such feedback can help increase self-efficacy, which was supported by our results where positive comments were connected to motivation and increased the perceived sense of purpose. This is consistent with an earlier finding by London and Sessa (2006) that positive feedback is often received more openly and with more faith in it. Nevertheless, while more positive feedback and channels should be encouraged, also ways of giving more constructive feedback could be explored.

Feedback is especially important for new members of a team or people new to a profession (Molloy & Boud, 2013). Our results agreed with previous research that feedback is important for integrating newcomers to a team (London & Sessa, 2006), especially new teachers desire feedback (Eck & Ramsay, 2019), and they understand the benefits of co-teaching for personal development as teachers (Lock et al., 2016). Creating an equal co-teaching relationship between novice teachers and teachers with more experience might also be challenging and requires time and mutual effort (Lock et al., 2016). Teams should thus ensure that new teachers also have the opportunity to form these co-teaching relationships and participate in feedback discussions equally.

It may also be beneficial to have a discussion in teams about the meanings of feedback, which can then lead to developing new feedback practices. Several participants raised the question of what is meant by feedback, which is partly connected to our choice not to influence the participants too much by providing definitions of feedback that might restrict their thinking.

More importantly, the participants' differing conceptions of feedback also highlight the need to discuss the issue in teams to create a common understanding.

Based on previous studies (e.g., Eck & Ramsay, 2019), it was not surprising that much of the feedback was positive, whether simple compliments or more constructive feedback. However, while much of the studies discussing positive peer feedback between teachers concentrates on classroom interaction, most of the participants considered cases of such feedback outside of the classroom. Taking into account that actual co-teaching together in a classroom is not a common practice according to the responses and, even then, it is done mostly in pairs, most of the feedback teachers receive is likely connected to the core task of teams, namely, planning the courses and their materials. This planning, which is done either by the whole UVK team or smaller, often subject-specific teams, enables constant discussion as the results indicated. However, some participants found it difficult distinguishing "feedback" from "pedagogical discussion" in such situations. This might explain why the teachers felt they receive a moderate amount of feedback but are very satisfied with what they do get: the participants gained satisfactory insight into core areas of their work without actively seeing it as feedback.

Awareness of a group's developmental stage is also important regarding feedback (London & Sessa, 2006). The teams in our study have formed at different times and have been at different stages even during this study and, as such, their needs for feedback might have differed. Newly formed UVK teams may need a different focus for feedback than do those which have already been running for a longer time. For example, in the beginning stages, feedback could help teams become motivated while in the latter stages it could be more task oriented or reflective (London & Sessa, 2006).

Team characteristics and other conditions to consider

Our results suggested that team characteristics such as trust, team size, and stability shape feedback interaction in teams. Feedback seems to work better in smaller teams that have been working with the same members for a longer time, which may be partially explained by trust. Moreover, other studies have recognised that trust plays an important role in team feedback interaction (Baker et al., 2013; Peñarroja et al., 2015; Peterson & Behfar, 2003). Some researchers (e.g., Costa et al., 2009) have found that trust in teams develops more naturally from prior social capital, that is, the familiarity among team members through previous experiences. This might also explain why participants reported that they received the most feedback from other teachers within their own subject group. As teachers have been involved in co-planning with members of this group even prior to the UVK teams and operate with them in other tasks outside of their UVK teams, this might result in increased familiarity and trust. Trusting the person giving the feedback seems to increase the perceived accuracy of feedback (London & Sessa, 2006). This was confirmed by our finding that teachers were more open to feedback from those colleagues they trusted the most. This suggests teams and subject groups should consider how to increase feedback beyond group borders.

On the other hand, the stability of a team and the opportunity to create mutual experiences in the future might also be important factors in building trust within a team. Poppo et al. (2008) found that the expectation of continuity is an important factor of trust but that the history of a team has a lesser impact. There is much turnover in many of the teams in our study and

the expectation of continuity may be low, at least for some teachers. Stabler teams may then have higher expectations of continuity, and thus have more trust, which then benefits their feedback interaction. Or as Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018, p. 132) stated: "Teachers cannot collaborate with each other if they are making new acquaintances every year. When there is a culture of high turnover, teachers behave as self-centred individuals who have to sink or swim by themselves." Though in an environment like Movi turnover is inevitable, creating a smaller and stabler team structure is an important administrative challenge. However, responsibility also belongs to the teams themselves, whose acknowledgement of the importance of trust could make them pay more attention to the phenomenon and its effects on feedback.

Our finding that there are not enough resources for feedback discussions in teams should also be addressed by both administration and the teams themselves. Administration should be aware that feedback is an essential part of teamwork that requires time and perhaps also organisational structures. Several studies (Dang et al., 2022; Lock et al., 2016; Voogt et al., 2016) indicate that co-teaching requires institutional support that has an important part in creating a suitable culture for the work. A "feedback-friendly culture" has the potential to improve performance, innovation, and growth across the organisation (Baker et al., 2013). On the team level, teams should consider their own perceptions of feedback in relation to resources. Questions to consider include whether feedback should be a continuous part of the team's work or the topic of annual meetings. Our results suggest that teachers want feedback to be a more "natural" or continuous part of their teamwork. Teams that monitor their process regularly perform better than teams that only evaluate their performance after completing a task (Rasker et al., 2000). Then again, as Baker et al. (2013, p. 261) argued, "Quality feedback requires quality time." If feedback is seen as merely another task by teams, as Baker et al. (2013) claimed happens too often and is supported by our results, time should be allocated not only to changing this perception but to providing quality feedback. Teams should therefore have sufficient resources for feedback but there is no need for a considerable increase if they include feedback as a part of their other processes and tasks such as curriculum, course and lesson planning or co-teaching.

Our results show that while the relatively new UVK structure encourages co-teaching, the greater experience in teaching individually in the classroom may produce a sense of vulnerability and reduce the desire to co-teach. If one is used to working alone, there is an added sense of vulnerability in co-teaching (Knights et al., 2010). Yet, as Lock et al. (2016) point out, if co-teaching is done well, co-teaching and constructive feedback are, in fact, inseparable. They also suggest that the co-teaching relationship should be based on trust, and this requires an open mind and willingness to develop. This seemed to be the case for the teachers in this study, too, and when they reported to have developed trust with their co-teaching partners, peer feedback within the classroom seemed natural and constructive to them.

However, based on our results, there is a perception among teachers that there are not enough resources for classroom co-teaching or that the resources have been allocated to different matters. Knights et al. (2010) also highlighted how one of the possible problems of co-teaching is time constraints, which was also seen in the findings that stressed the lack of time for feedback interaction in teams. As co-teaching involves teachers from different subject groups working together in the classroom, its expanded use could also increase the amount of feedback teachers receive from members of other subject groups. There are further potential benefits as well, such as learning from other teachers (see Dang et al., 2022; Wennerberg & McGrath, 2022). This is something the Movi teams could consider: What is lost if they

give up co-teaching entirely? In which ways could co-teaching help them develop? Could observing other people's teaching also be increased outside of co-teaching?

Creating opportunities for feedback interaction

In most teams, feedback seemed to be a "natural" or inherent part of pedagogical co-planning. However, more open discussions on agreed feedback practices and channels were desired to enhance constructive feedback and feedback on, for example, co-working practices. Dang et al. (2022) argued that many contradictions in teacher teams, such as a lack of team coherence and role ambiguity, can in fact be managed by establishing rules for organisation, planning, and communication. Furthermore, if feedback mechanisms are not well designed, they may not be taken seriously (Clausen et al., 2008). It is important to jointly agree on feedback practices by establishing rules for communication. When these are clear for all team members, the threshold for giving and seeking feedback is also lowered.

Our results indicate that everyone may not have enough courage or motivation to give or seek feedback. As previous research synthesised by Ashford et al. (2003) suggests, seeking information that helps meet goals and regulate behaviour is typical in contexts of high uncertainty, novelty, and change, which are often present in our study's context as well. On the other hand, some teachers in our study emphasised individual responsibility and freedom of choice in seeking feedback. This is understandable since feedback often has an emotional charge because it may include information about oneself, and thus has the potential to hurt one's ego or image, which can motivate an individual to avoid or disregard feedback (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Ashford et al., 2003). Based on our findings and existing research, we suggest that teachers should consider their own motivations for seeking feedback: why do I need feedback or why do I feel I do not need it? It would also be beneficial for the teacher teams to understand the emotional dimension of feedback and practice sensitivity when giving feedback to their teammates. Trust, clear practices, and rules for feedback interaction in teams could also decrease the fear of losing face when seeking feedback.

Limitations and future directions

Our study has some limitations, but these also offer opportunities for further research. As we only focused on the feedback teachers received it would be beneficial to study the feedback process in a more comprehensive manner by, for example, examining feedback as a dialogue or studying feedback from different sources. A change of focus could produce important information on feedback in teacher teams.

Another limitation of our study is the response scale in our questionnaire for the question about the amount of feedback received. The scale was ambiguous because people have different understandings of what is seen as "plenty" or "some", and what is actually counted as feedback. Though this can be seen as a limitation, the scale also allowed the participants to answer on the basis of their understanding of what feedback actually is, and in the open questions they had a chance to elaborate on that understanding. Furthermore, we did not ask the participants about the regularity or continuity of feedback, which could have given us a more thorough understanding of the matter.

We also recognise that our own position within the organisation has affected the study: Our experiences in teams have in part guided us, from choosing the topic to reporting the results.

Even though the questionnaire was anonymous, our position as colleagues may have affected how the participants answered. Our subjectivity, however, is a resource that both assisted the analysis as well as helped us identify the relevant information for this context (see, e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2023). This study has indicated important areas for development in our organisation. Though the results should be verified in the future by similar research into different teaching organisations and their teams, the context of Movi and feedback also merits further study.

A multilingual approach to the teaching of languages and communication warrants more research in general. The teacher teams that design the curriculum and the courses are an important actor in these studies and should be studied further. The functioning of these diverse, multilingual, multicultural, and multidisciplinary teams affects the quality of teaching and learning results. Our study examined one part of team communication that can promote team and pedagogical development: peer feedback. By examining a topic that has not been widely researched before in this context, we have obtained important insight into peer feedback in teacher teams.

This research into non-hierarchical teams also opens paths for future studies outside of teaching. Movi currently offers a unique context, especially in the Finnish university system, but its organisation into teacher teams may be adopted in the future by different higher education institutions. Moreover, the team structure offers insight into teamwork in general, insight which can further understanding within other contexts, too, such as the heavily team-oriented IT field or similarly developing areas. Although the results of this study may be specific to a certain context, they offer insight that may be used directly or as inspiration for further studies into team communication.

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Authors

Karoliina Ahonen, MA, University Teacher, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0763-7093

Karoliina Ahonen is a university teacher of speech communication, involved in developing, teaching, and coordinating multilingual communication and language studies, and work life communication courses. Her research interests include interaction in multidisciplinary teacher teams and teacher identity.

Jani Ylönen, MA, University Teacher, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7714-5422

Jani Ylönen is a university teacher teaching academic language and communication courses in English as well as an equity course in Finnish. His research interests include feedback as well as questions of ethics, class, and gender in literature.

Appendix A: Questionnaire about peer feedback in UVK teams

Questionnaire about peer feedback in UVK teams

The purpose of this questionnaire is to examine the experiences teachers in UVK teams have on receiving peer feedback. The data will be used to develop UVK work as well as in an article in the Movi ebook. You can participate if you have been a member of at least one UVK team during the previous academic year (2021-22).

Answering the questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes.

Privacy notice

1. How long have you taught at Movi?

- ○ 0-2 years
- ○ 3-6 years
- ○ 7-10 years
- ○ 11 years or more

2. How many UVK teams have you been part of during the previous academic year?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5
- ○ 6
- ○ 7 or more

3. Which subject groups do you belong in? (You can choose more than one)

- ☐ English
- ☐ Written Communication
- ☐ Speech Communication
- ☐ Swedish
- ☐ Finnish as a Second Language
- ☐ Other Foreign Languages

4. How much feedback do you receive from the members of your UVK teams?

- ◯ None
- ◯ Some
- ◯ A moderate amount
- ◯ Plenty
- ◯ A great deal

5. Who gives you feedback for UVK work in your teams?

- ☐ Members of your own subject group
- ☐ Members of another subject group
- ☐ Responsible teachers
- ☐ Other teachers of the course
- ☐ Other teachers from your UVK team
- ☐ X team
- ☐ Someone else, who? [ ]

6. What does the feedback you receive from your UVK team members concern?

[ ]

7. How satisfied are you with the feedback you receive?

- ◯ Very dissatisfied
- ◯ Slightly dissatisfied
- ◯ Not satisfied or dissatisfied
- ◯ Slightly satisfied
- ◯ Very satisfied

8. Explain your choice for question 7 briefly

[ ]

9. What would you like to receive feedback on from the members of your UVK teams?

10. What would you not like to receive feedback on from them?

11. How could feedback be developed in your UVK teams?

12. Something else you would like to say concerning the topic (for example, do your experiences differ depending on the team?)

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A COURSE IN COMMUNICATION CONFIDENCE

A qualitative study

Maija Gerlander & Anne Alanne

A university pedagogy that emphasises students' agency and collaborative learning highlights the importance of active participation and interaction, including oral assessment. Students high in oral communication apprehension (OCA) can find these interaction-focused approaches as increasing harmful stress, leading them to avoid studies. Additionally, the inclusion of communication skills in the competency requirements for a wide range of professional fields may have increased stress for communication-anxious students. The aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of the course Gaining Confidence for Public Speaking, designed for students who assess their OCA as harming their studies. The research examined the qualitative changes in students' communication confidence and the factors that supported learning during the course, based on students' own descriptions. In addition, the study aims to generate insights and knowledge for the pedagogical development of the course, and to create a design for assessing its effectiveness. The research data consist of 38 reflective essays that university students wrote at the end of the courses held between 2018 and 2021 at the University of Jyväskylä. The study employed a qualitative approach using theory-guided content analysis conducted with ATLAS.ti 22 data analysis software. The key changes in communication confidence related to (a) orientational elements, such as increased acceptance of anxiety, loosening of the criteria for public speaking and reinforced communication orientation towards the audience, (b) improved oral communication self-efficacy, (c) more appropriate preparation skills, and (d) less avoidance of courses involving oral presentations, along with increased participation in communication situations. The main factors identified as supporting learning encompassed the peer group, video reflection, and research- and experience-based knowledge about anxiety. The findings support the need for courses on developing communication confidence for students high in OCA, as well the need to design pedagogical approaches for adopting in these courses.

Keywords: communication confidence, public speaking anxiety, social anxiety, oral communication apprehension, communication competence, oral communication self-efficacy, university students

Opiskelijakeskeisyyteen perustuvassa yliopistopedagogiikassa suositaan opiskelijoiden aktiiviseen osallistumiseen ja vuorovaikutukseen perustuvien oppimismenetelmien käyttöä. Lisäksi arviointitavat ovat vuorovaikutuksellistuneet. Oppimista arvioidaan kirjallisten tenttien tai tehtävien ohella suullisissa tenteissä, keskusteluissa tai näytöissä. Myös korkeakoulutettujen asiantuntijoiden osaamisvaatimuksissa vuorovaikutus- ja yhteistyötaitojen merkitys on nostettu keskeiseksi. Esiintymistä ja sosiaalisia tilanteita jännittäville opiskelijoille suullisen viestinnän yleistyminen opetuksessa, oppimisessa ja osaamisvaatimuksissa voi lisätä haitallista stressiä, ja johtaa jopa tiettyjen opintojaksojen välttelyyn ja opintojen viivästymiseen. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on selvittää esiintymistä jännittäville opiskelijoille suunnatun Esiintymisvarmuuden kehittäminen -opintojakson vaikuttavuutta. Tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan opiskelijoiden kuvaamia laadullisia muutoksia viestintävarmuudessaan ja oppimista edistäneitä tekijöitä. Lisäksi tutkimuksen tavoitteena on tuottaa näkemystä ja tietoa esiintymisvarmuuden kehittäminen -opintojakson pedagogiseen kehittämiseen sekä tuottaa menetelmiä opintojakson vaikuttavuuden arviointiin. Tutkimusaineisto koostuu opiskelijoiden kirjoittamista yhteensä 38 reflektiivisestä esseestä. Aineisto koottiin yhdeksällä Esiintymisvarmuuden kehittäminen -opintojaksolla, jotka järjestettiin Jyväskylän yliopistossa vuosien 2018–2021 aikana. Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytettiin kvalitatiivista, teoriaohjaavaa sisällönanalyysia. Aineiston analysoinnissa hyödynnettiin ATLAS.ti 22-ohjelmistoa. Keskeisiksi viestintävarmuuden muutoksiksi kuvattiin (a) orientoitumisen muutos, kuten hyväksyvämpi suhtautuminen jännittämiseen, esiintymisen kriteereiden väljentyminen ja vahvempi vuorovaikutusorientaatio suhteessa yleisöön, (b) vahvistunut viestinnällinen minäpystyvyys, (c) tarkoituksenmukaisemmat valmistautumistaidot ja (d) esiintymistä sisältävien kurssien välttelyn väheneminen ja aktiivisempi osallistuminen viestintätilanteissa. Oppimista tukevista tekijöistä korostuivat vertaisryhmä, videon hyödyntäminen reflektoinnissa sekä tutkimus- ja kokemuspohjainen tieto jännittämisestä. Tutkimuksen tulokset tukevat viestintävarmuutta kehittävien opintojaksojen tarpeellisuutta ja merkityksellisyyttä vahvasti esiintymistä jännittäville opiskelijoille. Lisäksi tutkimus korostaa kokonaisvaltaisemman lähestymistavan tarpeellisuutta tutkittaessa viestintävarmuutta kehittävien opintojaksojen ja pedagogisten ratkaisujen vaikuttavuutta.

Asiasanat: viestintävarmuus, esiintymisjännitys, sosiaalinen jännittäminen, viestintäarkuus, vuorovaikutusosaaminen, viestintäpystyvyys, yliopisto-opiskelijat

En la pedagogía universitaria basada en el enfoque centrado en el estudiante, se favorece el uso de métodos de aprendizaje que se basen en la participación activa y en la interacción de los estudiantes. Además, hoy en día los métodos de evaluación han evolucionado hasta favorecer metodologías más interactivas. Junto con las evaluaciones escritas en exámenes o tareas, se evalúa el aprendizaje a través de exámenes orales, discusiones o presentaciones. La importancia de las habilidades de interacción y colaboración también se enfatizan en los requisitos de competencia de los expertos educados en instituciones de educación superior. Para los estudiantes que experimentan ansiedad en situaciones de interacción social y de presentación, el aumento de la comunicación oral en la enseñanza, el proceso de aprendizaje y los requisitos de competencia puede aumentar un estrés perjudicial y llevar al estudiante a evitar ciertos cursos y ocasionar retrasos en los estudios. El objetivo de esta investigación es analizar la efectividad del curso titulado "Desarrollo

de la confianza en las presentaciones" dirigido a estudiantes que experimentan ansiedad cuando tienen que hacer una presentación. La investigación examina los cambios cualitativos en la confianza en la comunicación descritos por los estudiantes y los factores que promovieron el aprendizaje. Además, la investigación tiene como objetivo proporcionar perspectivas y conocimientos para el desarrollo pedagógico del curso y desarrollar métodos para evaluar su efectividad. Los datos de la investigación consisten en 38 aprehensión a la comunicaciónen nueve cursos de "Desarrollo de la confianza en las presentaciones" llevados a cabo en la Universidad de Jyväskylä entre los años 2018 y 2021. El método de investigación utilizado fue un análisis cualitativo de contenido guiado teóricamente. Se utilizó el software ATLAS.ti 22 para el análisis de datos. Los cambios clave en la confianza en la comunicación se describieron como (a) un cambio en la orientación, como una actitud más de aceptación de la ansiedad, una ampliación de los criterios de presentación y una orientación más fuerte hacia la interacción con la audiencia; (b) un aumento en la autoeficacia comunicativa; (c) habilidades de preparación más adecuadas; y (d) una disminución en el hecho de evitar de cursos que incluyen presentaciones y una participación más activa en situaciones de comunicación. Los factores que respaldan el aprendizaje incluyen el grupo de compañeros, el uso de videos en la reflexión, y el conocimiento basado en la investigación y la experiencia sobre la ansiedad. Los resultados de la investigación respaldan la necesidad y relevancia de cursos que desarrollen la confianza en la comunicación para estudiantes que experimentan ansiedad en presentaciones. Además, la investigación destaca la necesidad de un enfoque más integral al examinar la efectividad de estos cursos y soluciones pedagógicas.

Palabras clave: confianza en la comunicación, ansiedad de hablar en público, ansiedad social, aprehensión a la comunicación, competencia comunicativa, autoeficacia para la comunicación oral, estudiantes de universidad

Introduction

Activities and assignments that require interaction with others are an essential part of higher education studies (Almonkari, 2007; Broeckelman-Post & Pyle, 2017; Broeckelman-Post et al., 2023; LeFebvre & al., 2020; Pörhölä et al., 2019). In addition, individual or group presentations, debates, or discussions have become common forms of assessment in higher education (Grieve et al., 2021; Nash et al., 2016). In the Finnish context, the requirements for a bachelor's degree include compulsory communication and language studies leading to adequate communication and language skills in Finnish, Swedish, and English. At the University of Jyväskylä, these studies are offered by the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication (Movi) and typically include courses focusing on academic literacies, multilingual interaction, and research communication, with intercultural communication being an overarching theme in all courses (see the Introduction of this book by Károly et al., 2024).

Communication competence is widely acknowledged as crucial in achieving success academically and professionally (e.g., Bourke et al., 2021; Riemer, 2007). In descriptions of 21st-century skills[1], communication and collaboration, alongside creativity and critical thinking, are viewed as key soft competencies or skills needed in the future (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). Employers also emphasise the importance of strong individual and group communication skills in new graduates (Broeckelman-Post & Pyle, 2017; Byrne et al., 2012; Grieve et al., 2021; Horila, 2020). In addition, developing students' communication skills is given the highest priority in higher education (OECD, 2019; Hannover Research, 2012; Riemer, 2007) and they have been reported to be highly valued by employers (Clokie & Fourie, 2016).

In the university context, constructivist pedagogical approaches underscore the significance of communication and interaction in learning situations (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Nevgi & Lindholm-Ylänne, 2009). Through oral communication activities, students can construct disciplinary knowledge and engage in critical thinking (Baker & Heron, 2023; Broeckelman-Post et al., 2023). While modern learning theories emphasise active participation in the co-construction of knowledge as well as dialogue, there is a need for rigorous inspection and critique of accomplishing learning outcomes (e.g., Parpala & Lindholm-Ylänne, 2007; Pörhölä et al., 2019). Notably, for students with high communication apprehension, interaction-focused approaches (e.g., student-centred and learning-oriented practices) may increase distress and social anxiety (Almonkari, 2007; Almonkari & Kunttu, 2012; LeFebvre et al., 2020), potentially affecting academic performance (Cavanagh et al., 2019). Public speaking anxiety (PSA) and communication apprehension (CA) experienced during studies can deter students from taking courses that include group discussions and oral presentations, resulting in delays, lower grades, or even dropping out of their studies (Almonkari & Kunttu, 2012; Broeckelman-Post & Pyle, 2017).

Introductory communication and public speaking courses have been shown to decrease PSA and oral communication apprehension (OCA) (Broeckelman-Post & Pyle, 2017;

1. In their article, Thornhill-Miller et al (2023) use the terms "competences" and "skills" interchangeably. They point out that there has been a long-standing ambiguity and confusion between these terms based on the way they have been used in different domains and disciplines. Competence is often conceived as a broader concept comprising skills, knowledge, abilities, and attitudes whereas a skill is usually perceived as a narrower, more goal-oriented behaviour (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009; Rychen & Hersch, 2003).

Gallego, 2022; LeFebvre et al., 2020; Okoro & Cardon, 2024). In addition, there is evidence that various pedagogical methods (e.g., cognitive modification, habituation, performance feedback, systematic desensitisation, communication orientation modification, skills training) successfully lower PSA (Broeckelman-Post & Pyle, 2017).

The effectiveness of certain pedagogical methods in lowering PSA is typically evaluated by measuring the change in students' CA levels during the course (Broeckelman-Post & Pyle, 2017; Hunter et al., 2014). Previous studies mainly employed quantitative, standard measures, such as PRCA-24 and PRCA-PS[2] (see Daly et al., 2009; Gallego, 2021; McCroskey et al., 1985), to assess students' self-reported levels of CA or PSA. However, when measuring effectiveness, research has rarely considered qualitative factors, such as students' experiences, including their understanding of CA or their perceptions of the impact of the communication courses. The need for enriching and deepening research through qualitative approaches has been recognised in recent years (e.g., Byrne et al., 2012; Hunter et al., 2014; Niinivaara & Herkama, 2021).

Our study utilised a qualitative approach to evaluate the effectiveness of the course Gaining Confidence for Public Speaking.[3] Through reflective essays written by the students at the end of the course, we explored the qualitative changes in students' perceptions concerning their communication apprehension, their self-assessed communication competence, and their confidence in their own ability to communicate, particularly in the context they experience as public speaking (see Fushino, 2010; Topham et al., 2016). Additionally, we examined pedagogical factors and practices that the students described as supporting and enhancing their learning in the course. Thus, the study addresses the following two research questions:

1. What are the changes in communication confidence described by students at the end of course?
2. What factors do participants describe as supportive in the course?

Our study is teacher-practitioner research, which is based on the idea of teachers being researchers and developers of their own work (Babione, 2015). As such, it is closely linked to research on professional development (e.g., Burton & Bartlett, 2011) because its goal is to generate information and insights for pedagogical development and aid the development of methods for assessing course success.

Public speaking anxiety, oral communication apprehension, and communication confidence

Several terms are used to refer to the distress and social anxiety experienced in oral communication situations in various contexts and settings, including stage fright (Ayres, 1986; Clevenger, 1959), communication apprehension (CA) (McCroskey et al., 1985), oral communication apprehension (OCA) (Byrne et al., 2012; McCroskey, 1977b), public

2. The PRCA-24 (The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension) assesses trait-like communication apprehension in public speaking, small groups, meetings, and dyads (McCroskey et al., 1985). Meanwhile, the PRCA-PS (Personal Report of Communication Apprehension, Public Speaking Subscale) focuses on public speaking anxiety (see, e.g., Gallego, 2021).
3. The course Gaining Confidence for Public speaking [Esiintymisvarmuuden kehittäminen] has been offered at the University of Jyväskylä since 1992. The course is designed to aid the students experiencing heightened levels of communication apprehension. Its primary learning outcomes encompass the recognition and identification of individual's communication apprehension, the acquisition of effective coping methods, and the enhancement of communication confidence (Almonkari, 2000).

speaking apprehension (Almonkari, 2007), and public speaking anxiety (PSA) (e.g., Bodie, 2010).

In his classic definition, McCroskey (1977b, p. 78) defines CA "as an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons". OCA is the most common form of CA, which refers to CA in various situations such as conversation with a single peer or giving a talk on the television (McCroskey, 1977a). Thus, CA is a broader concept comprising the fear of public speaking as a situation-specific variant (e.g., Broeckelman-Post & Pyle, 2017; Byrne et al., 2012; Niinivaara & Herkama, 2021). In medical research, the fear of public speaking, in turn, is considered as a type of social anxiety,[4] which is defined as fear or anxiety related to social interaction or performance situations where a person is exposed to unfamiliar others or their possible judgements or evaluations (e.g., Grieve et al., 2021; Kunttu et al., 2006; Topham et al., 2016). In university pedagogy, social anxiety is considered a negative academic emotion affecting student engagement and wellbeing (Archbell & Coplan, 2022; Nash et al., 2016).

In this study, we adopt a broad view of public speaking, encompassing not just traditional oral presentations in front of an audience but also instances when individuals may perceive themselves as "performing" during activities such as group discussions or speaking on the phone. Consequently, we view the concept of PSA as closely related to that of OCA, and as such, these terms can be used interchangeably. In our qualitative study, we use the term OCA, defined by Byrne et al. (2012, p. 566) as "a fear of speaking or talking to other people in different contexts, such as on a one-to-one basis, in groups, in meetings, or public speaking".

OCA is a multifaceted phenomenon that can manifest on multiple levels and can include various physiological (e.g., pulse and breathing), cognitive (e.g., concentration), affective (e.g., fear, shame), and behavioural (e.g., speech, avoidance) elements (Almonkari, 2007; Pörhölä, 1995). Previous research has shown that the nature of anxiety may vary considerably from one person to another, and the elements of manifestation can be individually weighted (Almonkari, 2007; Pörhölä, 1995). Thus, there is an acknowledged need to pay attention to one's own perceptions of anxiety. The importance of individual interpretations is also emphasised by Gallego (2021), who found that students' self-reported PSA was not related to physiological reactivity. She concluded that individuals who perceive themselves as confident might understand physiological reactivity during public speaking as excitement, while individuals who perceive themselves as insecure or fearful might see the same physiological reactivity as fear or anxiety. Thus, PSA is not induced by physiological activation but by the way an individual interprets physiological activation. Almonkari (2007) stresses that the meanings given to anxiety and how to cope with it are crucial for individual senses of wellbeing.

In pedagogical contexts, OCA is often addressed in relation to communication confidence. Kunttu et al. (2006) define communication confidence as the opposite of PSA, suggesting that positive experiences and orientation toward performing and performing contexts shape an individual's communication confidence. Almonkari (2007) formed five categories based on students' level of self-reported anxiety and coping methods. She found that communication-confident students rarely experience anxiety, approach communication situations with trust and ease, and have a positive self-concept as communicators. Conversely, students

4. The American Psychiatric Association (2015, p. 17) defines social anxiety as "marked fear or anxiety about one or more social situations in which the individual is exposed to possible scrutiny by others", and specifies the definition: "individuals with the performance only type of social anxiety disorder have performance fears that are most impairing in their professional lives...Performance fears may also manifest in work, school, or academic settings in which regular public presentations are required".

with high CA experience anxiety in most study-related communication situations, worry about interaction, hold a negative self-concept as communicators, and tend to avoid courses involving presentations and group work (Almonkari, 2007; see also Nordin & Broeckelman-Post, 2020).

Finally, communication confidence can be defined as confidence in one's ability to communicate, consisting of communication apprehension and self-perceived communication competence (Fushino, 2010). The course that provided the context for our study aims to enhance communication confidence in oral communication situations, as well as alleviate or decrease OCA to make it more tolerable. In the study, the changes that students relate to their OCA and communication competence are understood as expressions or manifestations of communication confidence.

Consequences of oral communication apprehension

Previous studies have highlighted the prevalence of OCA among students both in the Finnish context and beyond (Almonkari, 2007; Almonkari & Kunttu, 2012; Pörhölä et al., 2019; Russell & Topham, 2012). In the UK, 10% of university and college students reported severe social anxiety (Russel & Shaw, 2009). As much as 80% of the students in two UK universities reported oral presentations to be a source of social anxiety that affected their learning and wellbeing (Russel & Topman, 2012), and 64% of undergraduate students in the US reported a fear of public speaking (Ferreira Marinho et al., 2017). In a survey among Finnish higher education students (Kunttu et al., 2016), approximately 30% reported public speaking to be a notable, stress-inducing problem. Furthermore, the findings of studies with Finnish university students show that social anxiety is most typically related to public speaking situations in academic seminars, speaking in a foreign language, and interacting with teachers and peers (Almonkari, 2007; Almonkari & Kunttu, 2012). Related to the fear of oral communication and public speaking, social anxiety has been found to affect students' ability to study, as well as various dimensions of wellbeing (e.g., Almonkari & Kunttu, 2012; Kunttu & Huttunen, 2009; Russell & Topham, 2012). If social anxiety is experienced as a problem, it tends to be connected to the individual's general state of health and mental health, including social wellbeing (Almonkari & Kunttu, 2012; Archbell & Coplan, 2022). Grieve et al. (2021) found that the fear of public speaking has several negative effects on students' overall experiences in higher education. For instance, it influences fundamental decision-making about participation (e.g., asking questions or participating), reduces confidence in attending university, and impacts progress (Grieve et al. 2021). Likewise, Byrne et al. (2012) pointed out that especially the fear of being perceived or judged negatively by others dominates the thinking of highly apprehensive students to such an extent that it inhibits their ability to complete communication tasks satisfactorily.

The audience is one of the most commonly reported sources of fear in public speaking. For example, Grieve et al. (2021) found that external fears (75%) linked to the audience were clearly more common than internal fears (25%) related to one's own feelings and performance. A fear of negative judgements from the audience, concerns about audience reactions, and the lack of interaction from the audience were found to be the most challenging for the students (Grieve et al., 2021; Tsang, 2020). Thus, the performer-audience relationship is of high importance when addressing individuals' experiences and perceptions of anxiety and developing pedagogical practices for alleviating it (e.g., Gerlander & Uitto, 2021).

Overwhelming anxiety and negative feelings have been shown to increase the avoidance of tasks (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2009). In addition, CA has been seen as a negative academic emotion that can destroy motivation, distract attention from the task, and make information processing superficial (Pekrun et al., 2009). CA has been found to be related to negative perceptions of oneself as a communicator and also to low self-perceived communication competence (Almonkari, 2007; Broeckelman-Post & Pyle, 2017; Fushino, 2010).

As a subset of social cognitive theory, self-efficacy refers to an individual's subjective belief in their ability to successfully achieve a given tasks, such as educational goals (Bandura, 1997; Elias & McDonal, 2007). Through learning, individuals develop their subjective beliefs of having certain competencies, their self-confidence, and a realistic understanding of their abilities (Bandura, 1986; Schunk & Pajares, 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). It has been found that individuals with low self-efficacy focus more on their weaknesses and highly exaggerate the possibility of negative performance in a given situation, which may increase emotional distress (Cavanagh et al., 2019) and lead them to withdraw in the face of new situations and tasks also in the future (Bandura, 1997; Nordin & Broeckelman-Post, 2019). However, individuals with strong self-efficacy are more capable of practicing their skills in demanding tasks and new situations (Bandura, 1997; Sharma, 2023), which contributes to their academic and professional development (Cavanagh et al., 2019).

In particular, oral communication self-efficacy has been investigated in some studies. For example, Cavanagh et al. (2019) found a positive correlation between oral communication self-efficacy and course performance. Hassall et al. (2013), in turn, explored a link between CA and oral communication self-efficacy and found that individuals with high levels of CA tend to exhibit low levels of communication self-efficacy. Similar results have been reported by Daly and Thompson (2017) as well as Tsang (2020). Hence, special communication courses for students with high OCA can be assumed to raise their ability to understand, accept, or manage their fear of communication, which support their self-efficacy (see also LeFebvre et al., 2020; Nordin & Broeckelman-Post, 2020).

Gaining Confidence for Public Speaking: A course description

The course is aimed at students who experience OCA that affects their studies by causing them to delay taking or simply avoiding those courses that include oral presentations and group work. Students from various faculties and academic levels can enrol in the course via a specialised application process. The pedagogical intent of the application procedure is to form a peer group for sharing experiences in a safe space (e.g., D'Eon & Zhao, 2022; Niinivaara & Herkama, 2021; Uitto et al., 2016). A previous study by Cavanagh et al. (2019) suggests that students can affect their peers' communication self-efficacy through vicarious experience: When students see that others who are like themselves can perform oral communication tasks and succeed despite the challenges, they have an opportunity to learn from a positive role model. The three-credit course spans 32 contact teaching hours. It is organised into eight 4-hour sessions over eight weeks, supplemented by 49 hours of homework assignments.

The overall goal of the course is to enhance students' communication confidence by guiding them to enhance their communication competence by recognising their strengths as communicators, irrespective of their OCA. Generally, communication competence is defined as the judgement or interference of the appropriateness and effectiveness of communication behaviour in a given context. It is based on the function of cognitive (knowledge), behavioural

(skills), and affective (motivation, attitude) components encompassing metacognitive knowledge and processes that are requisite for planning, adjusting, guiding, and analysing communication (Horila, 2020; Laajalahti, 2014; Spitzberg, 2015). Communication competence develops in actual communication processes and practices, and as such, it is fundamentally situated, context dependent, and relational in nature (Spitzberg, 2013). Communication competence is used as a general pedagogical framework throughout the course, including course activities and assignments, such as encouraging students to reflect on their communication competence and its development.[5]

The ideas of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), as identified by Gallego (2021), significantly shape the instructional strategies of the course. Gallego (2021) focused on university students' PSA and found that two self-as-context interventions, distinction-self and hierarchical-self interventions[6], based on ACT and combined with exposure, decreased self-reported PSA. When applying the ideas of these interventions in the course, the aim is to guide the students to acknowledge and confront their PSA rather than attempt to control it (Gallego, 2021).

Exposure has been found to be effective in reducing the level of PSA (Finn et al., 2009; Gallego, 2021; Lane et al., 2009). Consequently, the students are exposed to diverse communication exercises during the course. The degree of difficulty of the exercises is gradually increased, moving from brief presentations with a pair to more extensive individual presentations. In post-presentation discussions, the listeners are encouraged to ask and provide comments on the content. At the same time, various spontaneous exercises and group discussions are carried out. Oral communication skills training and knowledge about OCA is integrated with these exercises. Previous studies have shown that exposure combined with skills training that involves practice, reflection, and knowledge about the prevalence of anxiety, can mitigate OCA (LeFebvre et al., 2020; Okoro & Cardon, 2024). For example, the idea of two different cognitive orientations toward public speaking, performance and communication orientation, are presented (Bodie, 2010; Motley, 1991). Students are encouraged to focus on the audience and guided to approach presentations as interaction and knowledge building with the audience (Gerlander & Uitto, 2021).

Constructive feedback, both from peers and the teacher, plays an important role in building communication confidence and practising communication skills at the course. Issues such as the structure of the presentation and interaction with the audience are scrutinised. In addition, watching themselves on videos, combined with documented self-assessments and a reflective essay at the end of the course, is a crucial element of the learning process. Previous research suggests that video reflection guides the students to evaluate more accurately their speaking performances and scientific oral presentations, thereby enhancing their communication self-efficacy (LeFebvre et al., 2020; Oliveira et al., 2021). Reviewing their videotaped presentations also reassures students that despite their perceptions of nervousness and anxiety, they look calm, and the presentation proceeds in a logical manner (Cavanagh et al., 2019).

5. Kokkonen and Natri in this publication present the framework of multilingual and intercultural communication competence (MICC) and discuss its pedagogical applications in a higher education context.
6. In these exercises students are taught to recognise their thoughts, feelings, and physical reactions related to PSA both before and after the intervention. They are guided to detach from or gain distance from these internal experiences. Alternatively, they are encouraged to view themselves as the locus of inner thoughts and feelings, and evaluations, rather than being defined by them. (Gallego, 2021.)

Methods

Setting and participants

The study was conducted between the spring term of 2018 and autumn term of 2021 at the University of Jyväskylä. Over this period, nine Gaining Confidence for Public Speaking [Esiintymisvarmuuden kehittäminen] courses with a separate application process were arranged, and a total of 90 students participated. In the application, students described their reasons for applying for the course, their previous courses in communication, and experiences of OCA across various communication situations. The selection of participants for the course aimed at identifying those who would derive maximum benefit, considering both individual needs and group dynamics. All the courses with 10– 16 participants were taught in Finnish by the authors of this paper and a teacher of speech communication who contributed data collection.

The students selected for the course were informed about the goals of the study and the procedures of data collection and analysis at the beginning of each course. A total of 38 students voluntarily signed a consent form and gave us the permission to use their applications and reflective essays for research purposes. Participants had an opportunity to decline their participation and to withdraw their permission for using their texts at any time.

All participants of the research had studied at least one year at the university, and they represented diverse disciplines, including mathematical and natural sciences, social and educational sciences, and the humanities. Most participants had no prior communication courses, while some had completed one or two before taking this course. On the basis of their descriptions in the applications, all participants shared a high level of OCA.

Data and data analysis

The data consist of 38 reflective essays the students wrote at the end of the course. The students were instructed to write an informal reflective essay considering the nature of their OCA, the coping methods they employed and the changes in their communication confidence during the course, including various aspects of communication competence (e.g., knowledge, skills, attitude, and motivation). Furthermore, students were asked to articulate their future plans for sustaining and developing their communication confidence after the course. The reflective essay provided students an opportunity to write freely about their OCA and the changes they recognise at the end of the course.

We employed theory-guided content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018) to analyse the data, and used specific theories to code and interpret the data. The analysis focused on describing the contents disclosed and evident in the reflective essays, rather than on interpreting latent meanings (Graneheim et al., 2017). The data were processed using the ATLAS.ti 22 software. The authors analysed the data and developed a coding classification through joint discussions. Unclear coding cases were addressed in regularly conducted interpretation sessions.

The first phase of the analysis of the reflective essays was the coding of text passages that could be clearly interpreted as reflection on the course or on the change brought about by the course (i.e., what changed, what was learned). Descriptions of no change were also considered under the general category of change. The key point was that the passage dealt with change. In addition, passages where participants clearly mentioned that something had helped or supported their learning on the course were also coded.

In the second phase of the analysis, the coding that reflected the changes was re-examined and grouped into four thematic areas based on the theoretical framework of communication competence (Laajalahti, 2016; Horila, 2018; Spitzberg, 2015) and the five-level framework of analysis of PSA presented by Vadén (2006). The data coded as supporting learning were analysed and formed into three thematic areas. Overall, the data were coded into the following themes in terms of the research questions:

Changes in communication confidence (research question 1)
- Orientation towards anxiety, public speaking, or the audience
- Perceptions of oral communication self-efficacy
- Communication skills and strategies
- Participation in studies and everyday life

Factors that supported learning (research question 2)
- Peer group and peer relationships
- Feedback during the course
- Knowledge and understanding of anxiety

Furthermore, the distribution of passages among various themes and participants were analysed (see frequencies and percentages in Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix A). Changes in communication confidence were mentioned in 193 passages and factors supporting learning in 81 passages.

Results

Changes in communication confidence

Orientation towards anxiety, public speaking, or the audience

The majority of the changes (71 out of 193 passages) mentioned in the reflective essays related to orientation towards anxiety, public speaking, or audience. Notably, these factors were also identified widely among the participants: 32 out of 38 participants mentioned this theme (see Table 1 in Appendix A). Attitudes towards one's own anxiety were described as having become more neutral, more accepting, and even positive. In addition, in some of the descriptions, the role of anxiety in one's thinking had diminished.

> What has definitely developed the most is my own attitude towards anxiety...I don't think of it as just a negative thing anymore and I can put it more into perspective. (RE 8; 1) [7]

Sometimes recognising or understanding a specific aspect of anxiety was unpleasant, such as for this participant:

> I found the realisation that my anxiety is not just going to disappear a bit depressing at first. (RE 1; 2)

Many participants identified a change in their perception of the prevalence of anxiety and expressed that this had also led to a change in their perception of others' lack of anxiety:

7. Each quote is followed by an entry (RE No.; No.) where the first part refers to the certain reflective essay and the running number after it to the passage in the text. In Appendix B, all the quotes are presented in Finnish and in English. The translations into English are made by a professional translator.

> In the English courses, everyone has seemed to be such energetic and good presenters that I thought others didn't feel anxious at all. However, the same thing happened in this course, that is, mostly the anxiety wasn't externally visible in anyone, so my understanding broadened, and I realised that many people must have felt anxious in the English courses too. (RE 10; 3)

Many reported loosening their own criteria for public speaking. For example the criteria for one's own performance had changed from the pursuit of perfection to aiming for being good enough, and students started questioning the model of the ideal performer:

> I finally understand that a presentation doesn't have to be one hundred percent perfect to be good enough. (RE 18; 4)

> The course helped me to abandon this myth of the "good presenter", which would not allow for anxiety. (RE 1; 5)

Several participants reflected on changes in their perception of the audience and their understanding of being in relationship with it. The change is manifested by a shift in focus from one's own anxiety to the audience. In many descriptions, the perspective on public speaking seemed to evolve from unidirectional thinking towards a more interactive engagement with the audience:

> One of the key insights of the course has been that when performing, it is worth focusing on paying attention to the audience rather than on your own feelings of tension. Watching the performances of other students with performance anxiety, it became clear that the most important thing is not the how relaxed the performer is, but the way the audience is taken into account. (RE 21; 6)

> What helps me the most in the presentation situation now is the understanding that public speaking is about interacting with the audience. (RE 17; 7)

The change in attitudes towards the audience was also reflected in how participants described being looked at by others, and how they themselves viewed and understood the audience. For instance, the audience was no longer seen as hostile, judgmental, or expecting failure:

> I would say that the course had the biggest impact on my thought patterns related to public speaking. In the past, I saw public speaking situations as a kind of test, in which you had to perform perfectly in order not to be judged by the audience. And even then, they will judge you. Defeat is inevitable and my mind goes down the path towards disaster. Now I understand that the starting point is not inherently skewed. The audience does not inherently hate me and want me to fail. (RE 18; 8)

However, the participants' descriptions of their relationship with the audience also revealed a conflict: They grappled with becoming the centre of attention in an uncomfortable manner, while also expressing a desire for the audience's attention:

> I'm not quite sure how I feel about the audience's gaze, because, on the one hand, I don't like being looked at very much, but, on the other hand, I do want the audience to follow my presentation. (RE 18; 9)

Perceptions of oral communication self-efficacy

More than a third of all changes (63 out of 193 passages) were related to participants' perceptions of themselves as communicators or performers or their expectations of their communication competence, and these were raised by a little more than half of the participants. Many of the descriptions conveyed a positive attitude towards themselves as a communicator or as a performer. As the participants in the following examples, many did not perceive themselves as negatively as previously, or their orientation became more compassionate and merciful:

> During the course I have learned to accept myself as the presenter I am. (RE 33; 10)

> I used to think I was "defective" because I was anxious about speaking in public. (RE 11; 11)

> I have learned to be more merciful towards myself. (RE 15; 12)

The change in self-perception as a communicator was associated with the recognition that it is impossible to entirely eradicate anxiety and one must learn to live with it:

> I can't eliminate my anxiety, but I can strive to make its existence meaningless and act in spite of it. (RE 1; 13)

A commonly mentioned change was to view anxiety as a separate entity from the self or as a smaller aspect in relation to the self. Additionally, several descriptions challenged the association between anxiety and being a good performer:

> I have also learned that feelings, thoughts and labels are separate from myself and do not define me as a person, and despite them, I am ultimately the person who makes the decisions. So, I'm not just someone who has public speaking anxiety, but I can also be a good presenter. (RE 1; 14)

Another change was an increased self-awareness and the realisation that PSA is not necessarily caused by the act of presenting, but by deeper questions concerning the self, which the course provided concepts and opportunities to reflect on:

> I took an even bigger, silent leap in self-awareness in my mind when it struck me that the main reason for my public speaking anxiety was my low self-esteem. I don't like being the centre of attention, because fundamentally I feel that I don't deserve it and that the public is not interested in what I have to say. As I recognised the problem, I became aware that I was not simply going to get rid of my public speaking anxiety. (RE 15; 15)

A more optimistic perceptions of one's communication abilities was reflected in a strengthened confidence in one's potential and willingness to develop in public speaking. For instance, this participant's description indicates a shift from a belief in the impossibility of development to a newfound sense of empowerment and ability:

> I've always wanted to study and develop myself, but when it comes to public speaking, I've thought that it's something I can't develop – simply because I thought for a long time that I would never present again. Now I have a desire to develop, if not to become a great speaker, at least to become a better one. (RE 5; 16)

For some participants, changes involved an increase in self-efficacy thinking and improved confidence in their performance. For instance, some participants described themselves as having more courage to face demanding situations, such as presenting individually:

> Before the course and even during it, I was absolutely sure that I would not be able to give a presentation of any kind, and I certainly wasn't going to. I had been avoiding public speaking for a long time and I think I made progress, at least in that I had the confidence to dare to go on stage and I was even able to give a solo presentation. It was a big step for me. (RE 3; 17)

Communication skills and strategies

Changes in presentation-related communication skills and strategies appeared in 43 passages by 27 different participants. Most of the changes described involved the development of one's strategy for preparing for and acting in presentation situations.

The descriptions highlighted how students identified more effective ways of preparing. Some participants described having realised the need to reduce preparation and avoid over-preparation, while others described the need to increase it:

> I have learned to challenge myself in a totally new way. Towards the end of the course, I took more and more "risks", I didn't over-prepare for any presentation during the course. (RE 2; 18)

> During the course, I have also learned to accept that even if an assignment that involves public speaking appears easy and effortless to many people, I have to spend time preparing for it... In the past, I have avoided preparing for a presentation and I have downplayed its stressful impact, and I haven't even realised how much time and peace I need before and after a presentation. (RE 21; 19)

The participants also mentioned specific changes in their communication skills. These included unlocking the use of hands to support communication, having the courage to experiment with different postures and positions, speaking in one's own words, and reducing their reliance on notes:

> In the pair presentation, I took a big step for myself and freed my hands in order to use hand motions to support what I was saying. (RE 17; 20)

> I have particularly progressed in that, while I have my notes, I don't rely on them too much. Instead, I have the confidence to speak in my own words and engage with the audience. (RE 36; 21)

Some of the changes in the communication skills were related to the way in which a relationship could be established with the audience. Participants mentioned making eye contact, focusing on the task and audience instead of feelings of anxiety, and allowing oneself time to establish connection with the audience as in the following example:

> In the past, I've tried to say what I've had to say as quickly and briefly as possible, even in normal social situations, to get people's attention away from me. However, I have realised that the audience is in no hurry to go anywhere when I have the floor and that I can put my ideas into words more clearly when I give myself time. (RE 12; 22)

In addition, many participants described learning new ways to relieve and manage anxiety, for example through breathing, relaxation, or mindfulness exercises. Some also provided a

more detailed explanation of how a new method worked, for instance, to help with memory retention and to focus on the presentation rather than anticipating the opinion of the audience, such as the participant below:

> I have found that picturing what I am going to present in my head, like a film, makes it easier for me to remember what I am going to say and focus on it, instead of thinking too much about what the audience thinks about me and what I am presenting. (RE 28; 23)

Participation

About half of the participants mentioned changes in their participation during the course (see Table 1 in Appendix A). In the academic context, these changes included no longer trying to avoid courses that required presenting. In particular, students tended to avoid language courses, which they were encouraged to attend, as shown in the following example:

> Throughout my university studies, I've avoided the compulsory Swedish course because it involves giving a presentation in Swedish, and the idea has really disturbed me. However, I am currently in the process of taking the course and it is my turn to give a presentation in a few weeks' time. I don't think I would have been able to attend the Swedish course if it hadn't been for this course on developing confidence. Even though I know that the presentation is coming up, I feel very calm and peaceful about it. (RE 29; 24)

The change in participation was also reflected in more active engagement in academic communication situations. In the following example, the student describes a new kind of agency. In a perceived challenging public situation, the student had demonstrated the courage not only to initiate action but also to publicly express their opinion, which differed from that of the teacher:

> Nowadays, I also have more confidence to enter into these situations. A good example of this happened in a lecture this week, where I had the courage to open my mouth and share my view, which was in conflict with the view presented by the lecturer. My heart rate hardly increased at all and I also received positive feedback from the lecturer for a well-argued and presented view. (RE 38; 25)

In addition to communication situations related to studies, more active participation manifested in the willingness to take the initiative in various everyday situations (e.g., starting a conversation in the canteen) or taking part in recreational activities, which were now seen as opportunities to develop confidence in public speaking and even alleviate anxiety in social situations more generally:

> The course also inspired me to do more physical activity to relieve anxiety, which I intend to utilise with my fear of social situations. For the past month, I have increased the amount of exercise I do and have found that it has had a positive impact on my anxiety. I started team sports, which I had long dreaded, where first of all I have to deal with larger crowds and also have to "perform", as people's attention is focused on me when I have the ball. (RE 31; 26)

Factors that supported learning

The factors that the participants described as having contributed to learning revolved around three main themes: peer group and peer relationships, feedback during the course,

and knowledge and understanding of anxiety (see frequencies and percentages in Table 2 in Appendix A).

Peer groups and peer relationships

Peer group and peer relationships were the most common factors that supported learning, highlighted in more than half of the assignments. Peers provided a meaningful learning environment, offering a safe and accepting space for sharing experiences. The descriptions included recurring mentions of the experience of a genuine sense of belonging to a group instead of the familiar feeling of being alone, and the possibility of being oneself in the group. The importance of the group manifested itself in the opportunity to talk about anxiety without shame and increased the sense of belonging.

> My own development was very much supported by our wonderful group, where it was really easy to be confident and to be myself. Through peer support, I discovered that being anxious doesn't actually matter, and everyone in the group delivered really good presentations. (RE 2; 27)

As the example illustrates, the experience of belonging to a peer group also helped to change one's attitude towards one's own anxiety. In addition, observing the peers' presentations also gave participants the opportunity to question their beliefs about the link between the visibility of anxiety and the quality of the presentation. The group setup also enabled sharing experiences related to anxiety and identifying similarities, such as being left alone to deal with anxiety:

> Like many others, I have previously experienced in life how the individual is often left to deal with their anxiety on their own...It was great to work on the issues in a group, because it meant that you could finally truly experience that you were not alone. (RE 14; 28)

Feedback during the course

In the descriptions addressing feedback, the significance of reviewing the recorded presentations was emphasised. Although it was also associated with notions of difficulty and dislike, it was considered to be the key factor that contributed to learning on the course:

> Watching a video of yourself is probably the most awful thing I know, and at no point did I think that I was going to watch the recordings. However, during the last class of the course, one of the students and the teacher talked me into it... And I'm glad I did. Watching the videos was perhaps the best and most helpful thing about the whole course...I was baffled by the fact that the presentation looked almost natural from the outside. (RE 13; 29)

Combined with peer feedback the video reflection provided an opportunity to challenge preconceptions about oneself as a communicator and was described as a tangible record of a successful presentation. In addition, video reflection helped to identify personal strengths and areas for improvement and was described as providing a more constructive way of looking at oneself also in other social situations:

> During the course, I found the videotaped presentations especially instructive, as they allowed me to observe myself as a presenter through the eyes of an outsider. Now I know exactly how I look and sound when I present, what my strengths are and what I could develop in the future... Watching the videos has also helped me with other fears related to social situations. (RE 38; 30)

The knowledge and understanding of anxiety

When looking at one's own anxiety, the importance of research results as well as the experiences of other students were mentioned as factors that contributed to learning. Although the increase in knowledge and understanding can also be seen as a change in itself, a deeper and research-based knowledge was described as having provided concepts and perspectives for dealing with anxiety. Getting information on anxiety as phenomenon was also described as a valuable tool for coping in itself:

> The research data used in the teaching and slides on the course have provided me with a wealth of interesting information and in some ways helped me to rethink the anxiety involved in presentation and interaction situations when viewed from a scientific perspective as research and not just as a silenced marginal problem. (RE 20; 31)

Research also gave a completely new perspective on anxiety, highlighting its positive dimensions and thus helping to understand the multifaceted nature of anxiety.

> I remember going through research results on students' attitudes to public speaking situations during the course. That was honestly the first time I realised that there are people who actually enjoy public speaking. (RE 23; 32)

In addition to the research results, the experiential knowledge of participants shared by them in the class discussions was described as important in understanding anxiety. Sharing experiences also contributed to a feeling of belonging, not being the only one who is anxious, as illustrated in the following example:

> I had an eye-opening moment in the first session, when we went through the symptoms experienced by the course participants. It was then that I better understood that anxiety has a variety of symptoms, and that I am certainly not the only one who experiences it. (RE 8; 33)

Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to address the effectiveness of the course Gaining Confidence for Public Speaking by analysing changes in communication confidence and the factors that supported learning. The analysis was based on data collected through reflective essays written by students at the end of the course.

The changes in communication confidence

The changes in communication confidence described by the students centred around four themes: (1) orientation towards anxiety, public speaking, or the audience; (2) perceptions of oral communication self-efficacy; (3) communication skills and strategies; and (4) participation in communication situations in studies and in everyday life.

Almost all participants described changes in their orientation towards anxiety, public speaking, or the audience. By the end of the course, attitudes towards anxiety had become more "normal" in the sense that it was seen as a related phenomenon, which can be interpreted in various ways. Furthermore, there emerged an understanding that the thoughts and feelings associated with OCA could be considered as mere thoughts and feelings, and that they do

not define oneself as a performer or speaker, but the ideals attached to public speaking and performer were questioned. These findings are supported by Gallego's (2021) study on the effects of ACT interventions on PSA, where she found that the interventions focusing on detaching oneself from one's thoughts (distinction-self intervention) and viewing oneself as the place for inner thoughts and feelings (hierarchical-self intervention) reduced self-assessed PSA. Consequently, these findings suggest that the exercises based on the ideas of ACT have been effective in bringing about attitudinal changes.

The fear of the audience among students with PSA has been widely reported in previous research (e.g., Almonkari, 2007; Grieve et al. 2021; LeFebvre et al. 2018; Tsang, 2020). In this study, the changes in the relationship with the audience highlighted a shift from seeing the audience as hostile or critical to perceiving them as more neutral or even positive, and as a group with which one could also communicate and interact. This finding can be interpreted as a change from performance orientation towards communication orientation (Bodie, 2010; Motley, 1991), including more contact-seeking with the audience instead of fearing it or focusing one's feelings of anxiety. According to Almonkari (2007), building an interaction with the audience may help overcome negative perceptions of the audience. Therefore, external and internal processes no longer define the self as a performer as much, but it is one's agency as a presenter that is essential (e.g., Gallego, 2021; Grieve et al., 2021; Twohig, 2012).

The present study offers evidence that training for students experiencing OCA needs to consider the audience, building a relationship with it and acknowledging the responsibility of the audience. For example, Niinivaara and Herkama (2021) point out that anxiety and its alleviation should not only be examined by focusing on the symptoms of anxiety and the situations that cause it, but also by examining the state of being in a relationship, the relationship between oneself and others, or being in the world. Indeed, the importance of examining audience responsibility in the training of public speaking skills has been highlighted in the pedagogical literature (see, e.g., Gerlander & Uitto, 2021).

Regarding communication self-efficacy, the results of the study reflected a more realistic and, in some cases, more positive perception of oneself as a communicator. The results also showed an increase in confidence in one's communication skills and potential to develop communication competence in general. Previous research suggests that high levels of CA are associated with low levels of communication self-efficacy (Hassall et al., 2013) and reinforcing communicative self-efficacy alleviates or changes the nature of PSA (LeFebvre et al., 2020). In their quantitative study, Nordin and Broeckelman-Post (2020) discovered a connection between PSA, communicative competence, and communicative self-efficacy. They emphasised the importance of addressing students' perceptions of their own communication competence, and increasing their confidence in their competence, in order to reduce students' PSA. Confidence in one's ability to cope also increases the motivation to practice, which in turn develops skills and increases self-efficacy (Sternberg & Williams, 2012).

The results of this study highlight the contradictory changes in preparation strategies: some students found the reduction of the preparation more effective, while others recognised a need to increase it. Generally, preparation is perceived as a tool for alleviating PSA (Almonkari, 2007). Preparation can be seen also as a helpful safety behaviour for individuals who suffer from social anxiety, protecting them against supposed negative evaluation (Pörhölä et al., 2019). Over-preparation may also be linked to the expectations of high performance and striving for perfection that are found to be typical among students who suffer from PSA (Almonkari, 2007; Grieve et al., 2021; Oliveira et al., 2021). However, the impact of preparation on relieving

anxiety is unclear. There is evidence that preparation does not necessarily reduce the level of PSA of individuals who experience high anxiety (Byrne et al., 2012; Grieve et al., 2021). Tsang (2020) suggests that a variety of audience-related factors may affect the performer, potentially rendering the preparation unproductive. Pedagogically, it is essential to develop skills to assess what kind of preparation is appropriate for each task (Vaden, 2006) and for each individual and to adjust to the performance situation (Tsang, 2020).

The most significant change in study-related or academic participation among the students was the shift away from avoiding courses that involve performance or group work and discussion. This finding is noteworthy because research suggests that students who do not participate due to anxiety have a negative university experience (Archbell & Coplan, 2022; Grieve et al., 2021), while active participation leads to a greater interest in and attachment to university studies (Groccia, 2018). In addition, it is important to note that nonparticipation can lead to exclusion from knowledge construction, which can potentially hinder developing and succeeding with expertise (Archbell & Coplan, 2022). Studies have found negative associations between nonparticipation and the progress of studies and the development of expertise (Almonkari & Kunttu, 2012; Grieve et al., 2021; Okoro & Cardon, 2024).

Factors that supported learning

Based on the findings, the peer group and video reflections had a significant supportive impact on learning in the course. The group was described as helping to adopt of different ways of thinking and to promote a more neutral approach to anxiety. In addition, the peer group allowed many participants to gain an important insight for learning when faced with contradictions: Through vicarious experience (e.g., Cavanagh, 2019) they could be convinced that anxiety is not visible, even if they know that other person is experiencing it, and it does not affect the success of their performance. Thus, the peer group functioned as a tool for exploring the relationship between visibility and one's own experience of anxiety. The peer group also enabled the sharing of experiences of anxiety and the construction of meanings that accept anxiety and its manifestations, thus offering an empowering experience as opposed to being left alone to deal with anxiety in the past. For instance, Niinivaara and Herkama (2021) highlight the pedagogical importance of a peer group by arguing that anxiety, rather than being approached as simply acquiring skills or breaking out of harmful behavioural patterns, should be studied as a shared experience, identifying and acknowledging hidden meanings in interaction, and questioning ideals of public speaking. In line with them, Archbell and Coplan (2022) emphasise the importance of communication with peers for socially anxious individuals. Their research revealed a negative correlation between social anxiety and students' feeling of connectedness, with a notable association between a feeling of connectedness and communication with peers. Paying attention to communication within a peer group can, therefore, support a socially anxious student's connectedness to others, which in turn, is known to have a positive effect on socioemotional wellbeing (Archbell & Coplan, 2022; Van Ryzin et al., 2009). In relation to the feeling of connectedness, many participants found that they formed, with their peers, a group where there was not the feeling of being an outsider that they were used to. The group seemed to provide a space and setting for participation, a sense of belonging, and the freedom to be themselves, even to fail. Niinivaara and Herkama (2021) describe the change in the experience of anxiety as a change in the experience of being an outsider.

The influence of a peer group is, however, also known to be detrimental to learning, particularly for those with severe PSA. The fear of negative peer evaluation and of having these evaluations brought up can even lead to a fear of humiliation (Byrne et al. 2012). Peer feedback, for this reason, should be approached as an interactive, interpersonal, and relational phenomenon that requires pedagogical guidance to ensure its effectiveness in fostering supportive learning environment. A supportive and collaborative atmosphere in a group has been found to reduce perceived PSA (Broeckelman-Post & Pyle, 2017).

Interestingly, the teacher's role as an active leader in the group and the feedback from the teacher were only minimally mentioned in the students' descriptions. This could be explained by the students' experience of the teacher's role in the group as that of a facilitator who plans pedagogical practices beforehand and is considered more a member of the group than a traditional authority (for more about the role of the teacher as a facilitator, see D'Eon & Zhao, 2022; Uitto et al., 2016).

In the beginning, many participants perceived the idea of video reflection uncomfortable, but it proved to be the most meaningful learning experience for many. Video reflection served a supportive function in two ways. Firstly, it provided the participants with an outsider perspective on their own actions and enabled them to identify elements in their presentation that they had not previously been aware of (see, e.g., Oliveira, 2021). Video reflection, combined with reflective essays and constructive feedback from peers and the teacher can help to challenge the familiar chain of thought linking anxiety and success. Secondly, observing one's own actions can reveal the way one perceives oneself, whether it is constructive, accepting or judgmental. Video reflection can mitigate the most self-critical opinions about weaknesses in one's presentations (Oliveira et al., 2021). Reflection on one's own actions and those of peers was therefore seen as supporting self-efficacy (Cavanagh et al., 2019; LeFebvre et al., 2020).

Limitations and further research

The present study has some limitations. First, the results should be interpreted within a local context: They reflect the experienced impacts of a specific course within one university. In addition, the study period from spring 2020 to autumn 2021 coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, so its restrictions on face-to-face teaching affected the number of applications for the course. Second, the changes in communication confidence were based on a qualitative analysis of students' reflective essays. Future research could combine quantitative methods (e.g., PRCA-24 scales) with different qualitative methods, such as interviews with participants or observations of video-recorded exercises. A mixed methods research design (Creswell & Plano, 2011) would allow for a more comprehensive examination of the effectiveness of the course. However, by using a qualitative approach, it is possible to examine the meanings and interpretations given to OCA and to better understand the various contextual and relational elements affecting it. In the future, a more holistic approach would provide new insights for research on anxiety (e.g., Niinivaara & Herkama, 2021). The findings of this study focused on changes in communication confidence reported at the end of the course, thus they provide no information on longer-term effects. Third, using a reflective essay as a learning assignment may have influenced the data. The reflective essay guided the students to consider changes in their communication confidence (as well factors that supported their learning) from a certain point of view, but students may also have attempted to make a good impression on

the teachers evaluating the course (e.g., Paulhus & Reid, 1991) by reporting more changes than they actually experienced. However, the reflective essays were not numerically assessed, which may have reduced the students' tendency to exaggerate changes. Furthermore, the essay encouraged students to express themselves freely and provide specific information about the changes relating to their oral communication apprehension.

There are several possibilities for further research on this topic. Expanding the study design to include a follow-up study a few months after the course concludes would offer insights into the longer-term effectiveness of the course, such as impacts on students' study progress and on their communication confidence in fear-inducing communication situations. Furthermore, there is a need for additional research to explore how specific pedagogical practices affect OCA and students' self-efficacy (see, e.g., LeFebvre et al., 2020). Additionally, given the growing number of students participating in multilingual and multicultural contexts, further research is needed on the occurrence and students' experiences of OCA and language anxiety (see, e.g., Lou & Noels, 2020) as well as on strategies to enhance communication confidence in such environments.

Although the findings of this study focus on university students and the higher education context, they could also be applied to other educational contexts, such as primary, secondary, and adult education, to develop pedagogies that support individuals who experience anxiety in communication situations. Rather than simply reducing the manifestations of OCA in communication courses, it is crucial to provide individuals with support to enhance their communication competence and encourage the development of their communication confidence (e.g., Nordin & Broeckelman-Post, 2019) in a supportive pedagogical environment. Therefore, those pedagogical practices that should be given particular attention are those that increase students' communication confidence and self-efficacy, and encourage them to take the floor, participate and contribute to collective knowledge building through discussions.

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Authors

Maija Gerlander, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer in Academic Study Skills and Wellbeing, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3516-844X

Maija Gerlander is Senior Lecturer leading the Academic Study Skills and Well-being team, responsible for developing policies and courses to support student and staff wellbeing, with a focus on communication and language studies. Her professional and academic interests lie in the development of students' communication competence, communication confidence, and communicative and relational dynamics in different professional and institutional relationships, particularly in higher education, journalism and healthcare.

Anne Alanne, M.A., Designated Linklater Voice® teacher, Teacher in Alexander Technique (STAT, FINSTAT), Part-time teacher, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä.

Anne Alanne teaches oral communication to students of psychology, history, ethnology, music, art, and cultural studies. She also teaches courses in communication confidence and is a specialist in voice training.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Table 1 Themes describing changes in communication confidence in the reflective essays

Themes of the passages describing change	Distribution of 193 passages by the themes		Distribution of the themes among 38 reflective essays	
	Count of passages	Percentage of passages	Occurrence in different essays*	Percentage of occurrence**
Orientation towards anxiety, public speaking, or the audience	71	37%	32	84%
Perceptions of oral communication self-efficacy	63	32%	21	55%
Communication skills and strategies	43	22%	27	71%
Participation in studies and everyday life	17	9%	16	42%

*The number of reflective essays in which the theme is mentioned
** The percentage of occurrence relative to the number of reflexive essays.

Table 2 Identified factors supporting learning

Factors that supported learning	Distribution of 81 passages by the factor		Distribution of the factors among 38 reflective essays	
	Count of passages	Percentage of passages	Occurrence in different essays*	Percentage of occurrence**
Peer group and peer relationships	32	40%	23	60%
Feedback during the course	26	32%	20	53%
Knowledge and understanding of anxiety	23	28%	17	45%

*The number of reflective essays in which the theme is mentioned
** The percentage of occurrence relative to the number of reflexive essays.

Appendix B

The quotes in Finnish, the original language of the reflective essays, and translations into English made by professional translator.

Number of the quote	Quotes in Finnish	Quotes in English
1	"Eniten ehdottomasti on kehittynyt oma asennoituminen jännitykseen [...]. En ajattele sitä enää pelkästään negatiivisena asiana ja sen osaa suhteuttaa paremmin oikeisiin mittasuhteisiin." (RE 8)	What has definitely developed the most is my own attitude towards anxiety...I don't think of it as just a negative thing anymore and I can put it more into perspective. (RE 8)
2	"Koin alkuun vähän masentavanakin oivalluksen siitä, ettei jännitys noin vain ole katoamassa." (RE 1)	I found the realisation that my anxiety is not just going to disappear a bit depressing at first. (RE 1)
3	"Englannin kursseilla kaikki ovat vaikuttaneet niin reippailta ja hyviltä esiintyjiltä, että kuvittelin, etteivät muut jännitä ollenkaan. Tällä esiintymiskurssilla tapahtui kuitenkin ihan sama asia eli jännitys ei pääasiassa näkynyt kenestäkään päällekkäin, joten ymmärrykseni laajeni ja oivalsin, että myös englannin kursseilla monet varmasti jännittävät." (RE 10)	In the English courses, everyone has seemed to be such energetic and good presenters that I thought others didn't feel anxious at all. However, the same thing happened in this presentation course, that is, mostly the anxiety wasn't externally visible in anyone, so my understanding broadened and I realised that many people must have felt anxious in the English courses too. (RE 10)
4	"Olen viimeinkin ymmärtänyt, että esityksen ei tarvitse mennä sataprosenttisen täydellisesti ollakseen riittävän hyvä." (RE 18)	I finally understand that a presentation doesn't have to be one hundred percent perfect to be good enough. (RE 18)
5	"Kurssi osaltaan helpotti luopumaan tällaisesta "hyvän esiintyjän myytistä", johon jännittäminen ei mahtuisi." (RE 1)	The course helped me to abandon this myth of the "good presenter", which would not allow for anxiety. (RE 1)
6	"Yksi kurssin keskeisimmistä oivalluksista on ollut se, että esiintyessä kannattaa keskittyä omien jännityksestä johtuvien tuntemusten sijaan yleisön huomioimiseen. Muiden esiintymisjännityksestä kärsivien opiskelijoiden esityksiä seuratessa huomasi selvästi, että oleellisinta ei ole esiintyjän rentous, vaan se, miten yleisö on otettu huomioon." (RE 21)	One of the key insights of the course has been that when performing, it is worth focusing on paying attention to the audience rather than on your own feelings of tension. Watching the performances of other students with performance anxiety, it became clear that the most important thing is not how relaxed the performer is, but the way the audience is taken into account. (RE 21)
7	"Eniten itse esiintymistilanteessa minua auttaa nyt ymmärrys siitä, että esiintyminen on vuorovaikutusta yleisön kanssa." (RE 17)	What helps me the most in the presentation situation now is the understanding that public speaking is about interacting with the audience. (RE 17)

Number of the quote	Quotes in Finnish	Quotes in English
8	”Sanoisin kurssin tehneen suurimman vaikutuksen esiintymiseen liittyviin ajatusmalleihini. Aiemmin näin esiintymistilanteet eräänlaisina koetilaisuuksina, joista piti suoriutua täydellisesti jottei yleisö tuomitse. Ja silloinkin se tuomitsee. Tappio on vääjäämätön ja mieleni lähtee katastrofiajattelun polulle. Nyt ymmärrän, että lähtötilanne ei ole luonnostaan vinoutunut. Yleisö ei lähtökohtaisesti vihaa minua ja halua, että epäonnistun.” (RE 18)	I would say that the course had the biggest impact on my thought patterns related to public speaking. In the past, I saw public speaking situations as a kind of test, which you had to perform perfectly in order not to be judged by the audience. And even then, they will judge you. Defeat is inevitable and my mind goes down the path towards a disaster. Now I understand that the starting point is not inherently skewed. The audience does not inherently hate me and want me to fail. (RE 18)
9	”En ole ihan varma miten itse koen yleisön katseen, sillä yhtäältä en pidä kovinkaan paljoa siitä, kun minua katsotaan, mutta toisaalta haluan kyllä että yleisö seuraisi esitystäni.” (RE 18)	I’m not quite sure how I feel about the audience’s gaze, because, on the one hand, I don’t like being looked at very much, but, on the other hand, I do want the audience to follow my presentation. (RE 18)
10	”Olen oppinut kurssin aikana hyväksymään itseni sellaisena esiintyjänä kuin olen” (RE 33)	During the course I have learned to accept myself as the presenter I am. (RE 33)
11	”Olen luullut, että olen ”viallinen”, koska esiintymiset jännittävät minua.” (RE 11)	I used to think I was “defective” because I was anxious about speaking in public. (RE 11)
12	”Olenkin oppinut olemaan armollisempi itseäni kohtaan.” (RE 15)	I have learned to be more merciful towards myself. (RE 15)
13	”En voi poistaa jännittämistäni, mutta voin tavoitella sen olemassaolon merkityksettömyyttä ja toimimista siitä huolimatta.” (RE 1)	I can’t eliminate my anxiety, but I can strive to make its existence meaningless and act in spite of it. (RE 1)
14	“Olen oppinut myös, että tunteet, ajatukset ja leimat ovat itsestäni erillisiä asioita eivätkä määritä minua ihmisenä ja niistä huolimatta olen lopulta itse se ihminen, joka tekee päätökset. En siis ole vain esiintymisjännittäjä, vaan voin olla myös hyvä esiintyjä” (RE 1)	I have also learned that feelings, thoughts and labels are separate from myself and do not define me as a person, and despite them, I am ultimately the person who makes the decisions. So, I’m not just someone who has public speaking anxiety, but I can also be a good presenter. (RE 1)
15	“Otin itsetuntemuksessa vielä isomman, hiljaisen harppauksen mielessäni, kun tietoisuuteeni iski, että suurin syy esiintymisjännitykseeni on huono itsetunto. En pidä huomion keskipisteenä olemisesta, koska pohjimmiltaan koen, etten ansaitse sitä ja ettei yleisöä kiinnosta sanottavani. Samalla kun tunnistin ongelman, tiedostin että en ole niin vain pääsemässä esiintymisjännittämisestä eroon.” (RE 15)	I took an even bigger, silent leap in self-awareness in my mind when it struck me that the main reason for my public speaking anxiety was my low self-esteem. I don’t like being the centre of attention, because fundamentally I feel that I don’t deserve it and that the public is not interested in what I have to say. As I recognised the problem, I became aware that I was not simply going to get rid of my public speaking anxiety. (RE 15)

Number of the quote	Quotes in Finnish	Quotes in English
16	"Olen aina halunnut opiskella ja kehittää itseäni, mutta esiintymisen suhteen olen ajatellut, etten siinä voi kehittyä – yksinkertaisesti jo siitäkin syystä, että kuvittelin kauan, etten koskaan enää tule esiintymään. Nyt minulle on tullut halu kehittyä, jos ei nyt aivan loistavaksi, niin ainakin paremmaksi puhujaksi." (RE 5)	I've always wanted to study and develop myself, but when it comes to public speaking, I've thought that it's something I can't develop – simply because I thought for a long time that I would never present again. Now I have a desire to develop, if not to become a great speaker, at least to become a better one. (RE 5)
17	"Ennen kurssia ja kurssin aikanakin vielä olin ihan varma, etten pysty pitämään minkäänlaista esitystä enkä varmasti aio pitääkään. Olin pitkään vältellyt kaikkia esiintymisiä ja kehityin mielestäni ainakin siinä, että olen uskaltanut mennä esiintymään ja pystyin pitämään jopa yksin esityksen. Se oli minulle iso askel." (RE 3)	Before the course and even during it, I was absolutely sure that I would not be able to give a presentation of any kind, and I certainly wasn't going to. I had been avoiding public speaking for a long time and I think I made progress, at least in that I had the confidence to dare to go on stage and I was even able to give a solo presentation. It was a big step for me. (RE 3)
18	"Opin haastamaan itseäni aivan uudella tavalla. Kurssin loppua kohden otin koko ajan enemmän "riskejä", en ylivalmistautunut mihinkään kurssin esitykseen" (RE 2)	I have learned to challenge myself in a totally new way. Towards the end of the course, I took more and more "risks", I didn't over-prepare for any presentation during the course. (RE 2)
19	"Olen kurssin aikana oppinut myös hyväksymään sen, että vaikka jokin esiintymistä sisältävä tehtävä vaikuttaa helpolta ja kevyeltä monien mielestä, minun on käytettävä aikaa valmistautumiseen. [...] Aikaisemmin olen vältellyt esiintymiseen valmistautumista ja vähätellyt sen kuormittavaa vaikutusta, enkä ole edes tiedostanut sitä, miten paljon tarvitsen aikaa ja rauhaa ennen esiintymistä ja sen jälkeen." (RE 21)	During the course, I have also learned to accept that even if an assignment that involves public speaking appears easy and effortless to many people, I have to spend time preparing for it... In the past, I have avoided preparing for a presentation and I have downplayed its stressful impact, and I haven't even realised how much time and peace I need before and after a presentation. (RE 21)
20	"Parin kanssa tehdyssä esityksessä otin itselleni suuren askeleen ja vapautin käteni käyttääkseni käsien liikkeitä sanomani tueksi." (RE 17)	In the pair presentation, I took a big step for myself and freed my hands in order to use hand motions to support what I was saying. (RE 17)
21	"Olen kehittynyt erityisesti siinä, että vaikka minulla on muistiinpanot, en tukeudu niihin paljoakaan vaan uskallan puhua omin sanoin ja ottaa kontaktia yleisöön." (RE 36)	I have particularly progressed in that, while I have my notes, I don't rely on them too much. Instead, I have the confidence to speak in my own words and engage with the audience. (RE 36)
22	"Aiemmin olen ihan normaaleissa sosiaalisissa tilanteissakin pyrkinyt sanomaan asiani mahdollisimman nopeasti ja lyhyesti, jotta saisin muiden huomion pois itsestäni. Olen kuitenkin ymmärtänyt, että kuulijoilla ei ole mihinkään kiire, kun minulla on puheenvuoro ja toisaalta pystyn pukemaan ajatukseni selkeämmin sanoiksi, kun annan itselleni aikaa." (RE 12)	In the past, I've tried to say what I've had to say as quickly and briefly as possible, even in normal social situations, to get people's attention away from me. However, I have realised that the audience is in no hurry to go anywhere when I have the floor and that I can put my ideas into words more clearly when I give myself time. (RE 12)

Number of the quote	Quotes in Finnish	Quotes in English
23	”Olen huomannut, että esittämäni asian kuvitteleminen päässäni ikään kuin filminä, helpottaa minua muistamaan sanottavani ja keskittymään siihen sen sijaan, että miettisin liikaa, että mitä kuulijat ajattelevat minusta ja esittämästäni asiasta.” (RE 28)	I have found that picturing what I am going to present in my head, like a film, makes it easier for me to remember what I am going to say and focus on it, instead of thinking too much about what the audience thinks about me and what I am presenting. (RE 28)
24	“Koko yliopisto-opintojeni ajan olen vältellyt pakollista ruotsin kurssia, koska siellä pitää pitää esitys ruotsiksi ja ajatus on ahdistanut minua todella paljon. Nyt olen kuitenkin parasta aikaa suorittamassa kyseistä kurssia ja minun vuoro pitää esitys on muutaman viikon päästä. En usko, että ilman tätä esiintymisvarmuuden kehittämiskurssia olisin vieläkään kyennyt osallistumaan ruotsin kurssille. Vaikka tiedän, että esitelmä lähestyy, suhtaudun siihen hyvin rauhallisesti ja levollisin mielin.” (RE 29)	Throughout my university studies, I’ve avoided the compulsory Swedish course because it involves giving a presentation in Swedish, and the idea has really disturbed me. However, I am currently in the process of taking the course and it is my turn to give a presentation in a few weeks’ time. I don’t think I would have been able to attend the Swedish course if it hadn’t been for this course on developing confidence. Even though I know that the presentation is coming up, I feel very calm and peaceful about it. (RE 29)
25	“Nykyään uskallan myös hanakammin hakeutua näihin tilanteisiin. Hyvänä esimerkkinä oli tällä viikolla luennolla, jossa uskaltauduin avaamaan suuni ja kertomaan oman näkemykseni, joka oli ristiriidassa luennoitsijan esittämän näkemyksen kanssa. Sydämeni tahti ei edes kiihtynyt juuri ollenkaan ja sain myös luennoitsijalta positiivista palautetta hyvin argumentoidusta ja esitetystä näkemyksestä.” (RE 38)	Nowadays, I also have more confidence to enter into these situations. A good example of this happened in a lecture this week, where I had the courage to open my mouth and share my view, which was in conflict with the view presented by the lecturer. My heart rate hardly increased at all and I also received positive feedback from the lecturer for a well- argued and presented view. (RE 38)
26	”Kurssi innosti myös lisäämään liikuntaa jännityksen helpottamiseksi, jota aioin hyödyntää myös tuon sosiaalisten tilanteiden pelkoni kanssa. Olenkin tässä kuukauden aikana lisännyt liikkumistani ja todennut positiivisen vaikuttamisen jännitykseeni. Aloitin kauan kammoksumani joukkueliikunnan, jossa ensinnäkin joudun olemaan isompien ihmismassojen kanssa tekemisissä ja joudun myös “esiintymistilanteisiin”, ihmisten katseiden keskittyessä minuun pallon tullessa kohdalleni” (RE 31)	The course also inspired me to do more physical activity to relieve anxiety, which I intend to utilise with my fear of social situations. For the past month, I have increased the amount of exercise I do and have found that it has had a positive impact on my anxiety. I started team sports, which I had long dreaded, where first of all I have to deal with larger crowds and also have to “perform”, as people’s attention is focused on me when I am on the ball. (RE 31)
27	“Omaa kehitystäni tuki todella paljon ihana ryhmämme, jossa oli todella helppoa uskaltaa, ja olla oma itsensä. Vertaistuen kautta huomasin, että jännittäminen ei oikeasti haittaa mitään, ja kaikki ryhmäläiset pitivät todella hyviä esityksiä.” (RE 2)	My own development was very much supported by our wonderful group, where it was really easy to be confident and to be myself. Through peer support, I discovered that being anxious doesn’t actually matter, and everyone in the group delivered really good presentations. (RE 2)

Number of the quote	Quotes in Finnish	Quotes in English
28	"Olen aiemmin kokenut monien muiden tavoin elämässä sitä, kuinka yksilö jätetään usein käsittelemään jännitystään yksin. [...] Ryhmässä oli hienoa käsitellä asioita, sillä silloin sai vihdoin oikeasti kokea sen, ettei ole asian kanssa yksin." (RE 14)	Like many others, I have previously experienced in life how the individual is often left to deal with their anxiety on their own...It was great to work on the issues in a group, because it meant that you could finally truly experience that you were not alone. (RE 14)
29	"Itsensä katsominen videolta on ehkä kamalinta mitä tiedän, enkä missään vaiheessa ajatellut katsovani tallenteita. Viimeisellä kurssin tunnilla kuitenkin yksi opiskelija ja opettaja kuitenkin puhuivat minut ympäri [...] Ja onneksi katsoin. Videoiden katsominen oli ehkä paras ja eniten auttava asia koko kurssissa [...] Hämmennyin siitä, että esiintyminen näytti ulospäin melkein jopa luonnolliselta." (RE 13)	Watching a video of yourself is probably the most awful thing I know, and at no point did I think that I was going to watch the recordings. However, during the last class of the course, one of the students and the teacher talked me into it... And I'm glad I did. Watching the videos was perhaps the best and most helpful thing about the whole course...I was baffled by the fact that the presentation looked almost natural from the outside. (RE 13)
30	"Kurssin aikana koin erityisesti videoidut esitykset kehittäviksi, sillä niiden avulla pystyin tarkkailemaan itseäni esiintyjänä ikään kuin ulkopuolisen silmin. Nyt tiedän tasan tarkalleen, miltä näytän ja kuulostan esiintyessäni, mitkä ovat vahvuuksiani ja mitä voisin kehittää jatkossa[…] Videoiden näkeminen on auttanut minua myös muissa sosiaalisiin tilanteisiin liittyvissä peloissa." (RE 38)	During the course, I found the videotaped presentations especially instructive, as they allowed me to observe myself as a presenter through the eyes of an outsider. Now I know exactly how I look and sound when I present, what my strengths are and what I could develop in the future...Watching the videos has also helped me with other fears related to social situations. (RE 38)
31	"Kurssilla opetuksessa ja dioilla hyödynnetty tutkimus on tuonut itselleni runsaasti mielenkiintoista tietoa ja jollain tapaa auttanut ajattelemaan uudelleen esiintymis- ja vuorovaikutustilanteisiin kohdistuvaa jännitystä, kun asiaa tarkastelee tieteellisin lähtökohdin tutkimuksena, eikä ainoastaan vaiettuna marginaalisena ongelmana." (RE 20)	The research data used in the teaching and slides on the course have provided me with a wealth of interesting information and in some ways helped me to rethink the anxiety involved in presentation and interaction situations when viewed from a scientific perspective as research and not just as a silenced marginal problem. (RE 20)
32	"Muistan, kun kurssilla käytiin läpi tutkimustuloksia opiskelijoiden suhtautumisesta esiintymistilanteisiin. Tuolloin mieleeni pälkähti rehellisesti sanottuna ensimmäistä kertaa ajatus siitä, että on olemassa ihmisiä, jotka oikeasti nauttivat esiintymisestä." (RE 23)	I remember going through research results on students' attitudes to public speaking situations during the course. That was honestly the first time I realised that there are people who actually enjoy public speaking. (RE 23)
33	"Ensimmäisellä tunnilla, kun käytiin läpi kurssilaisten kokemia oireita, oli herättävä hetki. Silloin ymmärsi paremmin, että jännityksellä on monenlaisia oireita, eikä todellakaan ole ainoa, joka sitä kokee." (RE 8)	I had an eye-opening moment in the first session, when we went through the symptoms experienced by the course participants. It was then that I better understood that anxiety has a variety of symptoms, and that I am certainly not the only one who experiences it. (RE 8)

LEARNER BELIEFS OF JAPANESE EXCHANGE STUDENTS AT A FINNISH UNIVERSITY

Riitta Kelly & Yuri Imamura

Studying abroad in non-English-speaking countries has been increasing in Japanese higher education in recent years. While studying abroad, Japanese learners of English encounter English users from diverse cultural backgrounds, providing them with valuable opportunities for authentic interaction. Finland is a favourite destination for Japanese university students because of its high-quality education and the allure of Finnish culture, which is popular in Japan. The students who come to study in Finland have diverse motivations and goals, along with varying levels of proficiency in English. Valuable insights into these individual differences can be gained by exploring the students' thoughts and attitudes about language learning as well as their identities as language learners. These language learner beliefs influence their motivations, goals, and learning strategies, and thus their overall accomplishments. Our study explored the language learner beliefs of four Japanese exchange students studying various subjects at their home university who participated in English-medium courses focusing on English language and academic communication skills offered by the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication at the University of Jyväskylä. Data were collected through individual interviews conducted in Japanese, including visual data in the form of drawings (students' language portraits and learner portraits). We analysed the data from two distinct perspectives, those of a Finnish and of a Japanese educator, and juxtaposed our different interpretations to gain a more comprehensive picture of the participants' views. The combination of visual and verbal data provided us with a rich picture of these exchange students' learner beliefs and helped us to gain a deeper understanding of how they see themselves as students and how they feel about learning English. When teachers have a better understanding of their students, it is possible for them to address students' individual needs better, create a more inclusive learning environment and offer opportunities to establish a more supportive student–teacher relationship.

Keywords: Japanese learners of English, language learning beliefs, learner beliefs, language portraits, learner portraits, exchange students, study abroad

Opiskelu ulkomailla ei-englanninkielisissä maissa on lisääntynyt japanilaisessa korkeakoulutuksessa viime vuosina. Ulkomailla opiskellessaan japanilaiset englanninoppijat kohtaavat englantia käyttäviä henkilöitä, joilla on erilaisia kulttuuritaustoja, mikä tarjoaa heille arvokkaita mahdollisuuksia aitoon vuorovaikutukseen. Suomi on japanilaisten yli-

opisto-opiskelijoiden suosikkikohde korkeatasoisen koulutuksen ja Japanissa suositun suomalaisen kulttuurin vetovoiman vuoksi. Suomeen opiskelemaan tulevilla opiskelijoilla on hyvin erilaisia motiiveja ja tavoitteita, ja heidän englannin kielen taitotasonsa vaihtelee. Arvokasta tietoa näistä yksilöllisistä eroista saadaan tarkastelemalla opiskelijoiden kielenoppimiseen liittyviä ajatuksia ja asenteita sekä heidän identiteettiään kielenoppijoina. Nämä kielenoppijoiden omaksumat uskomukset vaikuttavat heidän motivaatioonsa, tavoitteisiinsa ja oppimisstrategioihinsa ja siten heidän saavuttamiinsa tuloksiin yleisesti. Tutkimuksessamme tarkasteltiin neljän kotiyliopistossaan eri oppiaineita opiskelevan japanilaisen vaihto-opiskelijan uskomuksia kielten oppimisesta. Opiskelijat osallistuivat Jyväskylän yliopiston monikielisen akateemisen viestinnän keskuksen järjestämille englanninkielisille kursseille, joilla käsiteltiin englannin kieltä ja akateemisia viestintätaitoja. Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin japaninkielisillä yksilöhaastatteluilla, ja siihen sisältyi kuvallista aineistoa piirustusten muodossa (opiskelijoiden kielimuotokuvat ja oppijamuotokuvat). Analysoimme aineiston suomalaisen ja japanilaisen opettajan näkökulmista ja asetimme erilaiset tulkintamme vastakkain saadaksemme kokonaisvaltaisen kuvan osallistujien näkemyksistä. Kuvallisen ja sanallisen aineiston yhdistelmä antoi meille monipuolisen kuvan tutkimukseen osallistuneiden vaihto-opiskelijoiden oppijuuteen liittyvistä uskomuksista ja auttoi meitä ymmärtämään syvällisemmin, miten he näkevät itsensä opiskelijoina ja miten he suhtautuvat englannin kielen oppimiseen. Kun opettajat ymmärtävät oppilaitaan entistä paremmin, he voivat esimerkiksi ottaa paremmin huomioon oppilaiden yksilölliset tarpeet, luoda heille osallistavamman oppimisympäristön ja tarjota mahdollisuuksia kannustavamman oppilas-opettaja-suhteen luomiseen.

Asiasanat: japanilaiset englannin oppijat, kielenoppimiseen liittyvät uskomukset, oppijan uskomukset, kielimuotokuvat, oppijan muotokuvat, vaihto-opiskelijat, opiskelu ulkomailla

Introduction

An increasing number of Japanese university students are encouraged to study abroad by both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2023). According to the Office of the Council for the Creation of Future Education, before the COVID-19 pandemic, some 222,000 students went abroad for at least a short exchange period; the government's goal is to increase this number to 500,000 students at different levels of education by 2033. Finland is a popular country in Japan (see, e.g., Chiba, n.d.), also increasingly for study abroad. The Finnish Institute in Japan, which was established in 1998, promotes co-operation between Finland and Japan in science, higher education and culture. The University of Jyväskylä, with its eight Japanese partner universities, is one of the Finnish universities offering bilateral exchange programmes with Japanese universities (University of Jyväskylä, n.d.).

One of the authors, as a teacher of English courses for exchange students at the University of Jyväskylä (JYU) for several years, has seen first-hand how Japanese students as learners of English have had opportunities to use and practise their language skills in a multicultural environment both in and, on occasion, out of the classroom. However, not much is currently known about how the Japanese exchange students at JYU see themselves as language learners.

That is why it is important to gain insight as to what kind of learner beliefs these students have, given that they may have been used to different types of teaching and learning styles and may have had little access to the English language as a means of communication (e.g. Watanabe, 2013).

According to Kalaja et al. (2017, p. 222), learner beliefs refer "to the conceptions, ideas and opinions learners have about L2 learning and teaching and language itself", and they have an important role to play when it comes to the "learners' awareness of their approaches to learning L2s". Kalaja et al. (2016) state that interest in learner beliefs emerged in the late 1970s with the question of why some students learn foreign languages well whereas others do not. Even though the term "beliefs" was not used at that point and, instead, expressions such as "learning philosophies" and "mini-theories" were used, these points of view were important in learning foreign languages and had an effect on the learning outcomes. In terms of terminology, it took 10 years for the term beliefs to be established. Kalaja et al. (2017) point out that the interest in learners' beliefs has been increasing since the mid-1990s, but that there have been differences in how learner beliefs have been approached (e.g., discursive, metacognitive, sociocultural and contextual approaches).

The purpose of our study was to gain an understanding about the learner beliefs of four Japanese exchange students in relation to learning English. The students had taken part in various courses in English at the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication (Movi) at the University of Jyväskylä. In order to gain a more comprehensive picture of their beliefs, we have used both visual and verbal methods in our study. On the visual side, the students were asked to draw two pictures: a picture including the languages in their lives (see, e.g., Busch, 2013 or Park Salo & Dufva, 2018), and a picture of themselves as language learners (see, e.g., Kalaja et al., 2008 or Kelly 2009). To obtain more comprehensive coverage of their learner beliefs, we asked them to describe their experiences of learning English before and during the exchange. These interviews were carried out in their native language by a Japanese language expert. Suzuki (2017) has suggested using drawings in connection with studying Japanese university students' views since that might reduce the pressure that writing or expressing themselves verbally might cause.

Conceptual framework

Learner beliefs

Learner beliefs can be defined in various ways. Kalaja et al. (2016) pointed out that in the 1970s learning philosophies preceded the concept of beliefs, and in the late 1980s they were viewed from the metacognitive point of view, which could be studied by using interviews and questionnaires. This trend continues but has since been complemented by, for example, the contextual approach, which takes into account the learner's inside view. Barcelos (2014) emphasises the interactive nature of learner beliefs by pointing out that they can be seen as "a form of thought, constructions of reality, ways of seeing and perceiving the world and its phenomena which are co-constructed within our experiences and which result from an interactive process of interpretation and (re)signifying, and of being in the world and doing things with others" (Barcelos, 2014, as cited in Kalaja et al., 2016, p. 10).

In terms of language learning, Kalaja et al. (2016) focus on the personal nature of beliefs by pointing out the significance of learners' personal meanings in situations where learners

reflect on language learning and relate these meanings to their experiences. The authors also recognise the importance of the context of beliefs as well as their dynamic nature. Learner beliefs can thus be seen as dynamic and interactive by nature. Barkhuizen et al. (2014) note that by using narrative inquiry, we can try to see how language learners organise their experiences and are able to represent them to themselves as well as others. In his view, narrative inquiry has the possibility to gain access to language learning as a lived experience, since it takes place over a long time and includes various settings and contexts. They also point out that given how narrative inquiry deals with stories, it can be seen from various perspectives. The first is found in the kind of research where stories are used as data, or where stories are used as a method for analysing data. A second division can be made between the biographical approach, where it is the researcher who analyses or tells the stories of the participants, or the autobiographical approach in which the researcher analyses and tells their own stories. A third division has to do with the focus of narrative research: is it the narrative itself or the content of the narratives? Typical research material consists of language memoirs, autobiographical or biographical case studies, or studies of multiple narratives, providing information on several topics, including, for example, learner strategies, motivation, autonomy, language policies, language loss, identity, context and affect, among others.

Language learner beliefs of university students have also been studied by Kaypak and Ortactepe (2014) among Turkish students in an EFL context. These students started to value intelligibility over accuracy, which helped them in successful interaction, and their learner beliefs were not found to be homogenous or stable.

Visual methods in the study of learner beliefs

Barkhuizen et al. (2014) point out that narratives constructed by more than one mode can be viewed as multimodal narratives. In general, they consider visual elicitation useful in collecting data in narrative research. Busch (2006) mentions that visual self-portraits have been used since the 1990s in Europe to investigate linguistic resources. They were first used amongst children in multilingual classrooms but later this method has been used with adults as well. The children were asked to use colour in pre-printed body silhouettes to show their languages in the picture. The colours were chosen by the drawer and no instructions were given on how to decide which colour is for which language. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) note that the meanings of visual structures and the meanings of language overlap in part, but in visual communication the meanings manifest themselves in terms of different uses of colour or compositional structures. Busch et al. (2006) also emphasise the importance of the interpretation of the author in the choice of colour and the location of different fields in the drawing. In addition, Kalaja et al. (2013) drew attention to Kress and van Leeuwen's viewpoint that visual images include both narrative and conceptual structures, where the role of narrative structures is to present actions, events or processes while conceptual structures give us a description of the characteristics of the participants; the latter can also be of symbolic nature.

Kalaja et al. (2008) studied Finnish university-level EFL learners by using a method where students have been asked to produce a visual narrative of their experiences in the form of a self-portrait and to add their own interpretation of the picture, making use of two different modalities. Based on the sociocultural approach, their focus was on the mediational means that were visible in the pictures and what they could learn about the students based on these

mediational means, as well as the role of drawings. The self-portraits of Finnish university students whose first language is Finnish Sign Language have also been studied by Kelly (2009), and Kusters and de Meulder (2019) have discussed the use of visual methods with signing students. Chik (2018) has studied the visual narratives of Hong Kong undergraduates and also other age groups in Berlin and Sydney, finding out, for example, that instructions play an important role in the outcome and that self-composed portraits encourage meanings to be reproduced across various modes. University students' learner portraits have also been studied by Barfield (2021) from the Japanese perspective to gain a better understanding of the connections between the students' languaged lives and different multilingual issues in the society.

As in Park Salo and Dufva (2018), our research is based on first-person experiences and the viewpoint on social circumstances where "the societal dimension is manifest in how individuals perceive, reflect upon and experience events and encounters, as part of their life world" (p. 423). In addition, Park Salo and Dufva (2018) draw attention to the emergence of emotions in multilingual surroundings, recognising the importance of face-to-face social interaction and societal-level institutions. These points could be relevant also for exchange students in a foreign country or in surroundings that are not familiar to them.

Language portraits possess several potential benefits. In Busch's view (2017), language biographies can help us decipher power relationships and language ideologies. Moreover, when we account for the perspective of speakers and their linguistic repertoires, it may allow us to see unexpected language practices and resources.

Contextual background

Teaching and learning English in Japan

English education has been considered important in both primary and secondary school systems in the past few decades in Japan. In 2011, foreign language activities (meaning "English education" in the Japanese context) were introduced to students aged 10 to 12 (i.e., fifth and sixth grades) in elementary schools. Since 2020, English has become a compulsory subject in elementary schools, and students start learning English from age 9. According to Nishibu (2008), English education in elementary schools was introduced mainly because of three reasons: requests from parents, perspectives on language acquisition, and a national strategy to keep up with internationalisation. In addition to these, the hosting of the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics led to the promotion of English education dramatically since Japan was chosen to host the games in 2013. Moreover, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2014) clearly mentioned that learners of English in Japan should be able to acquire "top-class" English proficiencies among Asian countries in order to survive in the current global societies.

Both cram schools (*juku*) and English conversation schools (*eikaiwa gakkou*) are common forms of educational support in Japan. According to Lowe (2015), cram schools are run by private businesses, and their purpose is to supplement the education provided in the actual schools in various subjects: the students are taught one-to-one or in small classes and in 2007, some 70% of students had taken part in this type of tutoring during their education with the ultimate goal of doing well in their university entrance exams. Bolen (n.d.) describes English conversation schools as privately operated, mostly taught by native English speakers and focusing on fluency in conversation. English conversation schools also vary, covering a

range of target and age groups, from young children to older people. As a result, in addition to attending compulsory primary and secondary schooling, a number of students go to cram schools and private English conversation schools after school in order to study English further. As for cram schools, students typically attend these in order to pass entrance examinations for secondary schools and universities where English is normally a part of an exam subject. Entrance exam systems differ between public and private schools in Japan, which means students need to address these differences. Some students also go to cram schools so they can catch up with classes at school. As for private English conversation schools, they are often considered as after-school activities (*okeiko goto*), where students take a particular lesson in, for example music or languages. They are also categorised as a fun activity compared to cram schools due to the different pedagogical approaches. In English conversation schools, kids learn English in varied ways, such as by singing songs and playing games. In contrast, at cram schools students attend lectures using textbooks. The two types of schools also have different target customers. Cram schools are mainly for students to continue their education at primary/secondary schools and universities, while English conversation schools are normally open to all generations, with classes for kids, businesspeople and other groups.

Studies regarding Japanese university students and language learning have been carried out, for example, from the point of view of the L2 self (Ryan, 2009; Yashima, 2009), and willingness to communicate, which increases with international posture and motivation (Yashima, 2002). Muroya (2022) has also studied Japanese students' willingness to communicate, comparing it to the willingness of English-speaking students of Japanese. Willingness to communicate and its relation to learning goals has been a topic (Fuji, 2023), as has students' resistance and teachers' responses in class (Sakui & Cowie, 2008) and classroom silence, the latter by taking into account the meaning of silence in the sociocultural context (Harumi, 2011). Tanaka and Ellis (2003) studied learner beliefs of Japanese students on a 15-week exchange in the US and discovered that the students' skills improved somewhat and especially their confidence and self-efficacy grew.

Research questions

Our research concentrated on understanding how Japanese exchange students see themselves as learners of English in Finland. The research questions we used in our study were as follows: (1) What kind of previous experiences do the students have when it comes to learning English?, (2) What kind of learner beliefs do they have regarding English?, (3) What do they find easy/difficult when learning English? and (4) What kind of motivation do they have in learning English?

Methods

The research setting

The research was carried out at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland among four Japanese university students, who were on an exchange programme. The study year they spent in Finland is not mentioned here to protect their identities, and for the same reason, we used pseudonyms and do not mention their home universities. At the time, they were 20 to 23 years old.

The University of Jyväskylä offers courses in English that are specifically geared to exchange students. The courses can focus on one skill, such as writing, or then they can be general courses in the sense that they cover several skills in English. At the time, the courses offered for exchange students included XEN0095 Academic English Communication 1 and XEN0096 Academic English Communication 2, which can be considered general courses, and XEN0097 Basic Academic Writing and XENX034 Intermediate Academic Writing. The students participated in these courses according to their personal study plans.

Data collection methods

A semi-structured theme interview was carried out in Japanese to enable students to express themselves in their native language. During the interview, the students were asked to complete a self-portrait that included the languages in their lives. The self-portrait was adapted from Busch (2013) in the same manner as in Park Salo and Dufva (2018), and instead of a person (silhouette) standing and waving with one hand like in the original, it consisted of a silhouette of a person standing in a neutral position with legs close to each other and hands down on its side. Judging from the silhouette, you could not tell if it was intended to be a man or a woman. In addition, the students were asked to produce a picture of themselves as a learner of English (a learner portrait), which was drawn free hand. Both these pictures were discussed in the interview. In addition, the students were asked to do a SWOT analysis about their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in terms of learning English during the interview. The topics of the theme interview included questions on their language learning background, how they saw themselves as learners of English and what they find easy and difficult when it comes to learning English. The students were offered coloured pencils to use in their drawings, but they could choose themselves whether to use them, and they were not asked to use color-coding in their drawings.

The interviews were recorded in audio format and each interview lasted about 50 minutes. In the analysis process, a summary in English was constructed by the interviewer, a Finnish Japanese teacher, to gain a preliminary understanding of the interviews. The interviews were then transcribed in Japanese first and translated into English by the Japanese author, who is a native speaker of Japanese.

Data analysis

We have used varied methods in our analysis to better understand the students' views. In students' language portraits, we have looked at their use of the silhouettes and whether they have chosen to use a text-based approach in their own additions to the silhouette, a visual-based approach, or a combination of the two. We have also paid attention to the use of composition, colours and symbols in the drawings. For the learner portraits, we have applied content analysis in line with Kalaja et al. (2008) to see what kind of mediational means are visible in the drawings. In the interview transcriptions, we highlighted thematic issues such as the students' background in learning English, their feelings about learning English, and what differences they see in learning methods between Finland and Japan. The researchers also held several online meetings to discuss what we can see from the data from Finnish and Japanese perspectives.

Results

In the results section, each student's results are presented individually. First their language repertoire and English learning background are described, including the feelings they have regarding English. These are followed by the results of their SWOT analysis and the two drawing tasks. Finally, the student's reasons for studying English and differences in teaching/learning are explained.

Student A: Mari

Languages: Mari is a 22-year-old student of international culture and teacher training studies. She knows Japanese, English and French and has started to learn Finnish and Korean while in Finland.

Background: Mari started learning English in junior high school at the age of 13. At the age of 15, she started at a private English conversation school where she studied for three years. She has also learned English through taking part in musicals. She is confident in Japanese and English and she would like to be able to talk about her studies at an academic level in English. She can use greetings in French and Korean, and carry out simple conversations in Finnish.

Feelings: Mari feels she is able to chat informally in English but says she is not able to have longer, more coherent discussions on a specific topic. Based on the interview, it was unclear whether she was referring to general or more academic topics. She feels her Japanese English teacher had beautiful pronunciation and she wanted to be like her teacher. Studying in Finland has made her realise that actually in Japan people are learning American English and she feels positive about "Japanese English" as she feels it is related to the Japanese identity. She would like to become a teacher but is constantly wondering if that is possible when she feels others are better at English than she is.

SWOT analysis: Knowing English enables her to learn more about studying English, as more papers are available to her on the topic in comparison to Japanese. It also enables her to live abroad. She finds it difficult to think about her weaknesses but not understanding what others say could be one. On the whole, thinking in terms of strengths or weaknesses seems to be challenging for her and not something she has given much thought to beforehand.

Language portrait: In her language portrait, Mari has chosen not to use any colours and she has written words in different languages either on the left-hand side or the right-hand side of the silhouette. On the left-hand side she wrote "soigine" which means "bye-bye" in her local dialect of Saga-ben. She wrote this word, which she uses with her family and friends, quite far away from the other words since at the moment she has a great physical distance from them. On the right-hand side she has written words in Finnish, English, Chinese and Japanese. These words consist mostly of greetings and ways of saying "thank you".

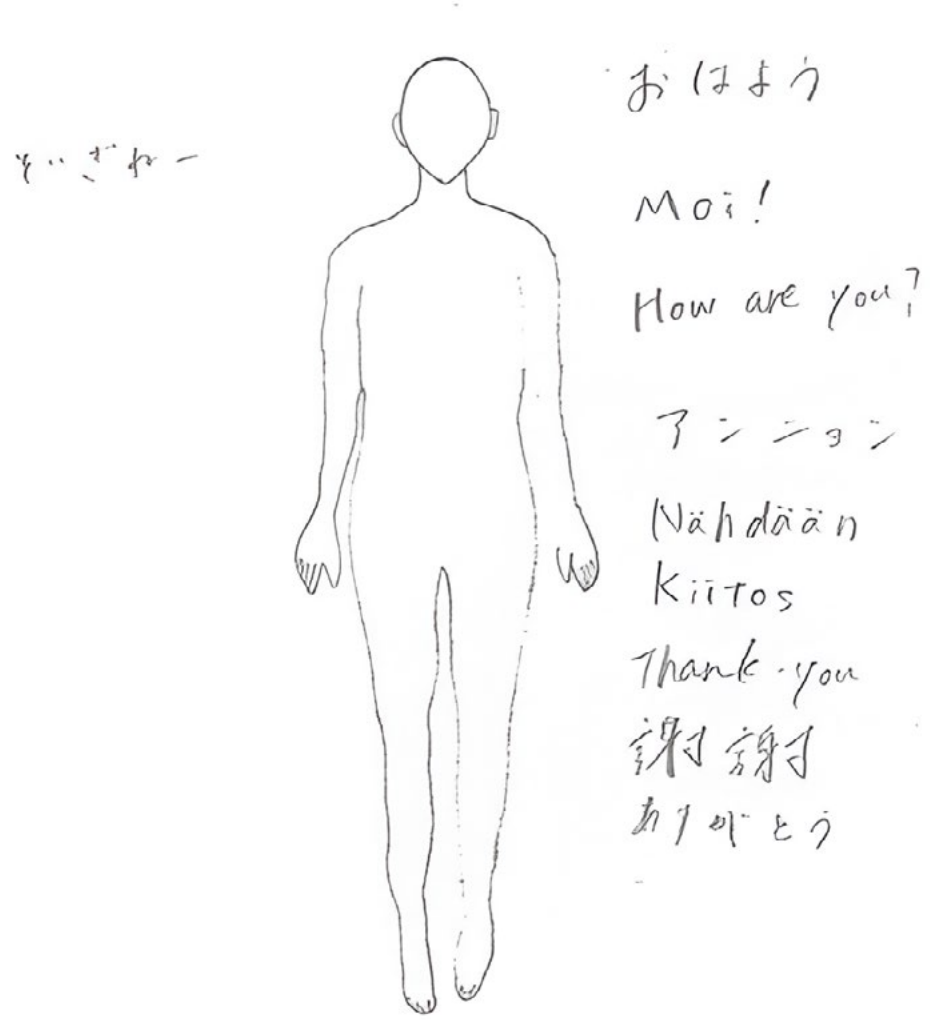

Figure 1 Mari's language portrait

Learner portrait: In the second drawing, Mari has chosen not to use colours. In the middle of the image, she has drawn the shape of a human. The face is not visible, and it gives the impression that she has her back to us.

The area around her head is surrounded by flags of different countries (e.g., Finland, Japan, the USA, South Korea, China) and what appear to be thought bubbles, with one topic in each bubble, such as "job", "friends", "language", "study" and "life in Finland". She is alone in the picture and there is no visible communication in any direction. The drawing depicts her study life abroad, which would not be possible without English.

Figure 2 Mari's learner portrait

Reasons for learning: Mari wanted to learn English so she could use it as a business tool. Currently, it is a necessity for her because she lives in Finland and has to use it in her studies and with her flatmate. She would also like to become an English teacher, but she is not sure if her skills are good enough for that.

Differences in ways of learning English: Mari feels the focus of the English teaching in Japanese higher education is on testing skills, whereas in Finland the teaching is more communicative and includes discussions. After discussions, she tries to summarise what was said to help herself learn. In Japan, Mari did not have an opportunity to use English outside of the classroom, but here it is fun for her. However, she finds academic English hard to use.

Student B: Akito

Languages: Akito is a 22-year-old student of sports science. The languages he knows are Japanese, English and some Finnish, Chinese and Korean. The latter two he started learning in Finland.

Background: Akito started learning English at the age of nine when he was at school. He has learned English at school and by playing games. He went to a cram school for a few months when he was in junior high because of an entrance exam. He says he knows a little bit of Finnish and can talk about himself in Chinese and Korean. He uses English in situations where the other person's native language is English or when he is in situations where he can use English, such as airports, buses or public transportation as well as with friends from the university.

Feelings: Akito feels his reading and writing skills are on par with other Finnish and international students, but in comparison with them, he feels he cannot speak or listen "at all" and he says he is not good at "output" (production). He liked English in elementary school but he did not like it after that. Now that he has come to Finland, he says he does not hate it anymore although he feels he is not good at it, whereas Japanese comes naturally to him. He says he can express himself "in a rich and easy-to-understand way" in Japanese.

For Akito, the feelings are connected to his use of English outside the classroom. He says he feels happy when he is understood, for example, in schools where he goes to talk about Japanese culture, but then he is also frustrated when he is not understood because of his English skills. However, when he is in the position of learner, he says that "there is a lot of pure memorising and just doing, so there is no feeling, no emotional ups and downs, so you can't remember much."

Akito says that the change in language changes his personality in the sense that in English he becomes quiet and shy, even though he would like to talk more and that's why people think that he is a serious person. Living in Finland has made him realise that he was not used to using English, which made him feel that he does not know the language. He sees now that everybody makes mistakes, and he has become more willing to try out using English.

SWOT analysis: Akito feels he has a solid foundation in English based on the way he has been learning vocabulary and grammar, but he feels his weaknesses are speaking, listening and using English in real life. He is not used to using the language in practice and feels that preparing, thinking and translating from Japanese to English is too slow and that he cannot speak at the right moment. This makes him feel worried about making mistakes, which then reduces his willingness to speak. Because of the fear of mistakes he then gives up trying to speak in English and it makes him weak.

Language portrait: Akito is not sure what is expected of him when it comes to drawing the language portrait. Nevertheless, he makes a clear distinction as to where certain words belong, and why: things that are fun are connected to his heart and things that are connected to his head are difficult. He illustrates this by drawing lines to the points where the words belong. Words that come out of his mouth are either Japanese or then certain Finnish words such as "moi" (hi) or "kiitos" (thank you), since these are words he uses on a daily basis. English and Finnish do not come out of his mouth immediately, so he has drawn them on the top of his head, but Finnish takes up a smaller space since there is not as much information there in comparison to English. He marks coffee and basketball in the picture, since these are things he enjoys, and they are linked by lines to his hands and his feet. In comparison to other students' language portraits, it is interesting to see that in his portrait the language exists inside his body, similarly to the language portraits seen in Busch's studies of Peter (2013) and Pascal. Unlike in Busch (2013), however, the colours seem not to pay an important role and are not used inside the body to fill certain areas; instead, lines are used to indicate where different languages seem to belong.

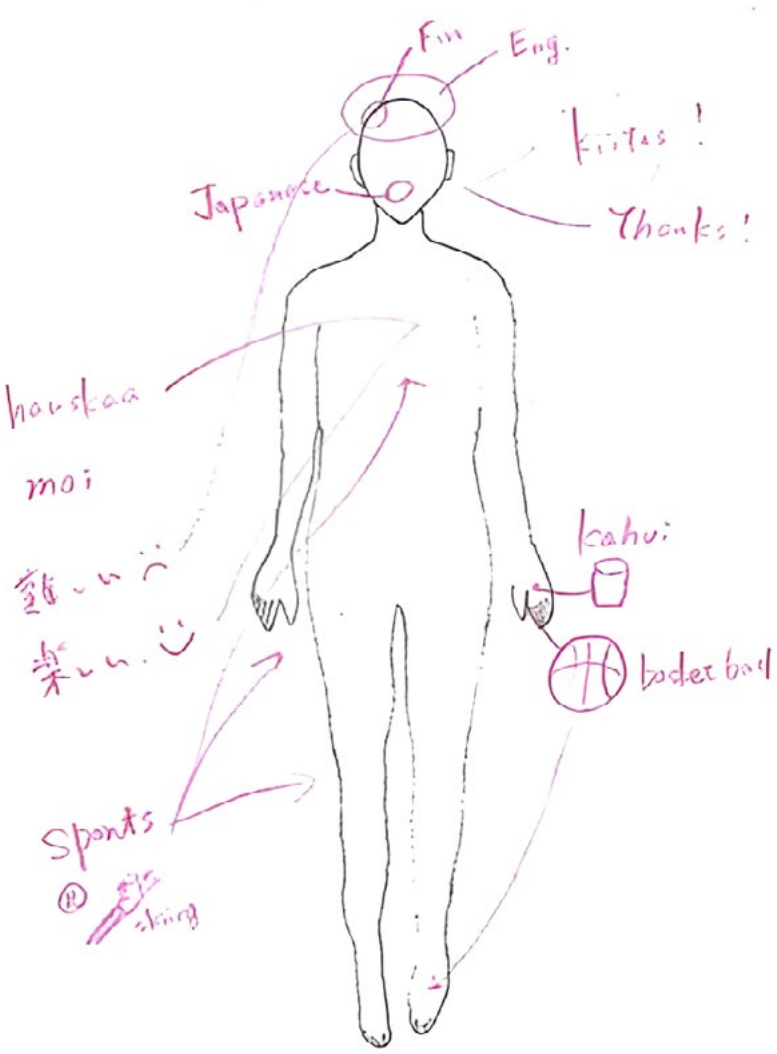

Figure 3 Akito's language portrait

Learner portrait: Akito's learner portrait has four parts: the first of them deals with feelings and he says he has a fear of failure. Even though he feels English can be fun and he enjoys playing sports as well as playing with children, the fear of failure plays a bigger role in his life. He believes that his lack of English skills causes his friends to see him as someone who is shy and does not speak a lot. Before coming to Finland, his studies included a lot of "input" but here he has had to produce the language more. He feels that throughout his school years his English has been improving but then at the university it worsened, but now it is improving again. Originally, he wanted to learn English to be able to study abroad but now he sees this from a broader perspective, wanting to use English in one way or another, and also to use it in working life after he has returned to Japan. He sums up his feelings saying, "I want to tell my past self that English is not something to be studied, but something to be acquired naturally."

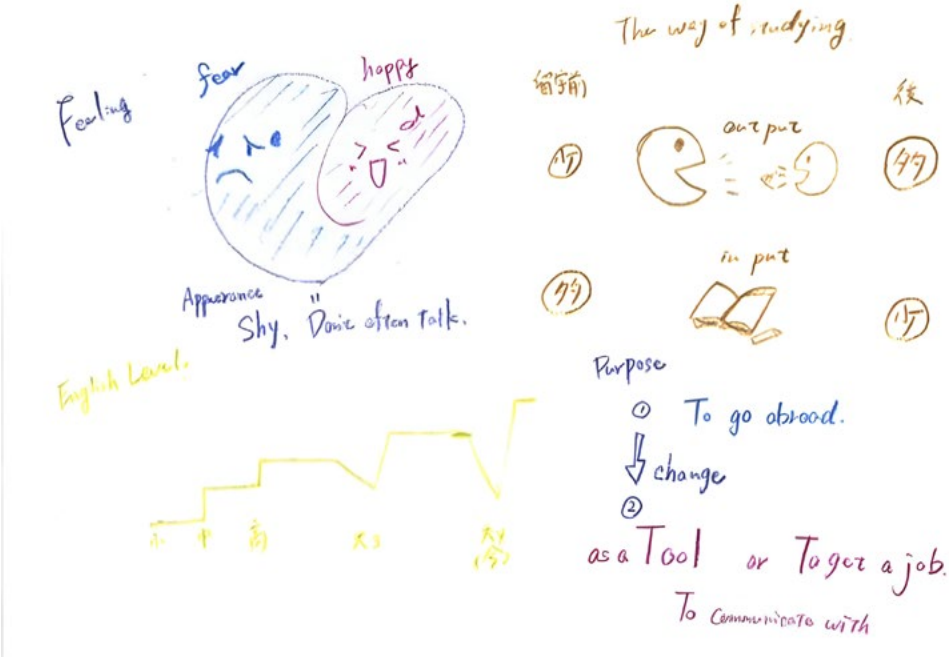

Figure 4 Akito's learner portrait

Reasons for learning: Akito sees English as a tool that enables him to speak with users of other languages. It is also a tool in the sense that it enables him to gather more information than he would be able to in comparison to just using Japanese or Finnish.

Differences in ways of learning English: Akito thinks the difference between the ways of learning English in Finland and in Japan has to do with "input" and "output". He feels that in Finland there are more discussions and presentations included in lessons whereas in Japan, grammar and vocabulary are considered important. He also notes there are no tests in Finland and that there are not many papers to write. Akito says he learns English in three ways: by studying textbooks, which is what he did in Japan; by using English as a tool when it comes to, for example, reading books; and by talking with people. For him, playing sports or playing with children is a good way to learn English because he feels he can use the language naturally and it is fun. The way he works now with English is that he translates what he hears from English to Japanese or paraphrases Japanese words into English, and he hopes that in the future he would be able to understand and respond in English.

Student C: Erina

Languages: Erina is a 21-year-old student of international relations. The languages she knows are English, Chinese, Finnish and Japanese (especially the Kansai dialect).

Background: Erina started learning English at secondary school at the age of 12. She has no experience of a cram school, but she mentions having learned a lot of English at university.

Feelings: In her opinion, Japanese is a difficult language and does not help in learning other languages but for her it is the best language to express herself. She says that Japanese people

are afraid of English and cannot speak it at all. Personally, she feels her English is better than those who live in Japan. She says she feels English is a "cute and charming" language. Even though she sees English as a communication tool, she says that it is "a tool to communicate emotions with friends and host families".

Thinking of languages, she says that she is very funny in Japanese. This is because she uses "interesting vocabulary and slightly difficult expressions" in her normal conversation, which makes her conversation distinctive in Japanese. In English, her lack of vocabulary prevents her from doing that and she uses a lot of body language instead when she feels she cannot use words to express herself. When she speaks English, she cannot express herself fully and feels she can express more in Japanese: "I speak English, but in my head there are many more Japanese phrases."

SWOT analysis: She looked at the strengths and weaknesses from a general point of view in Japan, and only after the two first points talked about her own perceptions. As a strength, she mentions that learning English can expand one's world tremendously, because then you are able to watch different movies and read books and magazines. She also says the content of films is different if it is dubbed. When it comes to weaknesses, she is not sure what can be called a weakness. However, she mentions how Japan is very competitive and that looking at test scores and deciding based on those whether you know English might be a weakness. From a more personal point of view, she says vocabulary is one of her weaknesses, since "it does not come out of my mouth easily", and she cannot understand it immediately. In Japan, she had opportunities to use English with tourists, since there are a lot of them in Kyoto, but in Finland she has the opportunity to use it all the time. She feels English can benefit her.

Language portrait: Erina seemed to like drawing and said that she enjoyed this type of activity. In her language portrait, she draws flags. The Japanese flag is large and almost completely covers her head and upper body. The Finnish flag is also large and starts above her right knee. On her left leg, below the knee, is a small Chinese flag. While these three flags are transparent and in front of her, there is also one flag which is behind her and not specific to any country; instead, it has the word "ENGLISH" written using different colours for different letters of the alphabet. Unlike in other students' portraits, some flags cover her body, but the silhouette is still visible underneath the flags.

She explains that the Chinese flag is small, because she has only just started to learn the language and feels she does not "understand a thing about it". Yet she does feel she has "a foot on the door" when it comes to learning it. The metaphor of legs continues with Finnish when she says that she has been able to dip her toe halfway into it. Finnish is all around her and she says that its scope is huge. Japanese, on the other hand, is "my base, my identity, my mother tongue" and that is why it covers half of her brain and her heart. She also explains why there is no easily recognisable flag with English. To her, it is not a language that belongs to the U.K. or to America, but instead it is a communication tool enabling her to communicate with people who are not American or British. She says, "People and I speak in English, so I have a multinational image."

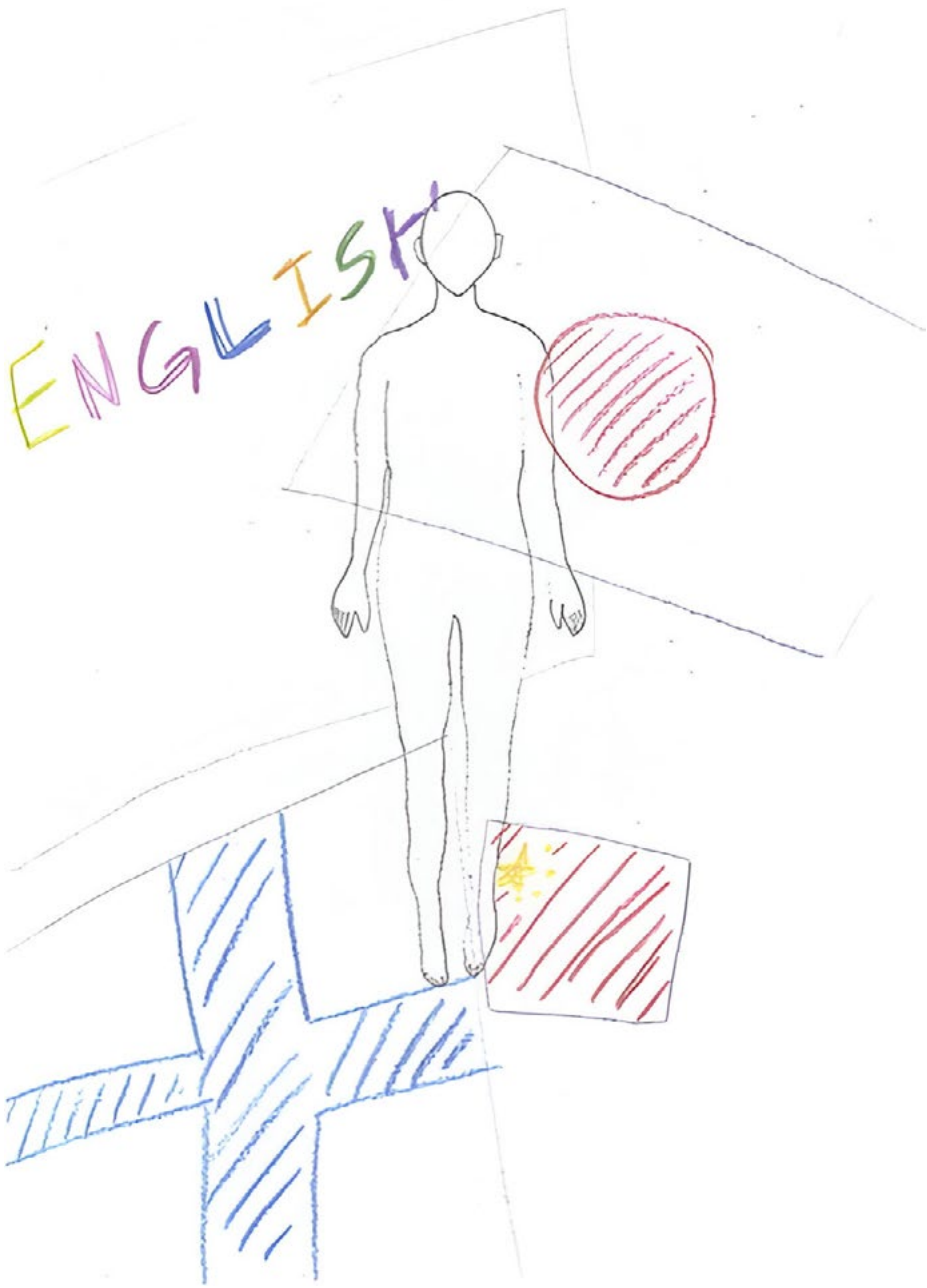

Figure 5 Erina's language portrait

Learner portrait: In her picture there is a character which resembles Pac-Man. There are two bubbles that seem like lines of thought which lead to a picture of a book, TED Talk and the word "CLASS". Then again, there are big and small colourful bubbles both coming in and going out of her mouth, but there are no words included in these bubbles.

Figure 6 Erina's learner portrait

Reasons for learning: She says she needs somebody to push her or she will not feel motivated to study.

Differences in ways of learning English: She says that at school, learning English meant writing and memorising but that at the university there is more flexible ways of studying it. Yet she sees both ways as important because even though the university is a freer atmosphere, basic grammar and words are necessary. In Finland she has learned to use citations, and this has given her the impression of English as a demanding language.

Student D: Mina

Languages: Mina is a 20-year-old student from the Institute of International Language and Culture. The languages she knows are Japanese, English, Finnish and German. Japanese is her native language and she started learning English at the age of 9 at an English conversation school. She considers her English skills to be at the lower intermediate level and says that her English is above the Japanese standard. She studied German for a year at university and now she has been studying Finnish.

Background: She started learning English by ear through songs. At that point she did not understand the content and had no knowledge of grammar, but when she started learning grammar in junior high school she was able to make connections between what she had learned at an English conversation school and the grammar she had learned in high school.

Feelings: Japanese feels most natural to her, and she expresses herself most in Japanese. She likes English very much and enjoys communicating with people in other languages.

SWOT analysis: She feels she has a strong heart and mentality, and that her pronunciation is good, and these are her strengths. However, she considers her academic skills in English, such as writing essays, to be her weakness. She thinks her reading is slow and grammar is "not very correct". When considering opportunities, she has no clear answer. She's been studying English for years, she says, and believes she does not have a lot to learn in terms of grammar, but she feels her speaking is not improving.

Language portrait: The language portrait seemed to be difficult for her to do, since she repeatedly said 'e' while drawing it, an expression of confusion in Japanese. The drawing was done with coloured pencils. Unlike with the language portraits by Akito and Erina, she leaves the actual human shape in the picture untouched but draws the Japanese flag and the American flag on the left-hand side of the picture (so, on her right since the human shape is facing the reader) and the Finnish flag on the right-hand side. The Japanese flag is at the same level as her head, and underneath the flag there is a brush and a piece of calligraphy with the word 希望 (hope) written on a piece of paper. The American flag is at knee-level and underneath the flag there is an apple. On the other side, the Finnish flag is at the same level as her hand and underneath it there are three letters of the Finnish alphabet, namely *y*, *ä* and *ö*. All the flags are coloured, as is the apple, whereas the rest of the drawings are in black and white.

She explains she chose to draw an American flag because in Japan she has learned American pronunciation, and she added the apple underneath the flag because she feels it is associated with America (she mentions New York as the Big Apple and the company called Apple). The letters *ä* and *ö* are letters in the Finnish alphabet that are not in English, and she added the letter *y* because she finds it hard to pronounce. The piece of paper with the Japanese word on it is there because of calligraphy, which is typically Japanese.

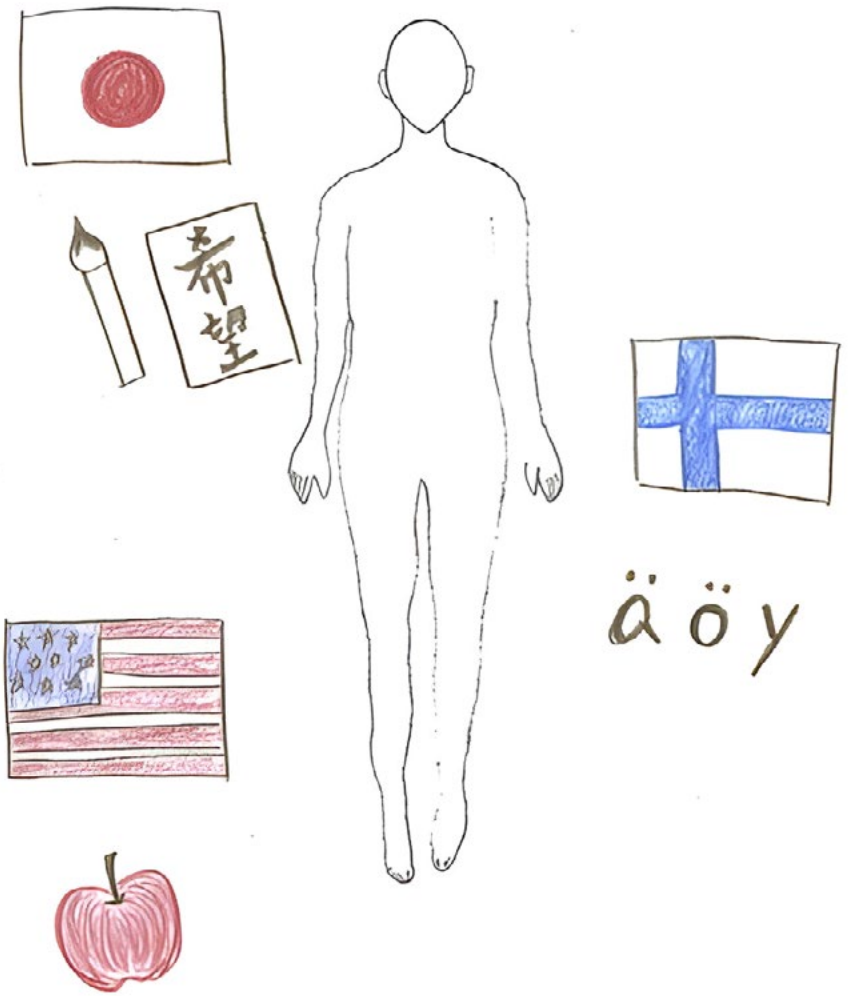

Figure 7 Mina's language portrait

Learner portrait: In her free-hand portrait she has drawn a profile of her head, and you can see inside her brain. The picture has big wide eyes and a closed mouth. In the middle with a red number one is an area labelled "nihongo" (Japanese). Below with a green number two is "English". "Suomi" (Finnish) has a small area at the top of her head and is missing a number. She has drawn them this way because Japanese always comes into her mind first, and English after that. This is true when she speaks English: the idea comes into her mind in Japanese, and then in English, so she thinks in Japanese first. With Finnish it is a different since she has learned it through English, so if she wants to say something in Finnish, she first thinks of it in Japanese, and then translates it into English and after that into Finnish, and the same way back. Despite her living in Finland at the time of the interview, Finnish does not get a number and she has written the word *Suomi* very small. In addition, even though she wants to learn languages to communicate with people, in the picture her mouth is closed even though her eyes are wide open.

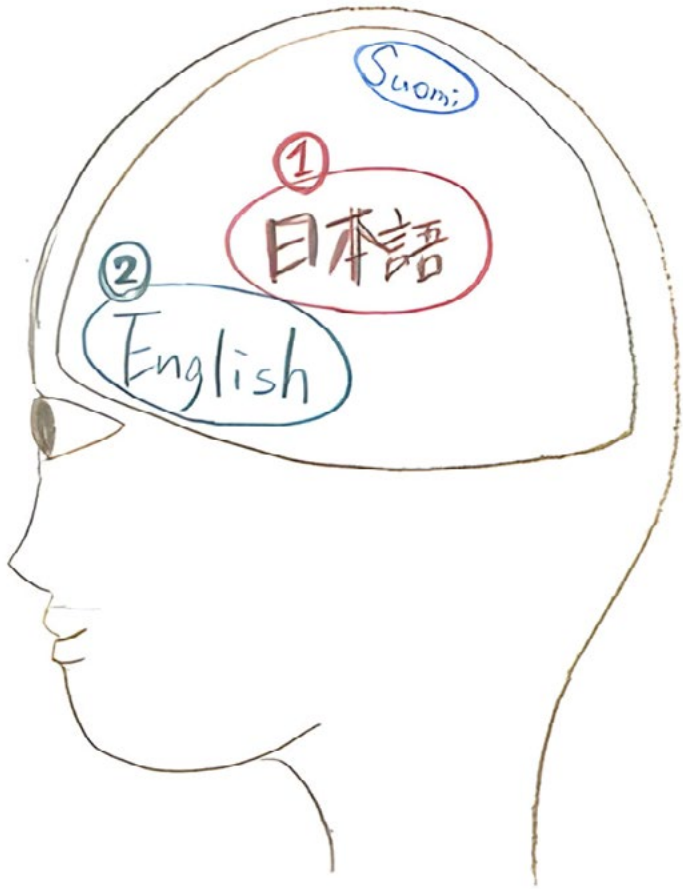

Figure 8 Mina's learner portrait

Reasons for learning: English is a means of communication for her, and she wants to use English to be able to talk to people from other countries.

Differences in ways of learning English: In Japan, English classes are mostly about grammar and writing, but in Finland she felt she needed a broader set of skills because she needs to be able to write, listen and speak. In her view, the Finnish way of learning has provided her with more practical skills. To her, speaking and listening are more important than reading and writing in order to survive. The best way of learning English, she feels, is to leave Japan and lead a life that is centred on English and using the language.

Discussion

The purpose of this paper was to examine how Japanese exchange students see themselves as learners of English in Finland. This was investigated by finding out their previous experiences of learning English, their learner beliefs, what they find easy and difficult when learning English and why they are learning it.

Even though we cannot really compare the results of only a few students as such, we can consider the influence of their previous experiences of learning English. The strongest languages these students had were Japanese, which was their native tongue, and English, which was the first foreign language they had learned. Although they started learning English at different times and in different ways, many of these students felt confident about their English skills until they came to Finland. The differences in ways of teaching English in Japan and in Finland potentially play a part in this, since in Japan the focus is more on grammar and reading, whereas in Finland the university-level English courses focus more on the communicative side of the language.

The students' stay in Finland affected their learner beliefs by showing them that to be able to communicate, one does not need to have perfect grammar and that others, too, can get their message across even though their English is not perfect. Even though some of the Japanese students in this study may initially have felt shy about using English, they seemed to have been encouraged by the realisation that perfect English is not expected here. English proficiency is generally high throughout the Nordic countries, so the situation in Finland can be compared to that in, for example, Sweden. There, according to Siegel (2022), the Japanese exchange students were surprised by the high level of English proficiency of other students, including both Swedish-speaking students and exchange students from other countries, and talked about the feeling of inferiority and the challenges they had in keeping up with conversations with other students. In her master's thesis, Hirai (2011) mentions that Japanese exchange students studying at a Finnish university are motivated to join an exchange programme to be able to brush up their English skills outside Japan, and that in Finland they have gained more confidence and found new ways of communication. This situation may provide some links to Yashima's (2002) study, where an international posture increased the willingness to communicate despite the students' being located in Japan. Some links may also be found with Muroya's (2022) study where Japanese students' self-perceived linguistic competence had a greater effect on their willingness to communicate than did their actual linguistic competence.

The differences in the ways of teaching English in Finland and in Japan seem to have taken the Japanese students somewhat by surprise. These were reflected in what they found easy and difficult when learning the language. After arriving to Finland, some of them realised that other students' communication skills in English were better than theirs, leading them in some cases to feel shy about using English. Given that the focus in Japan has been on reading and learning grammar, the more communicative approach and the difference in the skill level in comparison to other exchange students provided Japanese students with a challenge they reacted to in different ways. Feelings play an important role in language learning and English as a language seems to have created both negative and positive feelings in these students even before they came to Finland. These results are in line with those found by Kaypak and Ortactepe (2014) among Turkish students of English, who eventually became more interested in communication than in being able to use the language perfectly.

Regarding the students' motivation, most of them saw English as a tool for either finding more information about a topic of interest or a tool that enabled them to study in the tertiary educational setting in Finland. The difference between academic use of English and everyday use of English seemed clear to the students and whilst many of the students said they could cope with the everyday use, many found the academic use of English challenging on account of not having much experience with it, especially spoken academic English. Recognising this

difference in the teaching of these students and finding ways to help them become proficient in the spoken language is something that should be taken into account while planning English courses for these students. For them, Japanese is a language they can use to express themselves whereas English has a tool-like quality.

Because the Japanese exchange students come to Finland on the basis of a bilateral agreement from certain universities only, it might be possible to highlight the difference in language learning to the students already at the stage when they have been accepted to the programme. Ways to advise and help them prepare for coming to Finland should be identified, even though the potential overlap in the Japanese university term in the summer and the Finnish university term in the autumn may complicate the preparations. However, new exchange students could be encouraged to, for example, listen to presentations containing academic vocabulary, such as TED Talks, podcasts, or various types of educational content on YouTube (e.g., talks or discussions by scholars on academic topics).

The use of visual methods to learn more about these students' learner beliefs provided some insight but also presented a number of challenges. In particular, clearer instructions might have been helpful to these students (see Barfield, 2021). Our original idea was to provide students with some freedom of choice, which is why the instructions were general ("Draw the languages in your life in this picture" or "Me as a language learner"), but it turns out some students were ultimately concerned about finding the right answer or solution, and it was not easy for them to understand that it was their answer we were after. All learner portraits are multimodal in the sense that in addition to the drawing, they also include differing amounts of text. Mari's learner portrait seems to be passive in the sense that her face is not visible, and the words included in the picture appear in what seem to be thought bubbles. Akito's drawing features four different parts, and it has a more active nature, in that it includes two people communicating with each other and a book and a pen as mediating artefacts. Erina's picture also includes mediating artefacts, such as a book, a screen with the word "TED" (referring to TED Talks) and the word "CLASS" in one of the thought bubbles. Despite the mediating artefacts and input/output symbols with arrows, she is alone in the picture. Mina's picture also includes just one person, and the languages are inside her head, and her mouth is closed. Mina's picture also contains no other people.

In general, it seemed that for these students, colours in the silhouettes did not have the same significance as the colours in, for example, Park Salo and Dufva (2018) or Busch (2013), where the participants gave the colours they used a more profound meaning, linking them with certain languages. In the Japanese students' drawings, the use of colours focused mostly on flags or then were predictable (e.g., the apple in Mina's drawing is red). Moreover, the importance of the surroundings in the second picture, "me as a language learner", seems to differ from those found in, for example, the drawings of Finnish Sign Language students (Kelly, 2009). The Japanese students' pictures have very little surroundings and what is there appears symbolic (such as how in Mari's picture there are flags) or technical (the book or screen in Erina's picture). In contrast, the Finnish Sign Language students' pictures emphasise the learning situation visually. The pictures of Finnish university students in Kalaja et al. (2008) fall somewhere between the two previous examples. They often depicted a recognisable person in their pictures, alongside various tools. The Japanese students in this study, however, have drawn mostly shapes or Pac-Man-type creatures in their learner portraits. These characteristics suggest that these Japanese students see English as something that surrounds them and that is accessible with various tools. It is also possible that they

ended up with this solution because they were not used to the kind of task in which they had to draw and include their feelings. Another question to consider is whether drawings made by hand are the best possible solutions for a task like this. Multimodal and digital tools could have provided a different outcome with Japanese students, who are generally familiar with the use of technology (see, e.g., Paiva & Gomes, 2019). Nevertheless, student drawings are the kind of tool that can provide us with information that is different than that provided by other methods, such as questionnaires.

When it comes to power relationships and language ideologies mentioned by Busch (2017), the importance of English both in students' studies and everyday communication was paramount, even though the students are located in Finland. The students also expressed interest in learning Finnish but, in practice, English is the most important language for them. The students' linguistic repertoire also included languages such as French, Korean and Chinese, for example, but the students' skill level in these languages did not seem to be very high.

Overall, visual methods have potential to get students to think about themselves as language learners, but it is also important that these methods are complemented by interviews in order to produce an accurate interpretation of the pictures and to provide the researchers with an opportunity to gain additional information. Nevertheless, the drawing gives the students a chance to look at language learning from their own point of view and enables them to have the freedom to include their own impressions without asking them questions about the topic of the picture first. Complementing the drawings with an interview can provide the teacher with insight into the way a particular student views different languages, their use and the learning process. This increases teachers' knowledge and understanding of their students and helps teachers take these issues into account, especially when they are dealing with students with cultural backgrounds that are different from their own. Because teachers are limited by their own language knowledge when asking about students' views on language learning, and since they may have to use English when it is the only mutual language, visual aids might help students express their views on learning English at times when their own capabilities of expressing themselves in English are not sufficient. However, our study sample was very small and the results cannot be generalised as such.

Conclusion

In this study, both visual and verbal methods were used to obtain information about the learner beliefs of Japanese exchange students in Finland. Even though the students were not necessarily familiar with drawing as a method and the result could depend on their creativity, the use of drawings added another dimension to the students' narratives. This, combined with interviews, provided a more comprehensive understanding of the learners' situation. Since beliefs and emotions in language learning are linked (Aragão, 2011), visual language portraits and learner portraits could offer a potential outlet for emotions. The drawings could provide a starting point for fruitful discussions between for example the learner and the teacher, offering the teachers better opportunities to understand the learners, thus giving the teachers possibilities to meet the learners' needs better and to create more inclusive learning environments for them. In addition to exchange students, this type of drawings could be helpful when working with various groups of learners to whom their language skills or their disposition may (for different reasons) hinder them from expressing themselves the way they would like to.

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Authors

Riitta Kelly, M. A., University Teacher, The Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5285-7386

Riitta Kelly teaches English at The Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä, and she is a doctoral student at the Department of Languages and Communication at the University of Jyväskylä. Her research interests include university students' learner beliefs and visual methods in the study of linguistic repertoires and language learning.

Yuri Imamura, M.A., Assistant Professor, the Research and Development Institute for Higher Education, Shukutoku University, Japan.
https://orcid.org/0009-0008-1634-2407

Yuri Imamura works at the Research and Development Institute for Higher Education, Shukutoku University, Japan. Her research interests include learner autonomy, translanguaging in the Japanese context, and language learning spaces.

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING PRESENCE IN AN ONLINE ACADEMIC READING MODULE

An Action research study

Aaron Orszag

Understanding students' perceptions of teaching presence in online learning environments is crucial for designing effective teaching. This action research project took place over four years with four different cohorts and examined how teaching presence, a key dimension of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, was affected by three pedagogical factors: embedded support, learning environment layout, and teacher feedback against a base model. The study involved first-year bachelor's students in education enrolled in a mandatory language course focusing on academic literacies. Embedded within this course was an e-learning module designed to develop students' academic reading skills. The aim of the action research was to determine whether student perceptions of teaching presence significantly increased with the introduction of each of the pedagogical factors. The research also investigated how students' confidence in their academic ability (CAA), confidence in English (CE), and working mode (WM, individual or group work) affected their perceptions of teaching presence in the module. Confirmatory factor analysis, measurement invariance, comparison of means, and regression analysis were used to test different variables. The results indicate that embedded support seems to be the most crucial pedagogical factor affecting students' perceptions of teaching presence. There was no significant difference observed in the effect of students' CAA, CE, and WM on their perception of teaching presence across all four cohorts. However, in the 2021 cohort, students who completed the e-learning module individually reported significantly higher perceived teaching presence than did those who worked in a group. These students appeared to form groups based on perceived CAA rather than self-rated CE, but this finding was not observed across the other three cohorts. The results highlight the impact of different pedagogical factors and student choices on teaching presence, which has important implications for designing effective online courses.

Keywords: teaching presence, online learning, pedagogical design, academic reading, community of inquiry

Tehokkaan opetuksen suunnittelun kannalta on ratkaisevan tärkeää ymmärtää, miten opiskelijat havaitsevat opetuksellisen läsnäolon verkko-oppimisympäristöissä. Tässä nelivuotisessa ja neljän eri kohortin toimintatutkimushankkeessa selvitettiin, miten kolme pedagogista tekijää, eli integroitu tuki, oppimisympäristön järjestelyt ja opettajan antama palaute verrattuna perusmalliin, vaikuttivat opetukselliseen läsnäoloon, joka on keskeinen ulottuvuus tutkivan yhteisön (Community of Inquiry, CoI) mallissa. Tutkimukseen osallistui ensimmäisen vuoden kasvatustieteen kandidaattiopiskelijoita, jotka suorittivat pakollista akateemisten tekstitaitojen kurssia. Kurssiin sisältyi verkko-opetusmoduuli, jonka tarkoituksena oli kehittää opiskelijoiden akateemista lukutaitoa. Toimintatutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää, lisäsikö kunkin pedagogisen tekijän käyttöönotto merkittävästi opiskelijoiden havaintoja opetuksellisesta läsnäolosta. Tutkimuksessa selvitettiin myös, miten opiskelijoiden luottamus akateemisiin kykyihinsä (CAA) ja englannin kielen taitoonsa (CE) sekä heidän käyttämänsä työskentelytapa (WM, yksilö- tai ryhmätyöskentely) vaikuttivat heidän havaintoihinsa opetuksellisesta läsnäolosta moduulissa. Muuttujia testattiin konfirmatorisen faktorianalyysin, mittausinvarianssin, keskiarvovertailun ja regressioanalyysin avulla. Tulokset osoittavat, että integroitu tuki näyttää olevan tärkein opiskelijoiden havaintoihin opetuksellisesta läsnäolosta vaikuttava tekijä. Minkään kohortin osalta ei todettu merkitsevää eroa opiskelijoiden CAA:n, CE:n ja WM:n vaikutuksessa heidän havaintoihinsa opetuksellisesta läsnäolosta. Vuoden 2021 kohortissa verkko-opetusmoduulin yksilöllisesti suorittaneet opiskelijat kuitenkin raportoivat havainneensa opetuksellista läsnäoloa huomattavasti enemmän kuin ryhmässä työskennelleet opiskelijat. Nämä opiskelijat näyttivät muodostavan ryhmiä pikemminkin koetun CAA:n kuin itsearvioidun CE:n perusteella, mutta tätä havaintoa ei tehty kolmessa muussa kohortissa. Tulokset tuovat esiin erilaisten pedagogisten tekijöiden ja opiskelijoiden valintojen vaikutukset opetukselliseen läsnäoloon, millä on merkittäviä implikaatioita toimivien verkkokurssien suunnitteluun.

Asiasanat: opetuksellinen läsnäolo, verkko-opetus, pedagoginen suunnittelu, akateeminen lukeminen, tutkiva yhteisö

Introduction

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) is a prominent theoretical framework for designing and analysing online learning environments. According to this model, learning is facilitated through three factors: teaching, social, and cognitive presence (Garrison et al., 2010). Teaching presence is defined as the support of social and cognitive presences to achieve educational outcomes, social presence refers to the ability of learners to express their personalities and interact within a learning community, and cognitive presence is the ability of learners to construct meaning through dialogue (Garrison et al., 2010). It is important to note that presence does not refer to physical presence but to an individual being perceived as there to help or guide (Song et al., 2019). Combining these two definitions one can define teaching presence as students' perceptions of the pedagogical design of the course to support their social and cognitive development. Of the three presences, teaching presence plays a central role in the CoI because it supports the other two presences (Domenech-Betoret et al., 2017; Shen et al., 2013). According to Garrison (2017), teaching presence is based on design and

organisation, facilitation, and direct instruction. Design and organisation are the structure and logical progression of the course, facilitation provides meaning and understanding for each individual student, and direct instruction refers to correcting misconceptions and providing timely academic expertise for the students. Despite the assumed significance of teaching presence in the CoI, further research is needed to explore this concept in different contexts, including the use of assessment and student perceptions of teaching presence (Garrison, 2017). Some researchers have proposed that a fourth dimension, learning presence, should be added to the CoI (Ma et al., 2017; Shea et al., 2014). Learning presence is defined as the behaviour, motivation, emotions, and strategies for successful learning (Shea & Bidjerano, 2012). However, this distinction between teaching and learning presence would compromise the basic principles that the CoI was founded on (Garrison, 2017). This debate suggests that further research into teaching presence is needed.

A review of the recent literature indicates that the research focuses on verifying the use of CoI in different contexts and modifying and validating different items and constructs rather than on comparing how groups of students differ in terms of context, institutional setting, major, or stage of studies. Two studies (Ma et al., 2017; Wertz, 2022) found that learning presence and teaching presence were separate constructs. Ma et al. (2017) found that teaching and social presence influenced learning presence, while Wertz (2022) only mentions that learning presence should be added to the CoI. Neither study analysed how different groups viewed the CoI even though they had the chance to compare institutions, years at university, and major. Two studies (Heilporn & Lakhal, 2020; Wertz, 2022) found that a two-variable construct of teaching presence consisting of course design and facilitation was best because facilitation and direct instruction were highly correlated. Heilporn and Lakhal (2020) collected data from two universities and found them invariant, which means that the two groups viewed the questionnaire's questions the same. However, they did not conduct a comparison of means (e.g., t test, ANOVA) on the two universities. One study by Lau et al. (2021) compared gender and major with teaching presence and found no significant difference between these factors, but they did not test for invariance. Heilporn and Lakhal (2020) have called for more multi-group analysis on the CoI which tests for invariance and could provide researchers and teachers with a better understanding of teaching presence. This action research, conducted over four years, aims to investigate how different pedagogical factors, embedded support, learning environment layout, and teacher feedback affect student perceptions of teaching presence in an online academic reading module. An additional aim was to investigate whether working mode (group or individual work), confidence in academic ability, and confidence in English affect teaching presence.

E-learning Design

Course background

The English language e-learning module at the centre of this study focused on reading an academic article written in English. It was part of a compulsory multilingual academic literacy course taught in Finnish, English, and Swedish at the University of Jyväskylä, which was also integrated with the students' home department course. As a learning environment, the academic literacy course used Moodle 3.5 for the 2018 cohort and Moodle 3.9.7 for the 2021 cohort, with the e-learning module embedded into the Moodle workspace. The

students had one month to complete the e-learning module, but they were able to request more time.

Base design: Cohort 2018

The base model of the e-learning module was designed in such a way that the students had the choice to work either in a group or individually. The teacher encouraged students who were less confident in their English skills or their academic ability to work in a group. The teacher introduced the module, explained how long it would take, and gave the students the option to skip certain activities. Cho and Heron (2015) pointed out that if a course is too structured, competent learners will feel a lack of control and therefore experience dissatisfaction. The module consisted of mini-learning modules (MLM) focusing on the following: identifying academic articles, finding key information in an academic article, and paraphrasing and summarising. Each MLM was based on the cyclical phases in Zimmerman's (2013) framework of self-regulated learning (SRL): forethought, performance, and self-reflection. SRL is defined as an individual's active use of metacognition, motivation, and behaviour in their learning (Zimmerman, 1989, 2008). Garrison and Arkyol (2015) suggested that since the CoI makes the students reflect, process, and reflect again, it offers a good model for promoting SRL. Zimmerman (2013) also distinguished two types of learners, *proactive* and *reactive*. Proactive learners use more forethought than reactive learners, who, in turn, use self-reflection after a performance to learn. This means that proactive learners are goal-oriented and more confident in their learning due to a perceived similar experience and thus are able to use more self-regulation in their learning. Proactive learners also have high self-efficacy (Zimmerman, 2013). In contrast, reactive learners tend to have lower self-efficacy because of not having had a perceived similar experience and thus would use self-reflection to increase their self-efficacy/self-regulation in the future. Therefore, they would need observations and emulation activities with the help of social interaction from the teacher or other students. Cho et al. (2017) highlight that understanding and developing learners' self-regulation would have a positive effect on teaching presence.

In the course, performance activities were all mandatory assignments, and the self-reflection activities were only available after the students completed the performance activity. The self-reflection activities were designed following a multimodal approach, allowing students to reflect on their answers through a written text or a video with teacher comments. All the material was designed using the Cognitive Affective Theory of Learning with Media (Moreno & Mayer, 2007). No feedback was given to the students during these MLMs except after the final summary. This was done because too much teacher support has been shown to restrict students' metacognition (Larkin, 2009). It was also assumed that assessing every single performance activity would be unsustainable for the teacher. The CoI teaching presence questionnaire was integrated into the e-learning module after the final summary and data were collected before teacher feedback on the final summary to ensure a high response rate and to see how students perceive teaching presence without teacher feedback.

Embedded support: Cohort 2019

Based on students' feedback and analysis of the data from the CoI questionnaire from the 2018 cohort, embedded support was added. This support first meant labelling the SRL

cyclical phases as *think* (forethought), *act* (performance), and *check* (self-reflection). According to Lim et al. (2020), it is important for students to be aware of their learning to succeed at university. It was assumed that these labels would help students better understand the SRL process and their own learning. Second, support videos were added. These were think-aloud videos by the teacher to demonstrate academic reading strategies. Neebe (2017) found that such think-aloud videos increased students' attention to strategies and helped them continue when faced with a challenging task. The videos also provided observation opportunities for students, which is the first phase in SRL and can lead to a higher sense of self-efficacy (Ahm et al., 2017; Zimmerman, 2013). Finally, videos can also increase teacher credibility and persuasion power (Won et al., 2017). In the videos, the teacher demonstrated the process of academic reading, using an academic article written in a language the teacher did not know well (Swedish). It was assumed that if the teacher had a similar learning experience as the students, this would increase the teacher's credibility and demonstrate that a student can also complete the task. Third, an overview video of the e-learning module was added to the beginning of the module to help students understand the goals and completion methods of the e-learning module. In the previous year, the e-learning module was only explained in the first class of the course but not in the module. Fourth, an example of a summary (an authentic text written by a student in a similar course) was added with teacher comments in the text. Alternatively, students could watch a video of the teacher analysing and evaluating the summary. The last addition was face-to-face support for students who wanted it. As in the previous year, the questionnaire was integrated into the e-learning module at the end, and data were collected before teacher feedback on the final summary.

Learning environment layout: Cohort 2020

For the 2020 cohort, the layout of the e-learning module was changed. Instead of showing all the activities in Moodle, they were hidden from the students but linked to in a course outline table with suggested deadlines also showing links to register for face-to-face teacher support in Zoom. These deadlines were not mandatory but were intended to give students a time frame for completing the e-learning module. The data were collected the same way as in the previous two years to enable the researcher to see how course layout as a single factor influenced teaching presence. This was also the first time running the e-learning module during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teacher feedback: Cohort 2021

For the 2021 cohort, face-to-face support was dropped as no student was using it, but students were encouraged to email the teacher with their questions. The data for this year were collected after teacher feedback on the final summary to analyse if the feedback had an impact on teaching presence.

Methods

Participants

The participants were first-year students at a Finnish university, studying in a Finnish-language education BA program. Out of 608 students enrolled in the course over four years, 282 students participated in the study by completing the survey, which means a response rate of 46.38%. See Table 1 for the yearly and total response rate.

Table 1 Yearly and Total Response Rate

Cohort	Number of students completing the module	Number of students completing the survey	Response rate (%)
2018	119	80	67.2
2019	161	84	52.1
2020	173	69	39.8
2021	155	49	31.61
Total	608	282	46.38

Data collection methods

The CoI questionnaire based on the Community of Inquiry Survey Instrument (draft v14 (n.d.) was reverse translated from English into Finnish and then back to English by professional translators to ensure an accurate Finnish translation. Only the first two dimensions of the CoI questionnaire – design and organisation along with facilitation – were used in this study to measure teaching presence. There were ten items altogether, four for design and organisation, labelled tp1–tp4 and six for facilitation, labelled tp5–tp10. The students rated these items on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being *strongly disagree* to 5 being *strongly agree*. In addition to measuring teaching presence, the independent variables were cohort, confidence in academic ability (CAA) as well as confidence in English (CE) – both labelled as not confident or confident and then converted to 1 for not confident and 2 for confident – and working mode (individual or group), which was converted to 1 for individual and 2 for group. CAA and CE were not collected for the second year.

Data analysis

The data were analysed in RStudio (2022.07.1 build 554) running R 4.2.1. To conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), a sufficiently large sample size is needed. According to Wolf et al. (2016), the sample size is based on latent variables, items, and loadings. The more latent variables a study has, the larger the sample size. However, using a higher number of items and a higher loading of those items on the latent variables allows for using a lower sample size. Based on Wolf et al.'s (2016) research, a minimum sample size of two latent variables with 10 indicators would require a sample size of 160 for a loading of .50, 130 for a loading of .65, and 90 for a loading of .8. Wertz (2022) used the same two latent factors as this

study and had loadings from .69 to .88 to indicate that 90 to 130 participants were needed to conduct a similar CFA.

According to Maydeu-Olivares (2017), before conducting a CFA one has to determine if the data is normal or nonnormal. After this step, there are many estimators that a researcher can use to conduct a CFA (Maydeu-Olivares, 2017). The estimators ML or MLF can be used for normally distributed data and MLM, MLMV, and MLR for non-normal distribution. To determine the goodness of fit for the CFA model, a model should be above 0.95 for CFI and TLI and below 0.08 for RMSEA and 0.06 for SRMR (Hu and Bentler, 1999). However, Levesque et al. (2004) suggested that an RMSEA of 0.05 or less is a very good fit and that an RMSEA between 0.05 and 0.08 is a reasonable fit.

A test of measurement invariance (MI) for cohort, confidence in English, confidence in academic ability, and the working mode was conducted. MI tests a construct across groups to ensure that the different groups interpret the items the same. It consists of three tests: configural, metric, and scalar invariance. According to Putnick and Bornstein (2016), once these tests have been passed, even with partial scalar invariance, one can compare the group means of latent factors. They also emphasised that when testing MI, there is no consensus on the best-fit indices or cutoff values. They mentioned that a significance in $\chi 2$ is traditionally used, but now most researchers use the criterion of a –.01 change in CFI. This study used the -.01 change in CFI. MI groups were then tested using a combination of one-way ANOVA, Turkey's HSD, and *t* tests. Regression analysis was also used to test if confidence in English and confidence in academic ability affected the choice of working mode. Finally, Moodle statistical data on click counts for teaching feedback and "check activities" was collected to see if students were reading teacher feedback and clicking on the check activities.

Results

Descriptive statistics

All the items had an increase in their means over all four years. However, from 2019 to 2020 there was a lower mean for the indicator tp1 in design and organisation, as well as in all the facilitation indicators. This was also the first time the e-learning module was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. All the indicators were higher in 2021. (See Table 2 for an overview of the individual means of each indicator per year.) Most of the students (77%) completed the e-learning module individually, with only 23% completing the module as a group over the four years. However, in the 2021 cohort, 55% completed the module as a group, and 45% did it individually. It is also important to note that not all the students in the overall population clicked on the check activities. On average, 89% of the students clicked on the check activities. What is more interesting is that on average only 35% of the overall population of the students checked the teacher's feedback. See Table 3 for more detailed information by year, the working mode, the percentage of students who clicked on the check activities and looked at teacher feedback.

Table 2 Item Means and *SD* for Each Cohort

	2018	2019	2020	2021
tp1	3.29 (1.03)	3.85 (0.92)	3.72 (0.97)	3.80 (0.93)
tp2	3.22 (0.97)	3.76 (0.89)	3.78 (0.94)	3.82 (0.86)
tp3	2.84 (1.13)	3.67 (0.91)	3.77 (0.93)	3.84 (0.90)
tp4	3.28 (1.26)	3.93 (0.85)	4.39 (0.75)	4.47 (0.65)
tp5	2.59 (0.98)	3.06 (0.88)	3.00 (0.97)	3.29 (0.98)
tp6	2.96 (1.00)	3.57 (0.92)	3.33 (0.89)	3.53 (1.02)
tp7	3.01 (1.20)	3.44 (1.03)	3.19 (0.96)	3.37 (1.00)
tp8	3.00 (1.06)	3.38 (0.97)	3.29 (0.88)	3.59 (0.84)
tp9	3.21 (1.12)	3.58 (1.02)	3.32 (1.02)	3.63 (1.03)
tp10	3.08 (1.12)	3.48 (1.07)	3.04 (1.02)	3.59 (1.00)

Table 3 Percentages of Work Mode, Clicked-on Check Activity, and Checked Teacher Feedback

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Working mode[a]				
Group *N* (%)	16 (20)	12 (14)	9 (13)	27 (55)
Individual *N* (%)	64 (80)	72 (86)	60 (87)	22 (45)
Clicked on check activity (%)[b]				
PDF/Video 1	No data collected	80	76	No data collected
PDF/Video 2		93	89	
PDF/Video 2		93	88	
PDF/Video 4		100	95	
Checked teacher feedback (%)[c]	No data collected	30	45	30

[a]Percentage is calculated by the individuals who responded to the questionnaire.
[b]Percentage is calculated in Moodle with the overall population. These percentages are just estimates and include both teacher and students who viewed the text/video.
[c]Percentage is calculated in Moodle by the Turnitin activity and calculated with the overall population that completed the final assignment.

Marida's test

Marida's test was tested on items tp1–tp10 to see if the data was normal or non-normal. The test resulted in a skewness of $p = 0.00$ and a kurtosis of $p = 0.00$, which indicates that the data is non-normal, and a robust or non-normal distribution estimator should be used. The MLM estimator was decided on because the data were complete.

Confirmatory factor analysis

The validity of the instrument was tested with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in two stages using the MLM estimator. The first CFA using a two-factor model with design and

organisation and facilitation produced a model with a CFI of 0.96, TLI 0.94, RMSEA 0.07, and SRMR 0.04, which is not a reasonable fit because of the TLI. Looking at the modification index, tp4 was removed. This item was removed because it was easier to distinguish for students than the other items in the design and organisation factor. The second CFA produced a CFI of 0.97, TLI 0.96, RMSEA 0.07, and SRMR 0.03, which is a reasonable fit (Figure 2). Based on the items, latent variables, and loadings, the sample size of 282 is appropriate. Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations of the latent variables.

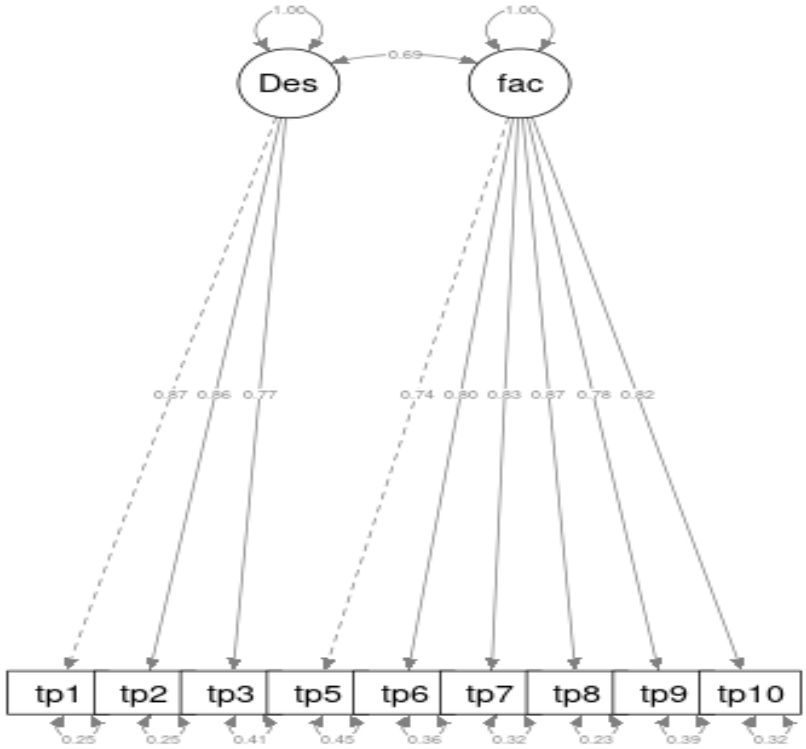

Figure 1 CFA

Table 4 Means (*SD*) of the Variables Per Cohort

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Design	3.11 (0.93)	3.75 (0.79)	3.76 (0.83)	3.82 (0.83)
Facilitation	2.96 (0.90)	3.42 (0.82)	3.20 (0.77)	3.56 (0.86)
Teaching Presence	3.05 (0.80)	3.59 (0.71)	3.48 (0.71)	3.68 (0.80)

Measurement invariance

A multi-group analysis was done to test measurement invariance for cohort, confidence in academic ability, confidence in English, and working mode. Confidence in academic ability, confidence in English, and working mode were all able to achieve scalar invariance. Cohort was only able to achieve partial scalar invariance because the ΔCFI was below the cutoff of -.01. Based on this result, it was identified that tp3 and tp10 had to be freed to have partial scalar invariance (Table 5).

Table 5 Test of Measurement Invariance

	Model fit indices				Model comparison			
Group	$\chi 2$**(df)**	**CFI**	**RMSEA**	**SRMR**	**Δχ2(Δdf)**	**ΔCFI**	**ΔRMSEA**	**ΔSRMR**
Cohort								
Configural	125.59 (104)	0.98	0.05	0.04				
Metric	147.73 (125)	0.97	0.05	0.07	21.67 (21)	0,00	-0.00	0.02
Scalar	200.54 (146)	0.94	0.07	0.08	68.81 (21)***	-0.02	0.02	0.01
Partial Scalar (free tp3 and tp10)	170.54 (140)	0.97	0.05	0.07	24.62 (15)	-0.00	0.00	0.00
Academic Ability								
Configural	66.52 (52)	0.98	0.05	0.04				
Metric	72.04 (59)	0.98	0.04	0.05	5.06 (7)	0.00	-0.00	0.00
Scalar	73.39 (66)	0.98	0.04	0.05	7.03 (9)	0.00	-0.00	0.00
English Ability								
Configural	71.79 (52)	0.97	0.06	0.04				
Metric	80.75 (59)	0.97	0.06	0.06	8.83 (7)	-0.00	-0.00	0.01
Scalar	84.83 (66)	0.98	0.05	0.06	2.89 (7)	0.00	-0.00	0.00
Working Mode								
Configural	94.30 (52)	0.96	0.07	0.04				
Metric	101.30 (59)	0.96	0.07	0.04	5.56 (7)	0.00	-0.00	0.00
Scalar	119.88 (66)	0.95	0.07	0.05	21.49 (7)**	-0.00	0.00	0.00

***$p \leq 0.000$, ** $p \leq 0.001$

Mean tests on invariance groups

Based on the measurement invariance tests, a one-way ANOVA test was used to determine the difference between cohorts with design and organisation, facilitation, and teaching presence as latent variables. There was a significant difference between the cohort and design and organisation, $F(3,278) = 11.59$, $p = 0.00$, the cohort and facilitation $F(3,278) = 6.28$, $p = 0.00$, and the cohort and teaching presence $F(3,278) = 8.90$, $p = 0.00$. Post-hoc testing using Tukey's HSD was then used to test the difference between the cohorts and these latent variables. There was a significant difference in design and organisation between the 2018 cohort and the 2019 cohort $p = 0.00$, 95% CI [0.30, 0.98], cohort 2018 and cohort 2020 $p = 0.00$, 95% CI [0.28, 1.000], and cohort 2018 and cohort 2021 $p = 0.00$, 95% CI [-1.09, -0.30]. For facilitation, there was only a significant difference between cohort 2018 and cohort 2019 $p = 0.00$, 95% CI [0.10, 0.78] and cohort 2018 and cohort 2021 $p = 0.00$, 95% CI [-0.98, -0.19]. For teaching presence, there was a significant difference between cohort 2018 and cohort 2019 $p = 0.00$, 95% CI [0.20, 0.81], cohort 2018 and cohort 2020 $p = 0.02$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.68], and cohort 2018 and cohort 2021 $p = 0.00$, 95% CI [-0.98, -0.26].

Next, *t* tests were used to determine if there was a significant difference between confidence in academic ability, confidence in English, and working mode with design and organisation, facilitation, and teaching presence (see Table 6 for means and standard deviations). There was no significant difference between students with no confidence in their academic ability and students with confidence in their academic ability between design and organisation $t(118.69) = 1.06, p = 0.29$, facilitation $t(115.17) = 0.86, p = 0.38$, and teaching presence $t(118.86) = 1.03, p = 0.31$. There was also no significant difference between students with no confidence in their English and confidence in their English with design and organisation $t(193.01) = 1.87, p = 0.06$, facilitation $t(185.98) = -0.92, p = 0.35$, and teaching presence $t(188.91) = 1.54, p = 0.12$. There was also no significant difference between those who worked individually or in a group with design and organisation $t(102.73) = 0.22, p = 0.82$, facilitation $t(96.37) = 0.33, p = 0.73$, and teaching presence $t(96.153) = 0.31, p = 0.75$.

Table 6 Means (*SD*) of Independent Variables for All Cohorts

	Design	Facilitation	Teaching presence
Academic ability (confident)	3.62 (0.88)	3.28 (0.74)	3.45 (0.77)
Academic ability (not confident)	3.47 (0.94)	3.16 (0.88)	3.32 (0.83)
English ability (confident)	3.63 (0.89)	3.25 (0.81)	3.44 (0.77)
English ability (not confident)	3.39 (0.95)	3.14 (0.95)	3.26 (0.86)
Working mode (indivi-dual)	3.60 (0.89)	3.27 (0.85)	3.44 (0.77)
Working mode (group)	3.53 (0.90)	3.23 (0.92)	3.38 (0.86)

2021 cohort analysis

A final analysis was conducted on the 2021 cohort because there was a sizable increase in students working in a group than independently compared to the previous cohorts (See Table 7 for means and standard deviations). In the 2021 cohort, 27 participants worked in a group (55%) and 22 worked individually (45%). In the previous three cohorts on average, 84% worked independently and 16% worked in a group. Those that completed the module independently for the 2021 cohort had significantly higher perceptions of teaching presence than did those that completed it in a group $t(80.49) = 15.77, p = 0.00$.

Based on the *t* test result, a multiple linear regression was used to test if confidence in academic ability or confidence in English could predict working mode for the 2021 cohort. The regression was significant, $R^2 = 0.14$, $F(2,46)$, $p = 0.02$. It was found that confidence in academic ability $\beta = -0.41$, $p = 0.01$ did have significance to predict working mode but confidence in English $\beta = 0.05$, $p = 0.70$ did not. This indicates that those not confident in their academic ability formed groups in the 2021 cohort. Based on these results, multiple linear regression was tested through all four cohorts to see if confidence in English or confidence in academic ability had a correlation with working mode. However, no correlation was found $R^2 = 0.10$, $F(2,195)$, $p = 0.34$.

Table 7 Means (SD) of Independent Variables for the 2021 Cohort

	Design	Facilitation	Teaching presence
Academic ability (confident)	3.91 (0.78)	3.64 (0.81)	3.78 (0.74)
Academic ability (not confident)	3.75 (0.86)	3.51 (0.89)	3.63 (0.85)
English ability (confident)	3.86 (0.81)	3.61 (0.81)	3.74 (0.77)
English ability (not confident)	3.77 (0.85)	3.51 (0.90)	3.64 (0.85)
Working mode (individual)	4.21 (0.54)	3.87 (0.72)	4.04 (0.57)
Working mode (group)	3.49 (0.89)	3.31 (0.89)	3.40 (0.86)

Discussion

The three main pedagogical factors – support, layout, and teacher feedback – were analysed to see whether they influenced teaching presence when compared to the base model. Although the study found a significant difference between embedded support, layout, and teacher feedback against the base model design, there was no significant difference between the effects of embedded support, layout, and teacher feedback, which suggests that teachers faced with time and resource constraints could focus more on embedded support. Cancino and Avila (2021) found that instructional material that was meaningful and that prompted self-regulation was rated the highest when students were asked about their e-learning engagement. In addition, Wang et al. (2022) found that learner–content interaction was perceived as the most engaging compared to learner–learner interaction and learner–instructor interaction. This also seems to be the case in this study where the support was embedded into the activities to help students at certain points. These findings demonstrate that embedded support seems to have the strongest impact on teaching presence in this study.

Surprisingly, teacher feedback did not significantly affect teaching presence when compared with embedded support. Research shows teacher feedback is an important aspect of learning and thus can be expected to enhance learning with embedded support. The reason why teacher feedback did not have a significant effect on teaching presence could be explained by students not being proactive, Moodle showing the grade before teacher feedback, and the timing of the feedback being too late for the students. Winstone et al. (2017) found that many students are not proactive in using feedback and that if a student receives a good grade, they will ignore the feedback. This seems to be the case in this study, with only 35% of the participants checking teacher feedback on the final summary. Moreover, the students were able to see the grade before receiving the feedback, and once they saw that they had passed the assignment, they might have assumed they do not need to improve. Brinkworth et al. (2008) highlighted that the timing of the feedback is often an issue, but the feedback in the module was given within two weeks. However, Brinkworth et al. (2008) also mention that students typically expect immediate feedback on their assignments. Students in this study might have been expecting feedback within one week or even instantly, which could explain the low number of students reading it. The fact that the "check activities" were immediately available after completing the performance tasks could also contribute to the timing issue of the feedback. This could be one reason teacher feedback did not have a strong impact on

teaching presence. It should be noted that direct instruction was not included in this study as a variable although it could have answered the question of feedback timing. On the other hand, it would still not have answered the question if students considered the grade the only feedback that they needed.

Another reason that teacher feedback might not have affected student perceptions of teaching presence could relate to the working modes in the e-learning module. In the first three cohorts, only 16% worked in a group, but in the 2021 cohort, 55% of the participants worked in a group. The reason for this change may have been the higher emphasis on group work in the overall course for the 2021 cohort. This rise in group work might have contributed to teacher feedback not significantly affecting teaching presence from the 2020 cohort to the 2021 cohort. Group work might be creating some role confusion for students. Shea et al. (2014) found that teaching presence, as measured by the CoI, can cause students confusion about the role of the teacher and learner. This current study found that participants who did the e-learning module individually in the 2021 cohort rated teaching presence significantly higher than those who did it as a group. This could be because individual learners had a clearly defined student role, compared to students who did the module as a group, where the roles of being a student and teacher are often blurred. However, it is not a simple case of limiting the e-learning module to only individual work because some individuals might not have the self-efficacy to start working, thus making group work important. Pajares (1996) found that those with higher self-efficacy put more effort into a task and spend more time overcoming obstacles than do those with low self-efficacy, who give up on a task more easily. In the Finnish context, Räisänen et al. (2020) found that university students who reported higher self-regulation did not require student support, but those that had low self-regulation needed peer support to help them develop their self-regulation. These findings point to the importance of group work for some students. If participants did the e-learning module as a group, the role of the teacher and student could have become confused. If one student learned more from another student than from the teacher, they may not have been aware of the teaching presence. This could indicate that those working in groups supported other students more than did the teacher who facilitated the learning in groups. This finding may be linked to the call for learning presence to be added to the CoI and highlights why more research is needed.

As stated above, the lack of students reading teacher feedback and working in a group might have resulted in significantly lower perceptions of teaching presence than what was found among those that worked alone. In addition, group interaction could also affect student perceptions of teaching presence. According to Garrison and Akyol (2015), there is a difference between self-regulation and co-regulation, which are independent of each other. Students who work in groups tend to focus more on co-regulation rather than self-regulation (Garrison & Akyol, 2015; Saab et al., 2012). This may have been the case for students who worked in a group during the e-learning module. Another reason for the lack of individual development might be a lack of discussion during potential conflicts within the group. If group members are unfamiliar with each other, they might not interact when there is a conflict due to a fear of stress (Robinson, 2013). This lack of conflict could limit metacognitive interaction because conflict is thought to be needed for co-regulation to affect self-regulation (Haataja et al., 2022). Garrison (2017) pointed out that self-regulation and co-regulation need monitoring and managing. The fact that the students who formed groups in the 2021 cohort had lower perceived confidence in their academic ability might

also mean that they had lower SRL as well as lower monitoring and managing skills at this point in their studies. Furthermore, low SRL might limit constructive conflict in the group. Garrison (2022) proposed that developing and supporting shared metacognition, which he defines as monitoring and managing one's SRL and co-regulation, might improve students' metacognitive awareness. This study indicates that students working in groups might need additional teacher support on shared metacognition, or more specifically, monitoring and managing their SRL and co-regulation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the three factors tested in this study, embedded support seems to play a prominent role in increasing perceived teaching presence when compared to learning environment layout and teacher feedback. Embedded support needs to focus on the development of metacognitive awareness and learning strategies related to the learning process. Teacher feedback did not significantly contribute to teaching presence, which might be linked to the lack of student proactivity, the timing of the feedback, or the nature of working in a group. Whether the students work through the e-learning module individually or as a group might also affect teaching presence. Although there was no significant difference when comparing students who worked alone with those who worked in groups through all the cohorts, the working mode had an effect on the 2021 cohort. This change was the result of more students working in a group than in the previous three cohorts. The 2021 cohort students seem to form groups based on a perceived lack of confidence in their academic ability. However, forming groups because of a lack of confidence was not observed when analysing all four cohorts. Considering that the participants are first-year students at university, and this was their first assignment, they are still developing their metacognition. Although teachers can provide more tailored support for students, it is important to understand that students might contribute their development to other students than the teacher because of role confusion within the CoI and not consider the teacher who facilitated the learning in groups. This e-learning module was very flexible in how students could complete it and demonstrates that different options chosen by the students can influence teaching presence.

Limitations

Since this study was conducted using action research, there are some limitations. Only two of the three teaching presence variables were used instead of the whole CoI questionnaire. Even though using the whole CoI questionnaire would have given a deeper and more comprehensive analysis of the learning environment, this study still provides insights into how to improve teaching presence. The other limitation is the factors chosen, that is embedded support, learning environment layout, and teacher feedback. These were chosen based on the literature and feedback from the students. However, there could be other factors influencing teaching presence that were not investigated in this action research. In addition, this study only focused on a specific e-learning module embedded in a course. Participants may have focused on the overall course rather than only on the e-learning module when answering the questionnaire.

Further research

Further research is needed to investigate the ways in which shared metacognition affects teaching presence, with a particular focus on group work. There seems to be a lack of

information in the available literature on the CoI in terms of whether the main assignments/tasks were done in groups, individually, or mixed for each study. Although the CoI encourages community, there seems to be a lack of information on whether participants are contributing to the overall course community individually or working with a pair/group first before contributing to the overall community. Many studies combined different courses with the brief comment that teaching methods were similar. As shown in this study, however, working in a group or individually might influence perceptions of teaching presence. A systematic or meta-analysis review of group work and teacher feedback on teaching presence would provide deeper insights into this aspect. Additionally, further research on how to encourage students to read and interact with teacher feedback is also needed within the CoI.

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Author

Aaron Orszag, University Teacher, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5462-5389

Aaron Orszag is University Teacher at the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication at the University of Jyväskylä. He is interested in online collaborative learning, critical thinking, active learning and student agency, and issues of equitable grading and assessment.

EXPANDING THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF WRITING

A paradigm shift in teaching written communication at a Finnish university

Elina Jokinen, Heidi Kuitunen & Päivi Torvelainen

This article focuses on the changes in the teaching of written communication in Finnish at the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication at the University of Jyväskylä between 2010 and 2020. In 2013 to 2014, the team of written communication teachers conducted a comprehensive reassessment of its pedagogical goals and content, referred to as learning pathway work. We report on a study which compared the 2010 and 2020 curricula before and after the development work, and examine the underlying approach to scientific writing and writing pedagogy. We drew on Ivanič's (2004) framework, which presents six discourses of writing and learning to write based on different conceptualisations of literacy. These, in turn, are reflected in the beliefs, values, and practices related to writing and writing pedagogy. Our findings show that the development work resulted in major changes in the curricula, particularly in the way writing is conceptualised. The revised curriculum reflects a broader understanding of writing, with greater emphasis on the mental processes involved and the sociocultural context in which writing takes place. We also discuss the importance of uncovering the implicit (language) ideologies that underpin our writing pedagogies. We emphasise that engaging in open and critical discussions on individual beliefs and values regarding languages and learning to write support collaboration among those involved in developing language and communication studies at the university.

Keywords: writing, university pedagogy, curricula, discourses, ideologies, academic literacies

Tarkastelemme tässä luvussa suomenkielisen kirjoitusviestinnän opetuksen muutosta Jyväskylän yliopiston Monikielisen akateemisen viestinnän keskuksessa aikavälillä 2010–2020. Vuosina 2013–2014 kirjoitusviestinnän opettajatiimi arvioi ja jäsensi tieteellisen kirjoittamisen opetuksen tavoitteita ja sisältöjä. Tästä pedagogisesta kehittämistyöstä käytämme nimitystä opintopolkutyöskentely. Vertaamme vuosien 2010 ja 2020 opetussuunnitelmia, ennen ja jälkeen kehitystyön, ja tarkastelemme, miten niissä

lähestytään tieteellistä kirjoittamista ja kirjoittamisen pedagogiikkaa. Hyödynnämme tarkastelussa Ivaničin (2004) viitekehystä, jossa esitellään kuusi kirjoittamisen diskurssia. Diskurssit perustuvat erilaisiin tapoihin käsitteellistää kieltä ja kirjoittamista, ja ne ilmenevät kirjoittamista ja kirjoittamisen pedagogiikkaa koskevissa uskomuksissa, arvoissa ja käytännöissä. Tarkastelumme osoittaa, että kirjoitusviestinnän kehittämistyö sai aikaan merkittäviä muutoksia siinä, miten kirjoittamista käsitteellistetään. Jälkimmäisessä opetussuunnitelmassa käsitys kirjoittamisesta on aiempaa laajempi: kirjoittaminen ei näyttäydy ainoastaan tekstilajien ja kielen hallintana, vaan sosiokulttuurisessa kontekstissa tapahtuvana toimintana, jota voidaan tarkastella myös mentaalisten ja käytännöllisten prosessien kannalta. Pohdimme lopuksi, miten tärkeää on tunnistaa kirjoittamisen pedagogiikan taustalla olevia kieli-ideologioita. Avoin ja kriittinen keskustelu kirjoittamisen opettamista ja oppimista koskevista uskomuksista ja arvoista on keskeistä, kun tehdään yhteistyötä yliopistojen kieli- ja viestintäopintojen kehittämiseksi.

Asiasanat: kirjoittaminen, yliopistopedagogiikka, opetussuunnitelmat, diskurssit, ideologiat, akateemiset tekstitaidot

Introduction

Writing plays a central role in academia, as becoming a member of the scientific community and contributing to it rely significantly on writing. Scientific writing encompasses a range of specific skills, such as reading, (critical) thinking, information management, as well as familiarity with the way knowledge is created in each discipline, including such key aspects as the social practices of interaction and the processes, norms, and conventions of publishing (e.g., Li, 2022; Wingate, 2018). The notion of academic literacies refers to the diverse and fluid practices of the scientific communities in various disciplines, embedded in complex institutional and social/cultural contexts and involving issues of power and identity (e.g., Kiili & Mäkinen, 2011; Kiili et al., 2013, Li, 2022; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Lillis & Tuck 2016). From the students' perspective, acquiring academic literacies plays a crucial role in academic progression (Bailey, 2018), and it strongly impacts students' sense of belonging to the academic community or particular disciplinary communities (Poutanen et al., 2012) and the development of their identity as a student and a member of the academic community (Gourlay, 2009; Korhonen, 2012). To familiarise students with the norms and conventions of academic writing and language use in a given context, explicit instruction is often necessary (Starfield, 2019). This instruction is provided in disciplinary content courses and thesis supervision, but in many countries, including Finland, students receive additional support from writing centres (e.g., Gustafsson & Ganobcsik-Williams, 2016; Kaufhold & Yencken, 2021) or university language centres in the form of language and communication courses.

In Finland, the Government Decree on University Degrees (794/2004) by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2004) stipulates that students must show proficiency in the official national languages, Finnish and Swedish, and in at least one foreign language. On this basis, a certain amount of language and communication studies are included in higher education degrees in Finland, and these studies are often arranged by separate language centres (see Jalkanen et al., 2015; Kuitunen & Carolan, 2019). The amount and scope of language and

communication studies varies for each degree programme at the University of Jyväskylä. For instance, certain programmes require 2 ECTS credits of written communication or speech communication studies in L1 at the bachelor's level, while L1 communication studies are not obligatory at the master's level. However, some faculties require 2 ECTS credits of L1 written communication at the bachelor's level and 3 ECTS credits at the master's level (University of Jyväskylä, 2020). As the number of ECTS credits required for (L1) written communication studies varies from programme to programme, the content and learning outcomes of these studies may also vary. In addition, university teachers have a high degree of autonomy in their work, which means that individual pedagogical approaches, strategies and emphasis on certain topics may also vary.

Teaching writing in a particular social, cultural and disciplinary context and at a particular educational level is influenced by the way both the surrounding community and teachers as individuals understand and approach writing (Graham, 2018). Different kinds of beliefs, perceptions and attitudes, as well as values and practices, constitute discourses of writing (Ivanič, 2004). Thus, discourses of writing can be seen as socially constructed and identifiable ways of conceptualising writing. For example, if a teacher has been socialised to believe that writing is primarily about the correct use of language, this approach may be central to their teaching. In this sense, Ivanič's (2004) concept of discourse can be seen as related to the concepts of ideology and paradigm. Many established practices are based on tacit, self-evident concepts, beliefs, values and assumptions, which can be called ideologies (e.g., Gee, 2008). In practical terms, an individual teacher may consciously or unconsciously be implementing an ideology of writing and writing education that they have been socialised to believe in.

According to Kuhn (1996), the concept of a paradigm refers to a shared and perceived framework for scientific work, such as a shared understanding of the norms and practices that define scientific activity in a discipline. In this way, a paradigm determines which practices are accepted and valued at a given time, or what is considered in some sense natural and normal in a given discipline. According to Kuhn (1996), the development of scientific disciplines alternates between phases of so-called normal science and paradigm shifts that can be called scientific revolutions. In a paradigm shift, the natural and self-evident facts of the dominant paradigm are challenged, and there is a perceived need to re-examine and challenge established ways of thinking and practicing. In this article we use the term *paradigm* not to refer to disciplinary research traditions and the changes that have taken place in them. Instead, we use it metaphorically to describe the discourses of writing in a particular time and place in our own community, the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication (Movi).

The authors of this article are teachers of written communication in Movi at the University of Jyväskylä. We discuss the shift in thinking and practice that took place in our own field, the teaching of Finnish-language written communication, in the 2010s. This shift is the result of the development work carried out between 2013 and 2014 that aimed to revise and renew the writing pedagogy underpinning our work, referred to as the learning pathway work. During this period, written communication teachers at Movi created an overall, forward-looking vision and specific goals for L1 written communication in each stage of the studies.

After defining the overall vision for writing pedagogy, the written communication teacher team reflected on the existing courses, focusing on their learning outcomes and contents, with reference to the jointly created vision and goals. All three authors of this article were actively involved in planning and implementing this development work. The outcome of the work seems to reflect a shift in conceptualisations (what scientific writing is), values (what is

considered important in scientific writing), and practices (how scientific writing should be taught). We saw the change in our pedagogy to be so fundamental that it could be described as a paradigm shift within our written communication teacher team at Movi.

This reflective report illustrates how change becomes apparent when observed from a temporal perspective beyond the immediate experience. We report the results of our reflection in which we analysed the discourses underpinning the curriculum of written communication pedagogy in Finnish used at Movi in 2010 and 2020. We examine the underlying discourses to find out what changes have taken place over this ten-year period. In addition, we discuss whether the perceived change can actually be seen as a paradigm shift and what the significance of the learning pathway work was based on.

Our research questions are as follows:

1. What discourses underpin the conceptualisation of writing in the curricula of Finnish written communication in 2010 and 2020?
2. What changes have taken place in the discourses underlying the written communication curricula during this period?

To analyse the change, we draw on Ivanič's (2004) framework, which helps us identify the discourses underpinning academic writing pedagogies. The framework will be presented in more detail in the next section, followed by the description of the learning pathway work. After this, we describe our research methodology, present the results and discuss the main findings.

Discourses of writing

In her definition of the concept of discourse, Ivanič (2004) refers to Gee's (1996, p. 131) idea of discourse as "socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and 'artifacts', of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting which can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group". More specifically, Ivanič (2004, p. 224) defines 'discourses of writing' as "constellations of beliefs about writing, beliefs about learning to write, ways of talking about writing, and the sorts of approaches to teaching and assessment which are likely to be associated with these beliefs". Discourses are thus expressed through language and symbols, but they are socially constructed based on people's values, beliefs, practices, and behaviours (Gee, 1996; Ivanič, 2004; Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2009).

Drawing on numerous studies of writing and writing pedagogies in Anglophone countries, Ivanič (2004) developed a framework describing six different approaches to writing which she refers to as discourses of writing and learning to write. These discourses are grouped as follows: (a) skills, (b) creativity, (c) process, (d) genre, (e) social practices, and (f) sociopolitical. Ivanič's discourses provide a framework for recognising and describing the beliefs, values, and practices that influence the learning and teaching of writing. In each discourse, she explains which dimension of writing is being emphasised – whether it is the written text, the mental processes of writing, the writing event, or the sociocultural and political context of writing. Additionally, she identifies the beliefs associated with writing and learning to write in each discourse. She also describes the approach to the teaching of writing, including the assessment criteria, specific to each discourse. The essential underlying ideas of each discourse are summarised in Table 1.

According to Ivanič (2004), in the skills discourse, writing is first and foremost about the correct application of language skills in the production of a text. In fact, what is central to the

skills discourse is the construction of an ideal text and the skills needed to do so, which are not seen as particularly context dependent. The focus on skills was offset by the acknowledgement that writing is creative self-expression, which Ivanič refers as the creativity discourse. The creativity discourse emphasises autonomy and agency in writing, in terms of topic choice, style, and writing goals.

The process approach to writing developed when research in cognitive psychology became interested in the cognitive processes of writing (Ivanič, 2004). In writing pedagogies, the practical steps that support the thinking process linked to writing started to receive more attention. The process discourse understands writing as a sequential activity with both a mental and a practical dimension. The process approach has been very prominent in the teaching of writing since the 1980s (Ivanič, 2004).

In addition to process thinking, genre pedagogy has become an integral part of writing pedagogy. In the genre discourse, as described by Ivanič (2004), writing is thought of as a goal-oriented activity, where the goal of writing determines the structure and linguistic choices in the text. Different communication situations thus shape textual genres, the characteristics of which are the focus of teaching and learning.

The social practices discourse and the sociopolitical discourse, as described by Ivanič (2004), emphasise the social context of writing even more than the genre discourse. In the former, writing is seen as part of the social practices of communities: texts and their production processes are linked to social interaction. Writing as a social practice is learned primarily by participating in the activities of the community and embracing its values and beliefs. Finally, the sociopolitical discourse is based on the idea that the ways in which language is used are ideologically constructed and thus not neutral. Raising critical awareness of the interconnectedness of language use and social power relationships is central to writing pedagogy underpinned by this discourse.

Since Ivanič's framework (2004) is based on research on writing and writing pedagogies in English-speaking countries, she also discusses its constraints. For example, the meaning of words that embody certain discourses may vary in different cultures and languages. For this reason, Ivanič points out that when the framework is used in a different context, it needs to be adapted. For example, in Ivanič's framework, the word *spelling* reflects the skills discourse, and it is associated with the skill of learning to spell and write words correctly, whereas due to the orthographical transparency of the Finnish language, the word *spell* in the similar sense is not relevant in the context of learning to write. In this case, we did not use the specific expressions mentioned in Ivanič's study, as they refer to a particular discourse in her data. Instead, we examined the curriculum texts to determine the overall concept of writing they represent in light of Ivanič's framework.

The learning pathway work: Background and implementation

The development project referred to as *learning pathway work* was designed and carried out by the team of written communication teachers in the 2013–2014 academic year, and it was part of the 2014–2017 curriculum update at Movi. Its purpose was to reassess the pedagogical goals and contents of written communication teaching in Finnish (L1).

Several internal factors drove this development work. One was the recruitment of new teachers, which required a transparent job description, and the idea of a teacher community with shared values and a shared understanding of academic writing in the context of the

University of Jyväskylä. These formed the basis for the development work, which was then carried out as a participatory and collaborative process, where every teacher was actively involved and had a voice.

One of the reasons for reassessing and restructuring the content and pedagogies of written communication was that the written communication studies in L1 required for bachelor's degree programmes could be taken in courses that did not cover academic writing at all. It was also seen as problematic that only occasional courses were offered to master's and doctoral students. The learning pathway work therefore aimed to ensure that all university students have an opportunity to study academic writing at the appropriate stage of their studies, from undergraduate to the master's and doctoral level, and that their learning needs are met in an appropriate way.

Another factor contributing to the learning pathway work was the development work that started at the university level and aimed to restructure language and communication studies as multilingual and discipline-specific studies (often referred to by the acronym UVK; see Laakso & Taalas, 2019 and the Introduction of this book by Károly et al., 2024). To prepare for the upcoming change, it was important to redefine the basic mission and restructure the core contents of teaching written communication at Movi.

In addition to these internal factors, the need for further development work was reinforced by gradual changes in the conceptualisations of writing at the global level, such as the genre-based pedagogy initiated by the Sydney School in the 1970s (e.g., Rose & Martin, 2012), and the concept of multiliteracy/multiliteracies that emerged with the rapid digital development of the 21st century (e.g., Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012; Kress, 2003).

Global changes in the conceptualisation of writing are also reflected in Finnish publications dealing with writing pedagogies. Process writing has been written about in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., Linna, 1994; Linnakylä et al., 1988), about genre-based pedagogy in the 1980s (e.g., Kauppinen & Laurinen, 1988) and especially in the early 2000s (e.g., Luukka, 2004, 2009), and multiliteracies in the 2010s (e.g., Kupiainen et al., 2015; Luukka, 2013). A similar impact of the global level developments can also be observed in Finnish writing research, although most studies have focused on the contexts of primary and secondary education (Kulju et al., 2017; Pentikäinen et al., 2017). The current L1 and literature curricula for basic education and upper secondary schools (valid in 2015 and 2021) are based on a broad understanding of texts, and multiliteracy is seen as a starting point for producing and interpreting meaning (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, 2020). In addition, for example, the current curriculum for primary school defines multiliteracies as one of the transversal competences alongside ICT competence, the objectives of which should be taken into account when defining the objectives and core content of different subjects (Luukka, 2013). Naturally, this development was also reflected in the learning pathway work and thus in the 2020 curriculum. It can also be assumed that teachers of different ages in Movi's writing communication team have been socialised into different conceptions of writing during their teacher training.

In addition to shifts in research-based knowledge and writing culture, changes in higher education during the period were also influenced by university education policy in Finland. At the beginning of the 2010s, the Ministry of Education defined an action strategy for higher education, setting objectives such as reducing the time taken to complete a degree, improving the pass rates, and enhancing the relevance of teaching to working life. Since progressing in and graduating from higher education require the production of written theses, there was

a need to consider how to support students' writing and research processes, also from the perspective of language and communication studies.

The connection between learning pathway work and higher education policy is reflected in the method that was chosen to support the progress of the work. The process was loosely based on the W5W² model (*Walmiiksi wiidessä wuodessa / Graduation in Five Years*) piloted at the University of Oulu, which focused on defining visions and core content, as well as cumulative learning (e.g., Rahkonen et al., 2009). During the 2013-2014 academic year, all eight teachers of written communication in Finnish and a student trainee (one of the authors of this article) participated in the learning pathway work.

The learning pathway work started by exploring the core competences of written communication in a higher education context. The first step in this work was to recognise and share teachers' personal perceptions of writing. In practice, this was implemented by having teachers write down their thoughts on what writing is and what should be taught about writing at university.

Next, the aim was to create a vision for each phase of studies (entry, bachelor's, master's and doctoral), namely, what kind of competence and agency in written communication is sought at each phase. The visioning phase generated a range of ideas. The trainee in written communication deepened the process and linked it to theory by conceptualising the ideas about writing that appeared in the teachers' visions, using Ivanič's (2004) framework. The analysis showed that there was diversity in the ideas generated during the visioning phase and also that there were certain approaches with clear commonalities.

We then summarised and formulated the structured ideas into a set of core statements, which formed a continuum of studies in written communication, that is, the learning pathway (see Figure 1). Our aim was to provide a comprehensive picture of writing, with clear objectives and a shared understanding of the core competences of each phase.

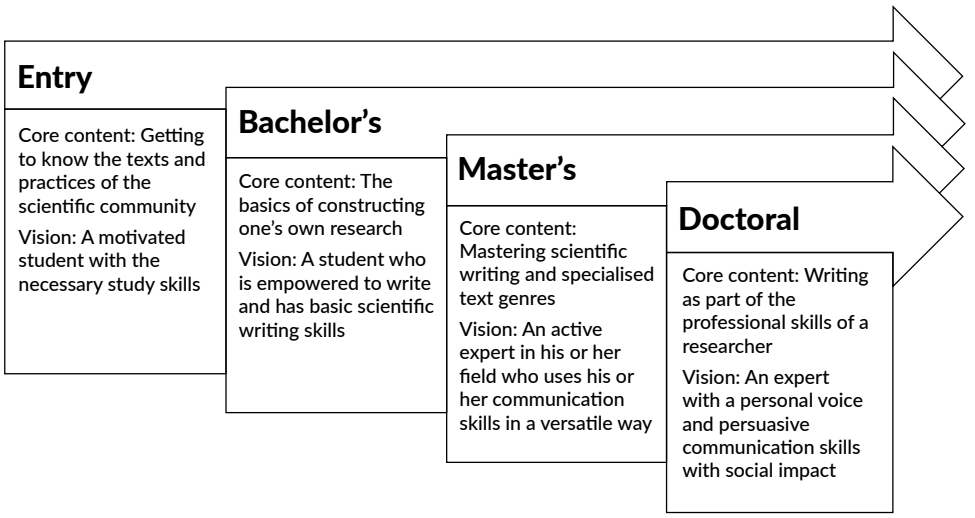

Figure 1 The phases of the written communication learning pathway and a summary of the core content and vision of each phase

At the entry phase, at the start of university studies, the emphasis is on students' academic socialisation, that is helping them to become part of the university community through

helping them internalise the norms, conventions, genres, and practices of the scientific community and learning the processes of knowledge creation. At the bachelor's level, the focus is on increasing students' academic identity and understanding the various phases in the research process and the importance of writing. The master's level focuses on developing expertise in one's own field through writing. Doctoral studies focus on the deepening of skills in scientific writing and the management of the research process, as well as the development of skills in self-expression and the popularisation of science.

The work continued with the practical implementation of the visions. In practice, we looked at how the existing curriculum was positioned on the learning pathway, how it was divided into core substance, complementary skills, and specialised competence, and what were the changes that needed to be made in the curriculum, course contents, and pedagogical approaches and strategies. The results of this phase of the work are reflected in the 2020 curricula, the analysis of which is part of the research reported in this article.

Research data and methods of analysis

The question of the paradigm shift in the teaching of written communication is a complex one, which could and should be examined in a variety of ways, for example, ethnographically through observation of teaching situations. For this study, we analysed curriculum documents from 2010 and 2020. These public documents were well suited for our purposes because they articulate the objectives and content of teaching written communication. These documents have a normative force in the sense that they form the basis of pedagogical practices, but they also play a prominent role in educational reforms and quality control in contemporary universities (e.g., Honkimäki et al., 2022).

The curriculum document can be considered particularly useful as research data when reflecting on underlying paradigms. They can be seen as representing a meta-language (Woolard, 1998), reflecting the norms of language use and communication that are considered desirable and appropriate. In our analysis, we have made an effort to take into account that some beliefs and perceptions reflected in the documents may be so naturalised (and deeply ingrained) that they are not explicitly negotiated (Mäntynen et al., 2012), but are included in curriculum documents because they are considered to be self-evident.

On the other hand, the curriculum is by no means problem-free as an indicator of a paradigm shift. It is possible to study discursive changes in texts, but such changes do not necessarily reflect actual practices. There is, in truth, never a perfect match between the written curriculum and actual teaching practices. When examining paradigm shifts at the curriculum level, we should, therefore, take into account the limitations: by studying texts we can gain insights into changes in linguistically expressed ways of thinking.

The curriculum dataset for 2010 consisted of the descriptions of the courses offered at that time at the BA and MA level. If the content and learning outcomes of several courses were similar, we included only one of them in the dataset. Consequently, the 2010 dataset consisted of data from 32 different courses, and the 2020 dataset consisted of data from 14 different courses. The analysis incorporated course names and descriptions including the target group of the course, learning outcomes, contents, and completion methods.

The curriculum dataset for 2020 consisted of the descriptions of the core courses designed for each phase of studies (entry phase, BA and MA phase) as a result of the learning pathway development work within the written communication team at Movi. In addition to these,

the dataset included descriptions of the UVK courses Academic Literacies and Research Communication from the fields of physics, history, and education. These courses were the result of Movi's university-wide development work, referred to as the UVK process (Laakso & Taalas, 2019; see also the introduction of this book). By 2020, multilingual language and communication studies had already started in almost all degree programmes. We chose to look more closely at the fields of physics and history, as these were the fields where multilingual language and communication studies had been offered the longest. In contrast, the development of UVK courses in the field of education was based on several years of experience in multilingual language and communication studies.

Analysing the discourses underpinning the two curricula

We applied Ivanič's (2004) analytical framework on discourses on writing and learning to write in our analysis of curriculum documents. Ivanič's classification of discourses is based on a multidimensional interpretation of meanings: Individual linguistic choices may refer to a particular discourse, but the identification of the overarching discourse requires in-depth reading that takes into account the context. In this connection, context refers to the culture of writing, which includes, for example, what aspect of writing is considered central, what writing is perceived as an activity, how writing is thought to be taught, how it is approached and how it is assessed.

Therefore, we first looked at the curriculum data as whole and complex entities. In this phase of the analysis, we provided a general overview of the data, paying attention to the name of the courses, target groups, learning objectives, and the content and structure of the courses. We conducted a preliminary analysis both together and separately. We discussed our findings together and reflected on them in relation to Ivanič's (2004) discourse classification. We then carried out a more detailed analysis, that is, we analysed each of the two datasets separately to see what discourses of writing underpin them.

Table 1 describes the discourses identified in the 2010 and 2020 curricula. It has to be noted that the original curriculum texts are in Finnish, so the English translation of the example terms does not always have the exact same meaning (basic and associative meanings) as the Finnish terms. During the analysis phase, we also adapted the analysis framework to suit the Finnish language. Thus, the function of Table 1 in English is mainly to demonstrate our method, but at the lexical level it cannot be considered an accurate description. The discourse descriptions in the left-hand column summarise the main features of each discourse, including the underlying views as well as pedagogical approaches and practices. Based on these, we identified linguistic expressions (words or phrases) that represent each discourse in the curriculum texts (listed in the middle column). It should be pointed out that the words and phrases in the table have been extracted by close reading from a specific context, and as such, they do not represent a particular way of thinking. What matters is the meaning that the word or phrase in question takes on in a particular (this time in the Finnish) context. The right-hand column of the table contains a few illustrative excerpts from the curricula as examples of each discourse. Again, what matters is the meaning in context. Due to the space restrictions of the table, the right column does not contain examples of all the expressions listed in the middle column. The year in brackets indicates the dataset it is taken from, and the letters *b* and *m* indicate whether it concerns the curriculum of a bachelor's or a master's course.

Table 1 Discourses identified in the curriculum documents

Discourses of writing and learning to write and their underlying views and pedagogical approaches/practices according to Ivanič (2004)	Topics in the curriculum data that indicate the underlying ideas of a particular discourse	Translated extracts from curriculum texts that reflect the discourse in their original context
Skills discourse		
The written text is central. Writing is seen as the application of knowledge of (decontextualised) linguistic patterns and rules, or linguistic skills. The correctness of the text (and its structure) determines the quality of the text. Explicit teaching of grammar is considered important. In an academic context "correct usage and adherence to conventions for the formal features of academic writing" (p. 228). A normative approach to writing, as reflected in the choice of words such as *correct*, *accurate.*	Norms and conventions of scientific writing Technical aspects of writing Grammatical correctness of writing Adherence to style standards Language revision, guidelines and recommendations Grammar and usage Characteristics of a good text, such as *fluent*, *clear*	*The course provides an in-depth look at the most important aspects of language revision.* (2010b) *The presentation manuscript is thoroughly checked for structure, language and conventions of scientific writing.* (2010b)
Creativity discourse		
The written text is central. Writing is seen as an author's creative activity / self-expression that is valuable in itself. Content and style determine the quality of the text. Construction of meaning is essential. Writing is learnt by writing and reading and receiving feedback. Reflected in the choice of words such as *creative writing*, *writer's voice.*	Creativity, creative writing, creative process Encouragement Motivation Reflection Barriers to writing Writer's personal experience Writer's personal voice	*The students are expected to be exposed to and encouraged to read and produce a variety of scientific texts.* (2020b) *They are expected to be able to reflect on their actions from the perspective of the creative process involved in conducting research and to develop working methods that suit them. The aim of the workshop is to support an active and motivated thesis writing process.* (2020m)
Process discourse		
The processes of writing are central as well as the writing event. Learning to write is about learning cognitive and practical processes of writing. Practical processes are taught explicitly. Writing is done in stages such as generating ideas, planning, drafting, working with feedback on the drafts, revising and editing. Reflected in the choice of words such as *plan*, *draft*, *editing.*	Process writing and the stages of the writing process Feedback as part of the writing process Process management methods Texts and writing in relation to cognitive processes Writing as part of the research process	*In the course you will work on your bachelor's thesis text using the process writing method.* (2010b) *The students are expected to be able to manage their writing process.* (2010b) *The students will understand the role of feedback in the writing process and will be able to give and receive feedback at different stages of the writing process.* (2020b)

Genre discourse		
The written text and the writing event are central. Learning to write is about learning different text types shaped by social context. The appropriateness of a text to its purpose determines what is a good text. The linguistic characteristics of particular text-types are taught explicitly. "Learning the established conventions for the types of writing which are highly valued in the academy" (p. 233). Reflected, for example, in terms of the names of text types/genres and the linguistic terminology used to describe them.	Different genres (study-related genres, work-related genres) Names of sections of text, e.g., introduction Structural and stylistic features of texts in relation to the genre Text analysis	*The students will learn about the characteristics and requirements of the most common textual genres in studies and working life and how to apply them in their writing.* (2010b) *This course is for developing writing skills by examining and writing different types of texts. (*2010b) *The students will be able to identify textual genres and their typical features in their field and understand their communicative function.* (2020b)
Social practices discourse		
The writing event is central, and the text and the processes of composing it are an integral part of the social interaction of the writing event. Writing is seen as a set of social practices (literacies perspective). Writing is learned by taking part in these practices and by identifying oneself with the community that has created them. Good writing is determined by effectiveness in achieving goals. Reflected, for example, in references to the events, contexts, purposes and practices of writing.	Academic literacies The significance of writing in the scientific community The discipline-specific nature of writing The process of scientific knowledge construction The communicative function of the genre in the social context Connection to the teaching of the department	*Students are expected to understand the role of scientific writing and its conventions for the functioning of the scientific community.* (2020b) *Students are expected to understand research text as a dialogue between various data and their own thinking, and to be able to compose their own text by applying the main principles of argumentation and demonstrating source criticism.* (2020b)
Sociopolitical discourse		
The sociocultural and political context of writing is central. Writing is seen as being shaped by social forces and power relations, but also as participating in the shaping of these forces. Learning to write requires understanding why certain discourses and genres are the way they are, and that writing has consequences (critical awareness of the impact of language use). Reflected, for example, in references to the social, cultural, political context of writing, power, social action, identity.	Critical thinking and critical reading A motivated student who is willing to think critically and express their ideas (Critical) reflection of communication practices Encouragement for having own ideas and views	*During the course, the students will observe the public scientific discussion in their field and contribute to the course blog with a post demonstrating critical literacy.* (2020b) *By working with a multidisciplinary peer group, students will increase their knowledge of themselves as writers and experts in their field.* (2020m)

The analysis of the curriculum documents provided valuable insight into the underlying discourses and their interrelationships. The focus was on understanding the fundamental changes and priorities given to certain discourses.

The results of our analysis are presented in the next section. We begin with an overview of the curriculum of each period under examination, followed by a more detailed observations of the discourses (research question 1). We then outline the changes that have occurred in the discourses of written communication curricula during the period under examination (research question 2).

Results

Discourses underpinning the 2010 curriculum

The 2010 curriculum was underpinned by several discourses of writing: writing was approached through the skills discourse, creativity discourse, process discourse, genre discourse and social practices discourse. However, the data did not reflect sociopolitical discourse. The descriptions of individual courses typically reflected one or two discourses, most prominently the skills discourse and genre discourse.

The written communication courses offered in the 2010 curriculum included courses in written communication open to all students (6 courses in our data) as well as courses aimed at students in specific fields or disciplines (altogether 26 courses in our data). There was also considerable variation in how writing instruction was targeted at different groups of students. For example, the different subjects in the Faculty of Humanities had their own written communication courses (11 such courses), while the Faculty of Mathematics and Science had only one course which was common to all students. On the other hand, one written communication course was aimed at both social sciences and economics students. These findings also suggest that despite having specific courses for each discipline, writing has been understood as a rather generic skill, transferable from one disciplinary context to another.

The large number of discipline-specific courses suggests that the teaching of written communication intended to take into account the social context of writing: the teaching of written communication involved working on texts related to the students' intermediate-level studies, such as bachelor's and master's theses and seminar papers. The requirements often stated that "the students are working on, or, during the semester, will start working on a bachelor's thesis, master's thesis or a related text." Some courses were implemented in collaboration with teachers in the departments, and the courses were designed and scheduled to be interconnected with the goal of mutually supporting learning, such as in the following example: "The Research Communication Skills [for journalists] course is integrated with the journalists' Proseminar course, and both courses are to be taken in the same semester."

This line of thinking can be seen as reflecting a social practices discourse, according to which writing is learned through participation in the practices of the certain community (Ivanič, 2004). However, when we looked more closely at the descriptions of the ways in which teaching was delivered, we discovered that teaching of writing could mainly consist of proofreading texts. Therefore, it can be inferred that the social practices discourse did not necessarily constitute the primary approach to teaching writing, even though the course was field specific and the writing tasks were related to an authentic writing situation.

Instead, there were many indications of skills discourse in the data. For example, the term "grammatical accuracy" (*oikeakielisyys*) was frequently used in the 2010 data. Other examples of frequently repeated expressions were "grammar-related issues" (*oikeinkirjoitusseikat*) "grammar and style norms" (*oikeinkirjoitus- ja tyylinormit*) as well as "language guidance and recommendations" (*kielenhuollon suositukset*).

Grammatical accuracy was highly valued, as evidenced by the prominent presence of grammar-related topics in the course descriptions. For example: "In addition, the students will learn to revise the language of their own texts..." and "the students are expected to demonstrate the ability to revise the language of their texts".

The data indicates that, in addition to the skills discourse, another dominant discourse was the genre discourse. The significance of genre discourse is exemplified by the fact that the 2010 curriculum emphasised various types of texts. The course descriptions included mentions of several genres. Depending on the focus of the course, the genres could be related to studying (e.g., report, essay, learning diary, seminar paper, or research report), working life (e.g., newsletter, memo, or job application), or creative self-expression (e.g., poem, short story, or column). Texts were often examined from the point of view of language, style, and adherence to conventions. The main pedagogical focus was on mastering the structural, linguistic, and stylistic features typical of particular genres. In other words, writing was conceptualised as the mastery of a genre.

As mentioned earlier, in 2010, genres were learnt, at least to some extent, in authentic writing situations, as can be seen in the following passage from the course description: "The topics studied (thesis structure, style, referencing conventions) are applied to your own bachelor's thesis text." It can be argued here that genres were, in a sense, considered as part of the social context of writing. However, the course descriptions placed more emphasis on following conventions than on understanding their meaning as part of the socially constructed practices of writing. The understanding of genre that emerges in the data can be seen as reflecting an autonomous conceptualisation of literacy (see, e.g., Street, 1997; Luukka, 2009), where individuals' cognitive skills are central, and skills were seen as universal and static.

The words and phrases describing the writing process also point to this static and universal conceptualisation of literacy. For example, one of the course descriptions states that, after completing the course, "the student has practised process writing during the course". This example shows that in the 2010 curriculum, writing was also approached from a process perspective, but the writing situation and its related objectives were excluded from (disregarded in) this process and, the writing process was largely seen as an individual process. Teachers of writing or peer writers were only mentioned in the context of feedback. Feedback was specifically linked to the final phase of writing the text. For example, the following was noted about the teaching methods in one research communication course: "The course consists of... opening lectures and thoroughly reviewing and refining the language and scientific writing conventions of your bachelor's thesis in a small group with your teacher and opponent." Another common feature was that the students had a passive role and were seen as the receiver of feedback: "Guiding feedback is given on exercises [= various texts produced]". The writing process was thus mainly presented as a linear sequence of steps, resulting in a text that conforms to the conventions of the (textual) genre. A central part of the writing process was feedback during the final phase, as well as (maintaining) spelling and grammar standards.

In the 2010 curriculum data, competence in writing largely referred to mastering the conventions of genres and being able to produce grammatically accurate texts. Based on

the course descriptions, it seems that a combination of the skills and genre discourses was predominant as these perspectives permeated the entire teaching of written communication at the time. Although the 2010 curriculum included various writing discourses, we cannot call it a comprehensive writing pedagogy, as presented by Ivanič (2004), which takes into account a wide range of approaches from different discourses.

Discourses underpinning the 2020 curriculum

The discourses of writing that underpin the 2020 curriculum have been influenced by learning pathway work described in detail earlier in this article. This work had already begun to develop a comprehensive approach to writing (see Ivanič, 2004; Svinhufvud, 2007). Ivanič's idea of comprehensive writing pedagogy is based on a multifaceted or multilayered view of language. According to Ivanič, a text and the mental processes involved in producing a text are intertwined with the writing event and the sociocultural and political context in which the writing takes place. Therefore, writing is not only seen as producing text, but also as social practices that are constructed in concrete language use situations. This was reflected in the 2020 curriculum data in the emergence of the social practices discourse and sociopolitical discourse alongside other discourses (genre, process, skills and, to some extent, creativity).

Connected to the social practices discourse and the sociopolitical discourse, the teaching of writing became in the latter curriculum data closely linked to the practices and objectives of the different phases of studies (entry, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral), each with its specific characteristics that determine the content and methods of teaching (see Figure 1). As part of the learning pathway work, the core contents of written communication studies for each phase were defined, and based on these the following core courses were designed: Foundations of Written Communication (entry level) and Basics of Research Communication (bachelor's level).

These core courses are for students from different faculties at these particular phases of their studies. Although the courses were not discipline specific, the discipline-specific nature of writing was seen as a pedagogical premise aimed at supporting students' academic socialisation process as actors in their own fields (see, e.g., Rantala-Lehtola & Kuitunen, 2021). This reflects the social practices discourse.

Underlying the social practices and sociopolitical discourses is the so-called ideological concept of literacy (Street, 1997), according to which all language use is situational and permeated by values and ideologies (see also Gee, 2008). From this perspective, literacies refer to a variety of textual and social practices, and therefore in the higher education context they are referred to by the plural form "academic literacies". This decision indicated that writing was no longer seen as a generic skill that was transferable from one context to another.

With more emphasis on the social dimension of writing, the role of texts in teaching became more diversified: texts were no longer considered as products, but as part of the ongoing interactive process of scientific discussion linked to the diverse activities of the scientific community in a given cultural and disciplinary context. For example, in the 2020 curricula, the perspective of genre is linked to the social discourse. Examining what the texts of a scientific community are and how they work was central, as the following learning objective shows: "The students will be able to identify genres and their typical features in their field and understand their communicative function."

Consequently, the importance of knowledge construction processes was also highlighted, and in the 2020 curriculum, the process approach was prominent. The broader consideration of the context of writing pointed to an understanding of writing processes as being more than just practical steps. Both individual cognitive processes of knowledge construction and the collective/collaborative development of ideas and texts, such as that done in peer groups, were brought to the fore: "The students are expected to understand that writing is an integral part of the research and thinking process, including giving and receiving feedback at different stages of the writing process."

Thus, the expansion of the process discourse is accompanied by a change in the meaning of feedback. While in 2010 feedback discussions focused on characteristics of the text, in 2020 the emphasis was on feedback interactions (dialogues) and their vital role in learning and the development of thinking. For example: "The students will recognise the importance of feedback interaction for their learning and academic communication."

In the 2020 curriculum data, the goal of teaching writing was to provide students with the skills and abilities to function in a variety of communication situations. As a result, the skills discourse, for example, through which writing can be understood as following context-independent rules, ceased to be dominant. In general, the notion of writing as the mastery of conventions and norms has become less significant, as the idea that the varying objectives and practices of communication situations require different writing skills has gained ground. For example, language revision has become a more integral part of finalising a text and is related to the idea of clearly conveying the intended message and using the appropriate style.

In short, the 2020 curriculum reflects a comprehensive writing pedagogy. The data provide evidence that in 2020, texts, writing processes and writing situations were seen as interconnected and linked to the wider sociopolitical context. As Ivanič (2004) argues, a curriculum can combine perspectives from all six discourses.

Changes in the discourses underpinning the curricula of written communication in L1

Our second research question concerned changes in the discourses of the written communication curriculum over a ten-year period. Based on our analysis, the main shift between the two curricula is the increased importance of social practices discourse and sociopolitical discourse and the disappearance of the skills discourse as such. The contents and procedures associated with the skills discourse were not disregarded but were treated more explicitly as part of the writing process and the communicative purposes of the texts. Consequently, it can be said, that the conceptualisation of writing as a universal, static and uncontextualised activity was marginalised in the 2020 data.

In fact, the discourses (all six of them) are somehow recognisable in both sets of curricular materials, but the essential change is whether they appear separately in the curricula or whether they are all (and thus the holistic conception of writing) visible in the background of each course. This is the situation in the 2020 curriculum data, and it can be attributed to the expanding of the concept of writing and the emphasis on social discourse in academic writing studies.

The emphasis of the social discourse can also be seen in the Movi's reform of the compulsory language and communication studies (UVK studies) on a large scale. In UVK studies, the development of language and communication was more closely linked to the university context

and the students' studies in their own field, and the language and communication studies included in bachelor's degrees were restructured as discipline-specific and multilingual units spanning the first three years of studies and forming a continuum. In 2020, the language and communication studies required at the bachelor's level were mainly taught in this restructured format, but due to the varying individual situations and needs of students, core courses in written communication were still offered.

The analysis of the curricula revealed that the instruction of writing is focused on becoming a member of the scientific community and understanding the significance of writing as a central component of scientific knowledge creation. For example, knowing the norms and conventions of scholarly writing, which appeared on its own in the 2010 data, was put into a broader perspective in the 2020 curriculum: "Students are expected to understand the necessity of scientific writing and its conventions for the functioning of the scientific community."

To illustrate the changes, we have summarised our findings in Table 2, based on Ivanič's (2004) description of the beliefs underlying each discourse of writing.

Table 2 Summary of key findings from the 2010 and 2020 curricula[1]

The aspects observed	Curriculum 2010	Curriculum 2020
The discourses in the data and the relationships between them	Skills discourse and genre discourse are prominent. The social practices discourse is reflected in the use of authentic writing situations. The process discourse is present in varying degrees and refers above all to the practical/technical aspects of editing the text.	The social practices discourse is central, and the skills, genre, and process discourses are seen in relation to this. The process discourse has expanded to cover mental aspects of the research and writing processes as well as practical ones.
Elements and aspects central to the teaching of writing	Texts are in the focus of teaching. The text is seen as related to a specific writing event, and produced through an individual writing process that progresses through practical steps.	The teaching of writing considers the (field-specific) scientific community as the sociocultural context for writing. Texts are produced through a mental and practical writing processes that are linked to the writing situation and its communicative goals.
Beliefs about writing	Writing is the mastery of language, style, and conventions, linked to the characteristics of different genres.	Writing is an activity that takes place within a social context, and students learn to consider different goals and practices of writing in different situations.

1. Column 1 in this table is largely inspired by Ivanič's original figure in Discourses of writing and learning to write (2004, p. 225).

The aspects observed	Curriculum 2010	Curriculum 2020
Beliefs about learning to write	Learning to write involves recognising the characteristics of genres, writing various types of texts independently, and revising the language of both own and peers' texts.	Learning to write involves understanding the social context of writing, discussing the goals and practices of writing, and practising the processes of writing scientific texts in a collaborative way.
Approaches to the teaching of writing	The teaching of writing involves explicit instruction on the norms and conventions of genres, as well as the practical phases of the writing process. Teaching involves instructing language revision, reviewing texts, and providing corrective feedback.	The teaching of writing involves exploring the processes of writing and knowledge construction, as well as discipline-specific communication practices. Teaching involves guiding students to become aware of their own perceptions of language use and communication and reflect on their own processes and practices in various situations in different contexts.

Discussion

We examined what discourses underpinned the conceptualisation of writing in the curricula of Finnish written communication in Movi between 2010 and 2020 and what changes took place in the discourses underlying the written communication curricula during this period. We were motivated in this examination by the question of whether the paradigm of teaching written communication shifted between 2010 and 2020 as a result of the learning pathway work, which was conducted by the written communication teacher team in 2013-2014. As mentioned earlier, we have used the concept of paradigm metaphorically.

Based on the discourses in the curriculum data, it can be said that the teaching of written communication has changed from a skill and genre-oriented approach to a broader focus on the mental processes and social context and ideological dimensions of writing. Such a change suggests that between 2010 and 2020, Movi's teaching of written communication showed signs of a paradigm shift, or rather the emergence of a holistic, comprehensive writing pedagogy as introduced by Ivanič (2004). This approach to writing is based on the idea that different dimensions of writing (the written text, the mental processes of writing, the writing event, and the sociocultural and political context of writing) are simultaneously present and interconnected. Consequently, comprehensive writing pedagogy draws on different ways of approaching the teaching of writing, specific to each of the six discourses of writing.

As previously mentioned, the 2010 curriculum data reflected various discourses on writing as a whole, but individual courses may have had a relatively narrow approach to writing. According to the 2010 written communication curriculum, there were variations in the aims and content of teaching writing, as well as differing views on what writing is and how it can be learned. Research has confirmed that teachers' beliefs can have an impact on their pedagogical practices (Tien, Graham, & Wong, 2018; Hsiang, Graham & Yang, 2020; Li & Xu, 2023). Therefore, the instruction that students receive may depend on individual teachers' beliefs about writing. The learning pathway work was conducted to ensure that every student had access to written communication studies that were appropriate to their phase of study and provided a holistic understanding of writing.

Probably for this reason, the 2020 curriculum demonstrated a more multifaceted approach to writing across all courses, potentially reducing the influence of individual teachers' beliefs. From the student's point of view, this is a significant change, because an individual student will study just one or a few of the courses described in the curriculum, not all of them. By approaching writing from multiple perspectives in every course, all students will be more equal in terms of learning opportunities. In this sense, the learning pathway work seems to have achieved its objectives.

The impact of the learning pathway work on the discourses of the latter curriculum data deserves critical examination. It is possible to criticize our analysis on the grounds that the 2013–2014 learning pathway work automatically produced certain discourses in the 2020 curriculum. However, it is important to note that the 2013–2014 learning pathway work no longer directly influenced the 2020 curriculum texts, as the development of this latter curriculum was its own process, separate from the learning pathway work. It is possible that the beliefs and views of individual teachers may have had a strong influence on the curriculum. However, this did not occur.

We described and contextualised the learning pathway work in such detail earlier in the article because we recognised that as a process it has greatly impacted the written communication teacher team's understanding of writing. By reflecting on our beliefs about scientific writing together, we were able to observe the contextual and temporal layers, as well as individual variations in our perceptions of writing. We observed that teachers of different ages, trained at different times, emphasised different aspects in the teaching of writing. Above all, we became aware of our own conceptualisations of writing. The open discussion among the written communication team revealed different, mutually challenging views, but as a result of the discussion it was possible to harmonise the learning objectives, content and working methods of the courses. This process can be viewed as the negotiation of language ideologies (see, e.g., Mäntynen et al., 2012). Through this process, the team's understanding of writing expanded and diversified, which also laid the foundations for diversifying pedagogies.

Looking back, the learning pathway work and the holistic understanding of writing that emerged from discussing meaning within the subject group has helped the writing teaching team to deal with various challenging situations in their everyday work. This type of open and critical discussion is particularly important when our work environment as teachers is changing, or when we are anticipating future changes. For example, the rapid development of artificial intelligence applications is currently challenging teachers to consider what kind of writing instruction university students need now and in the future as, while also driving us to re-examine what we as teachers base our views on.

The learning pathway work carried out by the written communication teacher team and the UVK development work in Movi have created a culture of discussion in which both philosophical and pedagogical issues of teaching are considered more collectively. What is significant for our conclusions is that the paradigm shift – in a metaphorical sense – was not about the content of teaching writing, but about the way in which the curriculum was negotiated together. It was this negotiation that made the learning pathway important. The changes in the working practices have also led to more coherent and shared curriculum texts.

Although reconciling different views when negotiating language ideologies can be challenging, it is important to have the courage to engage in open dialogue where concepts are unpacked and meanings negotiated. Only open dialogue can create genuine opportunities for challenging ideas and, more crucially, engaging in constructive cooperation.

We therefore suggest that paradigmatic reflection on the discipline and the negotiation of language ideologies should be a permanent, periodic part of the development of language and communication studies. We have detailed the implementation of the learning pathway process in this article to encourage such development work, with the hope that it can be a useful example for other organisations and units.

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Authors

Elina Jokinen, PhD, University Teacher, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5242-2956

Elina Jokinen is a university lecturer in writing communication at the Centre for Multilingual Communication at the University of Jyväskylä. She also works as a writer and as a writing coach. In her university position, she is responsible for teaching writing at the doctoral level and to university staff. Her area of expertise is supporting the doctoral dissertation process and mental coaching for professional writers. She organises dissertation retreats.

Heidi Kuitunen, M.A., University Teacher, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8333-1320

Heidi Kuitunen is a teacher of written communication at the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication at the University of Jyväskylä. Her focus is on teaching written communication, especially to undergraduate students, in the context of discipline-specific multilingual language and communication studies. She is actively involved in the pedagogical development of these studies. She is currently working on a PhD in Applied Linguistics that explores multilingualism in scientific writing processes.

Päivi Torvelainen, PhD, Lecturer, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3831-5361

Päivi Torvelainen serves as a lecturer at the Centre for Multilingual Communication at the University of Jyväskylä. She teaches written communication in Finnish (L1) to bachelor's and master's students. Additionally, she is a member of the Academic Study Skills team and works as a development teacher in the research and development project AAKE, a follow-up study on the development of academic expertise. Her research interests include academic writing, with a particular focus on understanding the challenges faced by first-year university students and thesis writers and providing effective guidance to help them in their academic writing.

FIRST-YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEMSELVES AS WRITERS OF ACADEMIC TEXTS

Jonna Riikonen & Sofia Kotilainen

Learning to write academic texts and developing an academic writing identity can be challenging for students transitioning to university because they are not yet familiar with the norms and conventions of the academic and specific disciplinary discourse community. This article qualitatively examines how first-year university students define themselves as writers of academic texts, and how they perceive themselves as mastering the writing skills required in an academic context. For our study, we interviewed 11 first-year students who, before the interview, had participated in the first course as part of their mandatory language and communication studies. We analysed the interview data applying the three aspects of the writer identity model proposed by Clark and Ivanič (1997): the authorial, autobiographical, and discoursal self. We discuss how the challenges in writing experienced by students could be considered in the pedagogical development of these courses and how the transition from upper secondary schools to university could be better supported to prevent uncertainty and confusion associated with writing at the beginning of university studies and support the development of students' writing identity.

Keywords: Academic writing skills; higher education pedagogy; writing identity

Yliopistoon siirtyvien opiskelijoiden voi olla haastavaa oppia kirjoittamaan akateemisia tekstejä ja kehittää akateemista kirjoittajaidentiteettiään, koska he eivät vielä tunne akateemisen ja tieteenalakohtaisen diskurssiyhteisön normeja ja konventioita. Tässä artikkelissa tarkastellaan, miten ensimmäisen vuoden yliopisto-opiskelijat määrittelevät itseään akateemisten tekstien kirjoittajina ja miten he kokevat hallitsevansa akateemisessa kontekstissa vaadittavat kirjoitustaidot. Laadullista tutkimustamme varten haastattelimme 11 ensimmäisen vuoden opiskelijaa, jotka olivat ennen haastattelua osallistuneet pakollisten kieli- ja viestintäopintojensa ensimmäiselle kurssille. Analysoimme haastatteluaineistoa soveltaen Clarkin ja Ivaničin (1997) luoman kirjoittajaidentiteettimallin kolmea näkökulmaa: kirjoittajaminä, omaelämäkerrallinen ja diskursiivinen minä. Pohdimme sitä, miten opiskelijoiden kokemat kirjoittamisen haasteet voitaisiin ottaa huomioon kieli- ja viestintäopintojen pedagogisessa kehittämisessä ja miten siirtymää lukiosta yliopistoon voitaisiin tukea paremmin. Tällä tavoin voitaisiin ehkäistä kirjoittamiseen liittyvää epävarmuutta ja hämmennystä yliopisto-opintojen alussa ja tukea opiskelijoiden kirjoittajaidentiteetin vahvistumista.

Asiasanat: Akateemisen kirjoittamisen taidot, korkeakoulupedagogiikka, kirjoittajaidentiteetti

Introduction

Academic writing is an essential part of the activities of academic communities. For students, success at university requires high-level writing skills (Bailey, 2018; Li & Mak, 2022). Teachers use writing as a fundamental assessment tool to determine whether a student has successfully completed a course (Lillis, 2001). Scholars and researchers participate in scientific discussion through a range of texts, which contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge and understanding. Academic writing can itself be seen as a crucial way of contributing to the development of different disciplines and the solution of various societal problems through research (Kniivilä et al., 2017).

Writing is also strongly connected to learning, as students acquire, extend, and deepen their knowledge through the process of reading and writing (Bailey, 2018; Lea & Street, 2006). According to Hocking and Fieldhouse (2011, p. 44), "the learning and production of disciplinary knowledge cannot be separated from the learning and production of writing". To learn writing, students must first engage with and critically think about the ideas they have read, before learning how to express their own ideas and perspectives clearly instead of merely repeating or summarising information from existing literature (Palonen et al., 2017; Tynjälä, 2001). This process of becoming a fluent and successful academic writer is, therefore, a long one.

Since academic writing can also be seen as a social practice (Lillis, 2001; Murray 2015) rather than as a detached and mechanical skill to be mastered, developing academic writing skills also includes internalising certain ways of thinking and communicating (Khumalo & Reddy, 2021). But this socialisation requires time and effort (Torvelainen et al., 2021), especially for new university students transitioning from secondary school to universities, who often perceive academic writing norms and conventions to be confusing (Lillis & Turner, 2001) and see the expectations and requirements regarding academic writing as challenging (Roald et al., 2021; Silva, 2017; van Schalkwyk et al., 2010). As the requirements are different from those of their previous studies, students are forced to rethink both their writing and their writing identity. Examining writing identity is important not just because writing is a vital part of participating in an academic community (Li & Mak, 2022), but also because a strong writing identity has a positive impact on students' attitudes towards writing (Kallionpää, 2017).

Thus, when students start university studies, they become gradually socialised into the norms and practices of academic communication, which are often different from what students are used to in their previous studies (e.g., Jalkanen & Taalas, 2015; Lea & Street, 2006; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). Some scholars argue that upper secondary school often seems to be unable to adequately prepare students for university when it comes to writing (Li & Mak, 2022; Bailey, 2018). Such challenges can affect identity, when, for example, a previous view of oneself as a good writer no longer applies and students need to rethink their writing identity.

Academic writing skills have been widely studied in various contexts, focusing on different aspects (e.g., Bailey, 2018; Lea & Street, 2006; Morton et al., 2015), including students' writing identities in academic contexts (e.g., Read, 2011; Vassilaki, 2017). However, research on writing identity in the Finnish context is limited. Some exceptions are Erra (2020) and Kallionpää (2017), who focused on the writing identities of upper secondary school students, while Vanhatalo (2008) examined the writing identities of Finnish university students. Since students' perceptions of their academic writing are affected by a multitude of factors, including

the sociocultural context, it has been emphasised that more research is needed (e.g., Boughey & McKenna, 2016).

In the present study, we explore through interviews how first-year university students at a Finnish university identify themselves as writers of academic texts. According to the broad concept of text, texts can be both spoken and written. In this study, however, texts refer specifically to written texts. Our study has a phenomenological orientation and a qualitative research design, and it aims to explore, make visible, and understand personal experiences, perspectives, and meanings that individuals give to certain phenomena (e.g., Fraser & Taylor, 2022). We are specifically interested in how novice academic writing students see themselves as writers in an academic context and also in relation to their previous writing experiences and studies. We draw on the concept of writing identity (Clark & Ivanič, 1997), which is strongly tied to the sociocultural context, and we aim to find out about students' experiences of writing at university, which is an unfamiliar learning environment for them.

The context of our research is the early phase of the restructured, integrated, multilingual, and discipline-specific language and communication studies at the University of Jyväskylä (for more on these studies, see the Introduction of this book by Károly et al., 2024). The goal of these studies is to support students' socialisation into the academic community and their growth as academic experts (see Jalkanen & Taalas, 2015). The first course they need to take focuses on academic literacy, where the learning objectives encompass the acquisition of basic skills in academic communication.

We will begin with a review of our key concept, writing identity, after which we present our research methods and findings.

Writing identity

Writers' identities are socially constructed (Clark & Ivanič, 1997), shaped by previous experiences and the way writers position themselves in the act of writing (Ivanič, 1998). Ivanič (1998) emphasises the importance of the sociocultural context in the creation of identity. Highlighting the interactive nature of writing, she also points out that identity can be seen as the readers' impression of the writer. Similarly, Burgess and Ivanič (2010) claim that writing identity is constructed discursively, and it changes over time in the interaction between a person, others, and their sociocultural context (see also Erra, 2020).

According to Clark and Ivanič (1997), writing identity comprises three interrelated elements: the authorial self, the autobiographical self, and the discoursal self. The authors remind us that these three dimensions are inseparable and that acts of writing are "an on-going struggle over possible identities" (p. 158).

The authorial self is the writer's perception of their own agency and position in relation to other scholars, conveying a sense of authorship and the author's presence in the text (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010). An author's perceptions of their skills and their ability to make choices as a writer influence their experience of their authorial self (see Erra, 2020). Perceptions of oneself and one's skills also influence whether the writer considers themselves an author whose words have significance (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Ivanič, 1998). If the author feels in control of their writing, their writing identity is positive, but often in the context of academic writing, the author (especially novice students) may feel that they have very little to say and that they would need deeper and broader knowledge to express their thoughts on what they read (Clark & Ivanič, 1997).

The autobiographical self is present in all writing (Clark & Ivanič, 1997), implying that an individual's personal history, experiences and beliefs influence their writing (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010). Typically, the autobiographical self is directly influenced by feedback from the environment, for example from parents or teachers, and by different writing experiences (in and outside of school). In addition, sociocultural factors also have an effect on the autobiographical self (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Clark & Ivanič, 1997). Students' social background affects not just their language use but also their values, beliefs, and thinking, and their access to educational opportunities and resources (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). On the other hand, the role of agency is crucial, and what matters is how an individual allows their experiences to affect them (Ivanič, 1998).

The discoursal self refers to the writer's discourse practices and is thus reflected in the text, for example, in lexical or stylistic choices (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). It is shaped by the author's values and beliefs (Ivanič, 1998) as well as the social environment. According to Clark and Ivanič (1997), the writer consciously or unconsciously evaluates the characteristics of the social context, including the goal of writing, and the nature of the relationship between the writer and the reader. During the writing process, the writer anticipates what characteristics the reader will value, and at the same time, tries to create an image of themselves as a writer who fulfils the expectations (see also Ivanič, 1998). In an educational context, the goal of writing is determined by the specific task at hand and is influenced by the teacher's expectations outlined in the assessment criteria.

Methods of data collection and analysis

Setting, participants and data collection methods

For the present study, we interviewed first-year university students at the University of Jyväskylä who, before the interview, had participated in a course as part of the restructured, multilingual, and discipline-specific language and communication studies organised by the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication. At the time of the interview, the participants were studying in their first year at either the Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics (5 students) or the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (6 students). All interviewees had completed upper secondary school and passed the matriculation examination. In addition, some of the students had graduated from a university of applied sciences, a university abroad or a vocational school.

Before the interview, the participants had taken part in the first course (Academic Literacies), the primary objective of which is to introduce students to fundamental academic literacy skills and textual practices at the university. The central themes in the course are process-oriented writing of academic texts, including the use of scientific sources, reasoning and argumentation, learning discipline-specific referencing and other textual conventions (see e.g. Gimenez, 2017) and applying them through practice, as well as peer group work. We, the authors of this study, have acted as teachers in these courses. However, we have not taught all the participants ourselves.

Those interested in participating in the research registered with the researchers by email. They had the option to stop participating at any time. The participants were given written information about the study and a privacy notice. They gave their consent to the study using an online Webropol form.

All but one of the interviews were group interviews. One was carried out as an individual interview due to scheduling challenges. All interviews were conducted in Finnish via Zoom. We recorded these focus group interviews online in Zoom (video and audio recording). The risk of interviewing as a data collection method (regardless of its format) is that the participants might present ideas they think the interviewer will value (Pietilä, 2010). To minimise this risk, we reminded the interviewees there were no right or wrong answers to our questions, and that we were interested in their personal experiences, views, and perspectives.

Face-to-face interviews have traditionally been considered better than other interview methods because they can give researchers a strong sense of presence (Fraser & Taylor, 2022). However, according to Hokka et al. (2022), it is also possible to achieve an experience of coherent interaction when using online technology, which can contribute to dispelling power relations in an interview situation. Inevitably, what is essential is not the instrument itself but the quality of the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees (Fraser & Taylor, 2022). An additional advantage of an online interview is that participation does not require physical travel and can be more efficient in terms of time management for everybody involved.

Some additional challenges of online interviews are that they make it more difficult to establish trust and personal connection (because of limited nonverbal communication). They have potential distractions and there may be unexpected technical issues. Thus, we determined that both individual and group interviews would produce similar answers and the interview format would not greatly affect the content of the answers.

A semi-structured interview was chosen as the data collection method. All participants were asked the same interview questions, but the order of the questions varied slightly. The main questions were addressed to the whole group. The questions were related to writing identity and its development, the distinctive features of academic writing, the process of academic writing in practice, writing as a leisure time activity, collaborative writing, and students' social background (for the original Finnish questions, see Appendix A).

There were four interviews in total, one individual interview and three group interviews (one with four and two with three students). The interviews lasted between 60 and 115 minutes and resulted in a total of 55 pages of transcribed material (font size 10, line spacing 1). In the article we include the English translations of the data extracts, which were translated by a professional translator. The original Finnish versions of the interview extracts can be found in Appendix B (with their English translation).

The individual interview format may be seen as more suitable than a group interview for eliciting personal opinions and perceptions (Pietilä, 2010), which was precisely what we aimed for. However, group interviews are also well suited for data collection because a joint discussion may bring up ideas that the participants would not have thought about otherwise. Furthermore, since the participants are in their own environment, often in a familiar setting, they may feel more comfortable, focused, and engaged. According to Eskola and Suoranta (1998), a group interview may actually provide more information than an individual interview.

However, in group interviews, some individuals may not feel comfortable to express different viewpoints or share personal experiences. Thus, moderation is crucial to ensure that everyone in the group has an opportunity to contribute and share their views and perspectives and that the discussion is not dominated by the more assertive or outspoken participants. The interviewer also needs to keep the discussion focused on the research topic. In addition, data analysis is more challenging because it is more difficult to identify individual voices, especially

when there are overlapping dialogues, as well as to distinguish between shared and different individual experiences.

Data analysis

We used only gender-neutral Finnish-language first names as the pseudonyms of the students interviewed. The interviews were transcribed, but as we were interested in capturing the essence of the participants' responses, we opted for less detailed transcription, which did not include pauses and corrections, for example (see Ruusuvuori, 2010). The transcribed data was examined by means of theory-based, deductive content analysis (see Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Content analysis (both deductive and inductive) involves three main stages: preparation, organisation and reporting of results (Elo et al., 2014). In the organisation phase, we constructed a categorisation matrix (Elo et al., 2014) based on Clark and Ivanič's (1997) framework of writer identity, which served as the initial coding scheme in the data analysis. It contained the main categories (authorial self, autobiographical self, and discoursal self), as well as the related subcategories to be used in the coding process (see Table 1).

Table 1 Our initial coding scheme derived from theory (Clark & Ivanič, 1997)

Authorial self	Autobiographical self	Discoursal self
The writer's sense of personal power in relation to writing	Previous experiences	Social context of writing
Authorship	Writer's life-history	Participation in discussions in the field of science
Own voice	Previous studies	How the writer represents themselves in the text
Presence	Socioeconomic background	

After the first cycle of coding, we needed to review and modify the predetermined categories in our initial categorisation matrix by merging some of the subcategories, as well as deleting or adding new subcategories under the predetermined themes, which we deemed more relevant in the actual context of our study. The result of this phase was a refined coding scheme, presented in Table 2. In the next coding cycle, we applied this refined codebook to the data.

Table 2 Our refined coding scheme

Authorial self	Autobiographical self	Discoursal self
Feelings about writing and about oneself as a writer	Previous perceptions of oneself as a writer including study history	University as a social environment for writing
Own voice	Own and others' attitudes towards writing	Other people (teachers, peers) as part of the social environment
Controlling the writing process		

As Clark and Ivanič (1997) point out, the different aspects of writing identity are not separate from each other, and therefore it was necessary to make choices about somewhat overlapping experiences and to consider which category an expression primarily belongs to.

Results and discussion

Authorial self

The authorial self was examined by looking for the interviewees' characterisations of their own writing and expertise, as well as their attitude to writing. The authorial self is also connected to one's own voice and the writing process.

Firstly, students defined themselves as writers in different ways. Typically, interviewees characterised themselves as writers in positive terms. They felt they were able to write and were "skilled" or at least "quite good" at it, and they also stated they felt mostly positive about writing. However, the interviewees had also experienced challenges in writing: It had been difficult, and writing could be associated with the thought of oneself as an unskilled writer.

Typically, interviewees felt that at university the experience of authorship became more negative than before. They identified challenges for themselves in the new academic environment, saying they were "unaccustomed", "timid" or "slow". Academic writing was seen as "difficult" as well as "distressing". The interviewees felt it was difficult to start writing because they did not know if they were doing it right (see also, Blair, 2017) and if they were using the correct vocabulary (see Nallaya et al., 2022). They were also unsure about reading the academic articles before writing (see also Nallaya et al., 2022):

> I was worried about how I would be able to write and how I could ever come up with anything to say about the articles. (Silmu)

Compared to previous studies, students have been confused by new text genres at the beginning of their university studies (see also Nallaya, Hobson & Ulpen, 2022). In addition, they have had difficulty adopting different referencing techniques compared to the practices used in upper secondary school, while the fear of plagiarism has also increased uncertainty:

> Well, it's completely different from what was taught during lower and upper secondary school, and when you are used to making references in a certain way and then the whole formula changes, and there are so many different options on how you can do it. So, it's still kind of a new thing. (Pouta)

Yet, amidst the challenges, the students were confident about the future and their ability to learn academic writing. They were sure that it is possible to learn to write by writing and that skills accumulate during one's studies:

> But maybe that's the kind of thing, that if you want to learn it, you have to just do it. (Ruska)

After all, they seemed to have a positive orientation towards development (see also Rantala-Lehtola & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2022). The interviewees found it important to have an experience of success in writing:

> Maybe that certainty only comes when you have experiences of success and then in a way you trust that it's OK, that it's going pretty well now. (Lumi)

The second aspect of the authorial self was the author's own voice. Interviewees acknowledged how little room there is in university studies to write texts using one's own voice or based on, for example, personal experiences or observations. Moreover, they felt that producing

academic texts in the university context is more limited than previous writing situations, a feeling which has an impact on the meaningfulness of writing and also on the opportunities to demonstrate creativity (see also Roald et al., 2021):

> It depends a lot on the subject and maybe also on the type of text you're writing, I think it's nicer to write, for example, something like an opinion piece versus something like a really academic and precise text which is maybe a little – not so much fun in my opinion. (Pouta)

The interviewees said that they were surprised by how little the author could express their own opinions when writing an academic text. This is a significant difference compared to upper secondary school, where one could write opinion pieces based on one's own ideas. In fact, the interviewees reflected not only on the importance of and room for their own voice, but also on the impact of their own authority on the meaningfulness of their writing:

> The more freedom you have, the more creative it is and the more meaningful it is to write, because you can get your own voice heard more. (Valo)

The interviewees recognised there are differing degrees of room for personal reflection in different types of tasks. For example, a learning diary, where students explore their own learning experiences and record their reflections and thoughts (see Rautiainen, 2023), was considered a meaningful genre of text because it enables more personal writing. Producing texts that allow for reflection and personal voice was seen as more interesting than, for example, writing traditional exam answers. The production of reflective texts was also thought to encourage a more process-based approach to learning:

> And you can perhaps bring out more of your own thoughts and maybe learn better if you use a process approach in which you start at the beginning and then in the middle you can work on the course content the whole time and not just aim for the exam. (Ruska)

The third theme of the authorial self was writing process. Writing at university is more about producing new knowledge and a student needs to take the time to actually work on their thoughts. Planning the process enough beforehand is also crucial:

> Of course at university you have to write in a different style and of course it's also much longer. When it was one page, it was usually the maximum you had to write, but now it can be [several pages], so it's a bit of a different process, you can no longer do it in a day, but you have to set aside a week for it. I'm still searching for a good process for it. How I structure the schedule and everything else for it. (Naava)

The interviewees recognised they were used to writing texts using the so-called one-off approach. In the past, they may not have written in a process-based way and as a result they have not learned how to edit text (see also Erra, 2017). They noted that the inherently short texts written in upper secondary school do not encourage process-based writing, and neither does the assessment, which usually focuses on the finished text:

> It was always just the end result, which is perhaps related to the matriculation examination. (Paju)

The lack of familiarity with writing academic texts was reflected, for example, in difficulties in editing one's own texts. The challenge was to identify where the text needed editing or how to improve it. Editing was often reduced to correcting typos. Another challenge may have been

that they did not have the energy to refine a "finished" text, even it would be an important stage of the writing process.

> I usually write the text based on the assignment in one or two sittings, a kind of almost finished text. Then, maybe the next day or two days later, I'll come back and have a quick look at it, to see if there's anything to change, and then I'll return it. But once the text has been written, I don't really go back to it or do edits. (Pyry)

The interviewees understood the importance of process-like writing and said they were trying to unlearn their upper secondary school writing habits and adopt a process-based way of working. At the same time, however, they stated that their writing is often not very planned. However, writing in a group was felt to encourage process-like working more than writing alone:

> When we had to write in a group, we made a pretty precise schedule as to when we would meet and work on the text and take the work forward. (Ruska)

Thus, it seems that the participants have different feelings about writing and their ability to control their writing. The beginning of university studies includes uncertainty and a lack of confidence in one's own skills. They also saw that at university there were fewer opportunities to produce a text in their own voice. However, it seems that both the experiences of success and getting to know the textual world of the university are important elements so that uncertainty dissipates, and students can experience authorship in relation to their writing. They also gain confidence in the development of their own.

Autobiographical self

The autobiographical self is built on past experiences and the writer's self-history. The category includes the following themes: previous perceptions of oneself as a writer, and one's own and others' attitudes towards writing in the past.

The students we interviewed reflected on themselves as writers primarily through their previous study experiences. Upper secondary school in particular seemed to shape perceptions of writing and authorship:

> Well, based on upper secondary school I'd consider myself a pretty good writer. It (writing) is quite easy. (Sumu)

The interviewees' entire school history could also define their perception of themselves as writers:

> Well, I've always done pretty well in school, so I consider myself to be pretty good. (Lumi)

The interviewees' experience of developing their writing skills is linked to the autobiographical self. Several interviewees looked back at their previous writing and found they had learned more about writing during their studies. They might compare their current skills with their past skills:

> I think I can write quite coherently nowadays. (Sumu)

The observations also included identifying shortcomings or a lack of prior skills:

> In lower secondary school I had a problem that I didn't really know – I didn't understand how to structure paragraphs, for example. (Sumu)

Students also defined their skills on a more abstract level:

> I was a bit bad (at writing) for the longest time. (Naava)

During their first months of study, the interviewees had discovered that the university's requirements differed from those of upper secondary school in many ways (see also Elliott et al., 2019). Some concrete differences between upper secondary school and university practices were, for example, the ways to refer to sources. It was noted that these differences meant that some things had to be relearned and new practices required some getting used to.

> I remember at least that in upper secondary school metatextuality was a thing that wasn't allowed to appear anywhere and it was like a red flag in all writing, so it was funny that in the first writing task at university there had to be at least three instances of metatextuality. (Pouta)

The interviewees wished that acknowledging and documenting the sources of information and ideas that they used in a written work would already be used in upper secondary school as they are in university. Then the change would not be so radical. However, amid the changing requirements, the interviewees found that upper secondary school had strengthened writing skills that were also useful in the academic world. Firstly, the need for basic skills – writing texts, finding the essential information in the sources – remains. Secondly, upper secondary school was perceived to have strengthened students' confidence in their writing: With a reasonably large amount of writing required at the secondary school level, the amount of writing at the university level should not come as a surprise (see also Blair, 2017). One interviewee also noted that data were also used as part of their own texts in upper secondary school, although the texts read at university are more demanding.

It seems that the study background has an effect on the students' perceptions in the sense that they have an understanding of the challenge of studying in new ways. Study background and perceptions of oneself as a "good writer" can support the initial stages of university studies if the student is able to trust that uncertainty will dissipate over time:

> Even at the beginning of high school, I felt terrible when I had to present the source there and somehow it was all completely new, although now that I think about it afterwards, it was almost nothing. Yes, I do believe that in a way, after the university has progressed, when you look back, you can wonder what that little Lumi was afraid of for nothing. (Lumi)

The second theme of the autobiographical self category was one's own and others' attitudes towards writing. The interviewees thought that attitudes and recognising them play a role in writing as well as in learning it. Previous experiences may have had a negative effect on attitudes if there had been no positive feedback on writing:

> When you're always getting feedback about not being good enough, a similar attitude towards it starts to take hold. (Naava)

The reluctant attitude could also be due to difficulties in writing, such as undiagnosed dyslexia. The notion that some people are naturally good writers dominated thinking in the past, but the understanding of the possibilities of learning to write has later grown, perhaps because the students have found that they have learned. According to the interviewees, attitudes can also be influenced by the topic and the purpose of the text. If the topic is not interesting or the text is only completed as a mandatory part of one's studies, writing ceases to seem meaningful (see also Roald et al., 2021). Changes in attitudes were also observed:

> Well, perhaps above all, there has been a big change in my own attitude, somehow nowadays I have more patience to write and try to produce text that is good and that has some kind of… cohesion. (Utu)

Positive experiences were associated with attitudes and interest in writing. A sense of accomplishment fuels writing and interest in it:

> And it (accomplishment) increases confidence, it's like OK, I can manage and my texts are just fine. (Lumi).

In addition to one's own attitude, the way others approach writing also seems to have an effect. The interviewees brought up ideas about the need for support and, on the other hand, also about the lack of support (see Blair, 2017). For example, a student's family background can support university studies. Having an academic family background (e.g., parents or relatives with a doctoral degree or a career in academia or research) reinforced confidence in being able to cope at university and with extensive writing assignments. In contrast, the lack of an academic background could have the effect that even upper secondary school was not initially seen as a possibility, let alone university (cf. Käyhkö, 2013). Confidence in one's potential was seen as weak because of the lack of connection to the academic world in the childhood family. This background was also reflected in a lack of appreciation and support for studying.

> You can't really get a lot of support from people close to you because they don't know this world at all….There's the kind of idea in the family circle that you live by working and not by studying, so maybe…I'm really demanding towards myself, so then it's easy to think that even though you've done quite well, it's not such a big deal. (Lumi)

On the other hand, the academic background of close relations was not necessarily seen as a factor in increasing certainty, as studies were not "discussed in depth" with them. In general, university felt like an "alien world" to the interviewees and the transition to higher education could create doubts about both success in studies and writing. The interviewees did not so much need guidance on concrete practices as they needed mental support:

> Maybe it (support) is something more abstract. It's more like, in a way, someone sees your potential and is like, you'll learn these things. It's like somehow someone has to come and say that it's something that can be learned. (Utu)

In this category, the students' own study history seems to be important. When they realise that they have learned content that seemed difficult at first during their previous studies and that they have coped well, their confidence in the future grows at the same time. They understand that uncertainty at the beginning of new studies is natural and that the beginning of university studies means giving up old habits and adopting new ones.

Discoursal self

In the discoursal self category, the university as an institution is seen as the social environment of writing, and other people, such as teachers and other students, as part of the social environment. First of all, for students, the transition to university means moving to a new environment and social context of writing, where there may not be much familiar (e.g., Blair, 2017). The interviewees described how at the beginning of their studies they did not know

what went on and what to expect at university. They also felt that it was difficult to picture the university environment before starting.

As previously stated, academic writing has evoked negative feelings and uncertainty in the interviewees. One factor that increases uncertainty is the change in writing practices. When the ways of working learned in upper secondary school are no longer desired at university, a student has to unlearn the old ways and adopt new ones. In addition, the first year at university involves writing different types of academic texts. These genres may not have been familiar to the students previously (in line with Torvelainen et al., 2021), and it can take time to get used to them:

> Depending on what you have to write, because you need to write a lot of different things here too. Now, the first year has included reflective assignments, a learning diary and also concept analysis, so there is always the feeling of whether I'm doing this right, that it has to be like this. So yes, there's always a sense of tension there. (Runo)

The students were wondering about the university's expectations of them. They were unsure what was expected of them and, on the other hand, the expectations seemed high in their uncertainty:

> It is still a bit of a scary subject, somehow it seems that it (academic writing) can only be done by the smartest and most talented people. But somehow I have the feeling that I'm not good enough for this, that I don't have enough skills. I would have to have super-advanced skills to be a scientific writer. (Silmu)

The interviews showed that unclear expectations were also related to reading academic texts. The interviewees were not sure if they were reading the so-called right things. Also, they were worried they would misunderstand what they read or that they would not be able to express themselves clearly enough and would be misunderstood in their community.

> Then it always scares me that somehow the content of the message changes too much when I have to say in my own words that even a certain verb choice can be decisive in terms of its meaning, so you always have to think about it so that you don't somehow misunderstand what the other person is saying. (Lumi)

At the beginning of their studies, students have identified the ideals of the academic community to which they should strive. One of the characteristics of the academic community is the scientific language that students would like to master better. Language may also be a distancing factor that makes one doubt their own possibilities to be part of the academic community:

> Some lectures use such strange words that I've never heard, so then I'm just like OK, I don't know if anything will come of this, and at the same time I'm reading some really academic articles, and I don't know the words, so then I question a little whether I should know them. (Lumi)

Another theme in the discoursal self category is other people as part of the social environment. To some extent, the students aim to write in the way they assume the teacher would expect them to write. More generally, the expected reader or readers influence how an author presents themselves in their writing (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). Often it is confusing for a student to decide what the teacher of a particular course might expect them of them when the instructions are not explicitly expressed:

> The course [at the department] was like, we had to do those essays…and we haven't had anything like that before. Well, I don't know if it was proper academic writing, but they were my first essays at university and none of the referencing and such was familiar to me yet, so there was a little bit of stress there, whether the texts would be accepted by the teacher, because I didn't have any reference point for the type of text that was required. (Paju)

The interviews revealed that the students would have needed more support at the beginning of their studies than they received (see also Blair, 2017). For example, they felt that the teachers assumed the students knew more than they did and the instructions have not always been clear. For example, the expected genre has remained unclear and they had to find out about study practices themselves. On the other hand, however, they thought that as adults they must be more responsible for their studies than before.

> Because the beginning was so confusing and there were so many new things, I would have liked for someone to have come and shown me in practice. But then on the other hand it is university and an adult has to be a functioning adult and independent and all that. But somehow I felt like I was completely lost and couldn't really get a grasp on anything. (Silmu)

In addition to teachers, support can also be provided by peers, and they were considered to be an important part of familiarising students with the new operating environment. The use of peer group work in first-year students' writing assignments has helped students acquire the practices of academic writing and offered peer support. In addition, working in a group may reduce insecurity as it allows people to share similar reflections and experiences while working on a shared assignment:

> I liked it quite a lot when we did the writing in a group…there was the group of people with whom you could think about the things together, and then you can also get the reassurance that you're not the only one who finds it difficult, and you can support each other and go through the things together. (Ruska)

An essential part of the Academic Literacies course is writing a course assignment in a group, which supports students in different phases of the academic writing process and provides feedback. Students find that writing together produces a text that takes several different perspectives into account:

> Well, I think it might be a bit more diverse. Of course, the more people, the more ideas. I'm sure it can be seen in the end result. And then there are many different viewpoints. Even if the aim is to have just one voice in the writing itself, the diversity can be seen in the text. (Paju)

Feedback is one part of social interaction in the academic community, and the students feel they have received little from both teachers and peers. Thus, they would like to have more feedback (see also Blair, 2017):

> I haven't really received any feedback from the teachers. Even in exams, nothing but the grade is visible. So, somehow, you might want to find out what was good and bad in your own answer, so that you could develop your own writing. (Ruska)

They had received peer feedback in at least one course and it was perceived as useful. To some extent, the students had asked for feedback from outside the academic community, such as their own parents. Positive feedback based on grades alone could also be doubted:

> Maybe it's just a matter of giving good feedback to everyone at the beginning, so that no one gives up and leaves. (Lumi)

In the Discoursal self category, it appears that the students are growing into an academic community and that its norms still need to be internalised. The identified ideals have not yet necessarily formed a part of their own activities, and on the other hand, the expectations of the university community are partly unclear to the students. For students, the social environment is an important part of strengthening their sense of belonging to the university, and they need more support and feedback, especially from teachers.

Conclusions

In this article, we have examined first-year university students' perceptions of themselves as writers of academic texts. Our goal was to understand how first-year university students identify themselves as authors of an academic text. Identity reflection essentially involves the student's own reflections, which are important in development and learning (see, e.g., Clark & Ivanič, 1997). We have been specifically interested in how students see themselves as writers in an academic context, which is new for them, and also in relation to their previous writing experiences and studies.

First of all, the interviews emphasised that the students' writing identity is reshaped at university, a new sociocultural context for them, and that reshaping identity involves significant uncertainty. This identity work includes reflection and sometimes even questioning one's previous identity as a good writer. These findings support prior research suggesting that writing at university is associated with affectivity (Torvelainen et al., 2021) and negative emotions (Gourlay, 2009).

Uncertainty and lack of confidence in one's skills can probably be explained by the demands associated with writing at university, which are different from those at the secondary level. At university, the texts one reads and writes are more extensive than those in upper secondary school. There are also differences related to text genres. An essay in upper secondary school refers to a different kind of text than at university, and in the university context students are confronted with completely new text genres.

In addition, students are concerned about the different referencing conventions compared to upper secondary school, as well as about different expectations regarding, for example, the use of metatextuality. At the beginning of one's university studies, it may seem easier to focus on technical questions, such as references to sources, than, for example, on reflecting on the development of thinking skills. It is also possible that the teachers' instructions place an unnecessary emphasis on the threat of plagiarism and thus on technical competence instead of knowledge-building skills (see Torvelainen et al., 2021).

In our view, the challenges experienced by the students are largely related to the need to rethink their writing identities. A positive definition of identity developed in previous studies is subject to re-examination in a new environment and with differing expectations (see, e.g., Gourlay, 2009), and this reflection on identity involves uncertainty and concerns about coping with studies, especially if no precise instructions are available. It would be important to ensure that students are made aware of the differences between secondary and higher education approaches to writing in the early stages of their studies, and it would also be important to build a bridge from upper secondary school to university (see also Jalkanen & Taalas, 2015).

At university, a bridge could perhaps be built by recognising the students' existing competence and remembering that the textual world of previous studies can be very different from that of the university. Perhaps at the beginning of one's studies, it could be possible to move into the academic world of texts gradually, through text genres that are not academic but already familiar to the students (see, e.g., Roald et al., 2021). It would be important to tell students about their competence, for example, that in upper secondary school they have practised writing skills which are useful at university as well. The national core curriculum for general upper secondary education, issued by the Finnish National Agency for Education (Opetushallitus, 2019), states that in upper secondary school, students develop their skills to acquire and apply knowledge as well as their problem-solving skills, and the same skills are used and honed further in university as well – it is just that the practices are slightly different. It is also good to keep in mind that technical skills are ultimately only one aspect of writing and that writing also includes scientific thinking, which should be practised from the beginning of one's studies (see also Torvelainen et al., 2021). A pedagogically important question is how teaching supports the development of students' thinking skills consistently and from the beginning (see, e.g., Nallaya et al., 2022). Although the initial phase of studies involves uncertainty, previous study experiences seem to strengthen confidence in one's own competence and ability to survive, and new habits become familiar over time.

Secondly, an important factor that reduces uncertainty is the social environment. The support of both teachers and peers is not only important for students, but also necessary. It is reasonable to further strengthen community activities with various pedagogical solutions because there are many benefits for students from peer-to-peer work. Peer work can be more widely useful in the early stages of one's studies, as peers can support each other in a wide range of problems and issues related to studying and thus also in integrating into the university community (see, e.g., Mickwitz & Suojala, 2020). Peer feedback can, at its best, help students to improve the quality of their texts (see, e.g., Huisman et al., 2019). However, it must be remembered that feedback skills must also be practised systematically during one's studies (Blair, 2017), and it is important to ensure a safe environment in a way that encourages new writing practices (see, e.g., Jusslin et al., 2021).

During their university studies, the students had already gained experience of producing collaborative texts in peer groups from the academic literacies course. Peer group work implemented in various ways can be useful, for example, in mastering the process of writing a text, but especially students in the early stages of their studies could also benefit from teacher feedback on their writing work in progress. This would allow them to see what kind of editing suggestions the teacher makes, and to better understand the variety of possible editing actions – as long as the feedback is sufficiently comprehensible (see, e.g., Lillis & Turner, 2001). In giving feedback, it would be important to take into account not only the form of the text, but also the development of the writer's scientific thinking and writing identity processes.

Thirdly, process-like working emerged as a phenomenon from the interviews. Writing requires thinking and a process-oriented way of working (e.g., Seow, 2002). The students pointed out that in their upper secondary school studies, working on relatively short texts in a process-oriented way did not seem very meaningful, and working on texts in stages was not something they had practised. However, the interviewees had understood that process-oriented work was considered the ideal to be pursued in the university context. For all of them, the ideal had not yet been actualised, although more extensive texts inevitably require process-oriented work, and the so-called night-before tactic no longer works. Therefore,

teaching could benefit from paying more attention to the process-oriented nature of the work and how to schedule it. In teaching and guidance, it would also be important to provide students with more tools for editing and evaluating the quality of their own texts.

Our findings suggest that it is inevitable that in a new environment students will have to reflect on their identity in many ways. It seems that students do not feel that academic writing is beyond their reach (see also Roald et al., 2021) and it can be expected that students' confidence in their own writing will increase as their studies progress (see Elliott et al., 2019). Still, they see that mastering the norms of writing is challenging and that it requires study. Therefore, it remains necessary to consider how to support students in their socialisation into the academic community and how to address the challenges of students from different backgrounds so that unnecessary accumulation of frustration and confusion could be avoided in the early stages of university studies (see also, e.g., Gourlay, 2009; Jalkanen & Taalas, 2015; Shapiro, 2022).

Pedagogically, it could be useful to pay more attention than before to how to support the strengthening of students' identity at the beginning of their university studies. Making students' previous study history and existing concepts of writing visible could help them recognise their own identity and the factors that affect it.

Limitations and future research

Although we have looked at identity through three aspects – authorial self, autobiographical self and discoursal self – it is clear that the different parts of identity cannot be separated from each other but also overlap. As Clark and Ivanič (1997) state, the three aspects are inseparable. For example, the sociocultural environment is present in all aspects of identity, although it is at its strongest when examining the discoursal self, and a writer's perception of their creativity is influenced by their previous experiences with writing, their own sense of control in relation to writing, as well as the sociocultural environment in which they are writing.

As we stated earlier, Clark and Ivanič's (1997) model of writer identity is intended primarily for the examination of written texts. Therefore, our research has not necessarily been able to reach the different aspects of identity in sufficient depth. However, our material supports the framework's idea that identity and writing are influenced by the sociocultural environment as well as by the writer's history. These aspects were strongly present in the reflections of the interviewees.

In addition, one challenge of the selected method was that the model was originally developed for written texts. For example, it was not possible to look at the aspect of presence from the interviews, because it is a feature specifically related to written texts. We still feel we were able to apply the model to the analysis of the interview material as well, because it was possible to group the participants' comments according to the three aspects.

The interview, in itself, is an effective method of data collection, as it allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of students' views. The interviews could have been complemented with an analysis of academic texts written by the students as well. Clark and Ivanič's (1997) framework helped us expand our understanding of identity and its different aspects, especially in relation to the sociocultural environment.

Participation in our study was voluntary and the group of interviewees was small. It is also possible that students who are primarily interested in writing applied for the study. Thus, our results cannot be considered generalisable, but on the other hand, our findings support previous research results well.

In the future, it could be interesting to study how students' writing identity, writing and scientific thinking take shape and develop during their university studies. Reflecting on one's writing identity in previous studies or working life could be fascinating. Moreover, it would be interesting to take an even deeper look at how the university as a sociocultural environment, with its own ideals and limits, is present in writing.

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Authors

Jonna Riikonen, University Lecturer, Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, University of Jyväskylä. https://orcid.org/0009-0007-4706-4131

Jonna Riikonen is a university lecturer of written communication in Finnish in the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication.

Sofia Kotilainen, PhD, Adjunct Professor (Docent), Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication / Centre for Applied Language Studies, University of Jyväskylä. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4701-6785

Sofia Kotilainen is a project researcher at the Centre for Applied Language Studies (University of Jyväskylä) and a part-time teacher of written communication in Finnish at the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication. As a historian and linguist, her interests include academic literacies, the use of literacy skills and their impacts on different kind of societies and communities, as well as the history of education and name-giving practices.