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Student teachers and their identity construction and awareness of multilingualism: re-visiting three studies

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This article re-visits three studies that originally focused on beliefs about second language (L2) learning and teaching held by student teachers. The studies have been conducted in the same educational context (that is, at a Finnish university). The participants in the studies are majors or minors in English, Swedish, German, etc., and they range from first-year students to fifth-year students about to graduate as qualified L2 teachers. Data have been collected by a variety of means over the past few years (questionnaires, sentence-completion tasks, drawings), and partly longitudinally. The pools of data (verbal and visual) will be re-analysed from the perspective of identity construction and awareness of aspects of multilingualism and findings critically re-evaluated.

Key words: *identity, multilingualism, student teachers, longitudinal, visual narratives.*

La construcción de la identidad y la toma de conciencia sobre el multilingüismo de los docentes en formación: revisión de tres estudios

Este artículo revisa tres estudios que originalmente se centraron en las creencias que tienen los futuros docentes sobre el aprendizaje y la enseñanza de una segunda lengua (L2). Los estudios se han realizado en el mismo contexto educativo (es decir, en una universidad finlandesa). Los participantes en los estudios son estudiantes de programas de especialización, o de optatividad, en inglés, sueco, alemán, etc., y van desde estudiantes de primero hasta estudiantes de quinto año, a punto de graduarse como profesores de L2 cualificados. Los datos se han recopilado en los últimos años, utilizando diversos instrumentos (cuestionarios, tareas para completar frases, dibujos) y, en parte, de manera longitudinal. Los datos (verbales y visuales) se volverán a analizar desde la perspectiva de la construcción de la identidad y de la toma de conciencia en relación con aspectos del multilingüismo, y los resultados se reevaluarán de manera crítica.

Palabras clave: *identidad, multilingüismo, docentes en formación inicial, longitudinal, narrativas, visuales.*



Introduction

This article re-visits three closely related studies conducted (mostly) with students of English, studying on the same five-year MA programme at a Finnish university and eventually graduating as qualified teachers, and critically reconsiders their findings from a new perspective, i.e., that of identity construction and becoming multilingual.

To start with, for the purposes of this article, two key terms need elaborating: identities and multilingualism.

Firstly, in this context, identity work is done by the participants in the three studies, i.e., what sense they make of themselves as second-language (L2) students and future teachers. Importantly, their identities are closely related to the *beliefs* they hold about aspects of L2 learning and teaching (which the studies to be re-examined were mainly about). Recently, a definition of *L2 teacher identity* was proposed by Barkhuizen (2017), based on a review of some 40 chapters on the topic as part of a book that he had edited. The definition can easily be extended to apply to L2 learners, as follows:

... identities are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological and historical – they are both inside the teacher/learner and outside in the social, material and technological world. L2 teacher/learner identities are being and doing, feeling and imagining, and storying. They are struggle and harmony: they are contested and resisted, by self and others, and they are also accepted, acknowledged and valued, by self and others. They are core and peripheral, personal and professional, they are dynamic, multiple, and hybrid, and

they are foregrounded and backgrounded. And teacher/learner identities change, short-term, and over time – discursively in social interaction with teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators and the wider community, and in material interaction with spaces, places and objects in classrooms, institutions and online (adapted from Barkhuizen, 2017, p.4).

This definition is indeed a very comprehensive one, and it is clear that no single study could possibly address all of its aspects.

To define the other key term¹, we can start by comparing multilinguals with monolinguals. Traditionally, *monolinguals* were thought to be speakers of a first language (L1) or native speakers, and they were assumed, firstly, to have acquired the L1 from birth, and secondly, to have full competence in the language (Ortega, 2014). In contrast, *multilinguals* were not only speakers of an L1 but also users of one or more additional languages (labelled as L2, L3, etc.), having learnt these at a later stage in their lives, and they were not expected to attain full competence in any of these. In addition, as non-native speakers, they were considered to be 'less than' native or L1 speakers, and as learners to be deficit: their competence in any additional language would always be lacking in some respects. It was typical of multilinguals to resort to code-switching and -mixing, neither of which was, however, viewed in very positive terms, and so needed to be avoided. It is only gradually being acknowledged that it is, in fact, multilinguals that

¹ Another set of terms has been advocated, e.g., by the Council of Europe (2001, 2007), including plurilingualism, pluriculturalism and plurilinguistic competence.

form *the majority* of people in the world, not monolinguals.

Thus, some of the traditional assumptions have been challenged (e.g., Ortega, 2014), including the *monolingual bias* – with its two assumptions discussed above. Besides, multilinguals are viewed to be ‘rather more than less’ compared with monolinguals or native speakers. In fact, it is argued that they should not be compared with these at all, but with other multilinguals to ensure fairer comparisons. Multilinguals are now viewed to be individuals that do *translanguaging* (Otheguy, Garcia, & Reid, 2015). They have a repertoire of linguistic (and other semiotic) resources, and so they can draw on their knowledge in any language they happen to know, depending on the situation. Their aim is in fact to attain *multicompetence*, originally used by Cook (1992), or knowledge in more than one language but to different degrees, and to learn to appreciate this constantly evolving and unique competence of theirs.

In addition, becoming or being multilingual can be looked at from two perspectives (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015). From the perspective of *outsiders*, the languages of a multilingual are viewed as separate and fixed entities and associated with nation states. In contrast, from the perspective of *insiders*, the languages of a multilingual are assumed to form one single entity in his or her mind, aspects of which he or she can draw on selectively from one situation to another.

Finally, it is claimed that there are two approaches to multilingualism (e.g.,

Kramersch, 2009). The *objective approach* focuses on figuring out the mechanisms inside a multilingual’s mind and tracing developments in his or her knowledge of any language (and possible stages in the process) in terms of mastery of a language as a system (e.g., grammar and lexicon), or in terms of an ability to communicate or interact with others in the language. The *subjective approach*, in contrast, attempts to find out how a multilingual him- or herself feels about becoming or being multilingual, or what the different languages and their use mean to him or her personally.

The three studies to be re-examined approach identities (as well as beliefs) as discursively and/or multimodally constructed on specific occasions and multilingualism as subjectively experienced, or as lived, and both partly longitudinally.² In the following, Studies 1–3 are first contextualised, then summarised, and finally the findings are discussed from the new perspective of identities and multilingualism.

Contextualising the three studies

The teaching of L2s in Finland is guided by a number of documents: European, *national* and local. In the past decade, the national core curriculums for Basic Education or Grades 1–9 (Finnish National Board of Education, 2003, 2014) and for upper secondary schools or Grades 10–12 (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004, 2015) have been revised twice. Interestingly, the three main aims have been reversed in their order (of importance), and their emphasis and scope revised (Table 1).

² When summarising the findings the terminology is that cited in official guidelines/documents of the time or as used by the participants. So terms, such as *first language* (L1), *second language* (L2), *foreign language*, and *mother tongue*, are used instead of *additional languages*, for example.

Table 1. Finnish national core curriculums compared.

National Core Curriculums (Grades 1–12) 2003/2004 (earlier ones)	National Core Curriculums (Grades 1–12) 2014/2015 (current ones)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language proficiency: four skills (Reading Comprehension, Listening Comprehension, Writing, and Speaking); status of English: a foreign language among others; summative assessment (outcomes) • Cultural skills (L1 vs. L2 culture), respect for Other • Learning strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multilingualism and multiculturalism (and awareness of languages in general) • Learning-to-learn skills (including learning strategies) • Language proficiency: three abilities (ability to interact, interpret and produce oral, written and multimodal texts); status of English: <i>lingua franca</i>; formative or dynamic assessment (process, feedback)

Now the first aim in teaching English (and other foreign languages) is to increase learners' language awareness in general, and their appreciation of multilingualism and multiculturalism, in particular. The second aim is to provide learners with practice in learning-to-learn skills, including learning strategies. The third aim is to develop their proficiency in English in three abilities, i.e., in the ability to interact, interpret, and/or produce texts in different modes. Also, for the first time, it is acknowledged that the status of English is different from that of other foreign languages in the country: English is considered a *lingua franca* or a global language. As a result, compared with learners of other foreign languages, learners of English are expected to reach higher levels in any ability on the standard CEFR scale of A1–C2 (Council of Europe, 2001). In addition, teaching content through the medium of English or Content-and-Language-Integrated-Learning (CLIL) is encouraged, as is looking for information in English, e.g., on the Internet.

These revisions have been important issues to address with student teachers when they have been attending courses

(with us) that deal with the teaching and learning of English (see also Kalaja, Alanen, & Dufva, 2018). At the time of Studies 1 and 2, the previous core curriculums were still effective. When Study 3 was carried out, the current national core curriculums were becoming effective in the Finnish educational system.

Study 1: Comparing English with Finnish longitudinally

Study 1 was carried out as part of the research project "From Novice to Expert", with Riikka Alanen and Hannele Dufva as members of the research team. It is a discursive study with a longitudinal research design (e.g., Kalaja, 2016a) and traces developments in the beliefs held by university students regarding English, a language they were studying, and Finnish, their L1. While comparing the two languages, they came to construct their identities, too: from moment to moment and over time.

We asked a group of English majors and minors on an MA programme at our university, irrespective of their line of specialization, to fill in a questionnaire, among other things. The questionnaire contained,

for example, a section with half a dozen sentence completion tasks aimed at comparing English with Finnish, e.g., “In my opinion, English is/sounds ...”, “If you ask me, compared with Finnish, English is ...”. The students completed the tasks twice – in the first and final year of their studies (four to five years apart), the first time with pencil and paper (n=118) while attending a course on “Learning to learn foreign languages”, and the second time online (n=37) with an additional more open-ended question “What does English mean to you these days?”.

The sentence completions varied in length from one or two words or sentences to half a page of text. We read and re-read the pool of written data looking for patterns in content and/or form and identified a total of four *interpretative repertoires* (e.g., Edley, 2009), or recurring ways of describing the two languages. Within the repertoires the students seemed to adopt different positions or *identities*, when comparing the two languages from one moment to another and from one round of data collection to another (Table 2).

Consider Examples 1–5 and 6–9 (all examples are translations from Finnish). In these samples the students draw on different ends of the repertoires (see Table 2)

and without explicit comparisons of the two languages:

Examples 1–5

- Finnish is beautiful, familiar and safe.
- Finnish is lovely, home language, mother tongue, part of me, important.
- Finnish is the language of emotions and thinking. A language that is suitable for these purposes.
- Finnish is under a threat. An important aspect of my identity.
- Finnish is a difficult language for foreigners.

Examples 6–9

- English is a useful language, a world language of the West. Fun, logical enough.
- English sounds nice, quite systematic. It is easy to learn.
- English is an interesting language but difficult to learn. An important language (e.g., when travelling).
- English is an important means of global communication. A window or even a door to many cultures and communities. It is very important in working life now and in the near future.

Table 2. The interpretative repertoires identified in comparing English with Finnish (FL = foreign language) (adapted from Kalaja, 2016a, p.112).

Repertoires	Dilemmas	Identities
1) Affection repertoire	Close vs. distant language	User of Finnish as L1/mother tongue; user of English as FL/L2
2) Aesthetics repertoire	Beautiful vs. ugly language	User of Finnish as L1/mother tongue; user of English as FL/L2
3) Vitality repertoire	Global vs. local language	User of English as lingua franca/world language vs. user of Finnish as L1 (in Finland)
4) Challenge repertoire	Easy vs. difficult language to acquire or learn	Learner of English as FL (including Finns); acquirer of Finnish as L1 and learner of Finnish as FL

The students discursively constructed the languages as being either emotionally close to or distant from them (Affection Repertoire), beautiful or ugly (Aesthetics Repertoire), global or local (Vitality Repertoire), and/or easy or difficult to learn (Challenge Repertoire). Of the repertoires, Repertoire 4 was the most dilemmatic, i.e., the students had mixed opinions or beliefs about the two languages, and Repertoire 3 the least dilemmatic, i.e., the students almost unanimously agreed that English was a widely-spread or global language, and Finnish, in contrast, a small or minority language. The students continued to draw on the four repertoires over the period of four to five years, and the dilemmas, or opposite views, seemed to remain for the most part unresolved. This kind of opinions or beliefs and traditional terminology (such as *mother tongue*, *foreign language*, English as a *lingua franca*, etc.) are discussed critically (by language-policy makers) to advance plurilingual education and positive acceptance of linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe (Council of Europe, 2007, pp.16–30).

In addition, we managed to trace some further developments regarding the students' *identities* over time, based on responses to the open-ended question of the second round of data collection.

Firstly, English is being realized to have gained the status of an L2. Thus, the students' identities tended to shift from *learners* of a *foreign language* to *users* of English as a *lingua franca* or a global language, as illustrated by Example 10:

Example 10

- It [English] is a language that opens the whole world. Part of my everyday life. Useful both in spare time and at work.

The students may have started their studies on the MA programme out of love or interest in aspects of English-speaking cultures, but with time they realize that knowing English can be of *instrumental value*, too (see also Example 13 below), making it possible for them to communicate in international contexts with both native and non-native speakers of the language; to pursue hobbies and spare time activities; to travel or live abroad; to find employment; to pursue a career; or to do well in their job, as language specialists or as teachers.

Secondly, the students start to talk about themselves as *bi- or multilingual*, albeit still with quite a traditional understanding of the term, as illustrated by Example 11 by a male student and Example 12 by a female student (both had studied at least three languages at school):

Example 11

- I'm lucky to be almost bilingual.

Example 12

- Even though I feel like I am multilingual, Finnish is still clearly my only mother tongue and I use it to express emotions. My English could only gain that kind of status if I lived in an English-speaking country for years. In my opinion, my knowledge of English does not have to be comparable to my competence in my mother tongue; my knowledge of English is after all pretty good, with its own weaknesses and strengths.

Thirdly, English is becoming an aspect of the students' *professional identity*. Consider Example 13 from a student

studying on one line of specialization (i.e., qualifying as an English teacher) and Example 14 from a student on the other line of specialization (i.e., being a specialist in English and the English-speaking cultures):

Example 13

- [English is] a tool. It is a tool quite literally, as I will graduate as a teacher of English, and English is what I will be teaching, teaching about, and using as the medium of instruction. It is also a tool for communication. I often realize that I am thinking in English, and in everyday conversations I often end up using an English word when the Finnish equivalent doesn't come to mind or isn't quite "to the point" in that situation.

Example 14

- It's a working language that I hope to be able to use as a language specialist. I'm trying to keep up or improve my skills even after graduation, as I don't want to forget what I've already learnt.

In summary, Study 1 with its longitudinal research design provides evidence that the identity of English majors and minors varies not only from moment to moment but also over time, depending on the line of argumentation in completing the different tasks as part of the research project, and with the gradual realization of the changing status of English in Finland (and elsewhere).

Study 2: Imagining a class of English or other L2s to be given soon after graduation

Study 2 (e.g., Kalaja, Alanen, & Dufva, 2013; Kalaja, 2016b) is a follow-up study to Study 1. Some of the students took part in both studies, while studying with us. Study 1 focused on the past experiences of future teachers, Study 2, in contrast, on the years to come in their lives. To this end, we made use of drawings, or *visual narratives* (for a definition, see, e.g., Squire, 2012, pp.2–4).

We asked a group of student teachers (n=58), majoring not only in English but also in other foreign languages, including Swedish, German, French and Russian, and being in the final stages of their MA studies at our university, to imagine an ³instance of teaching a foreign language in the not-so-distant future. We instructed them as follows: "Draw a picture of 'My Language X class a year after graduation'". In addition, on the reverse side of the task sheet, we asked the participants to give a brief written account of what their class would be like: "Explain what is going on in your class". The task was carried out as the final in-class assignment on the very last session of their pedagogical studies. We subjected the drawings and their commentaries to theory-guided content analysis (Tuomi, & Sarajärvi, 2009, pp.99–124). Study 2 drew on sociocultural theory (e.g., Lantolf, & Thorne, 2006), thus, in our analysis of visual (and written) data we focused on the environments, artefacts, and interaction in the class, and coded the drawings accordingly.

³ At the time of Study 2 the notion of *envisioning* had not yet been introduced to the field, see Study 3.

The environments in which foreign language teaching would take place ranged from traditional classrooms (furnished with desks and a board), modern classrooms (with carpets, sofas, armchairs, plants, posters, etc.) and virtual classrooms (via Skype) to out-of-classroom contexts, such as the school kitchen and the school yard. The teacher was depicted either standing in front of the classroom, in the middle of the classroom, or engaged in joint activity with the pupils; offering thus different possibilities for interaction in the classroom. Consider Figures 1–3.

However, for the most part, the teaching of foreign languages was depicted by the student teachers as taking place in a traditional classroom, furnished with desks and a board of one type or another, and some modern technology. Interestingly,

books, of any kind, would not play as important a role in class as before. The student teachers would rather use authentic materials, based on the needs and/or interests of their students.

Furthermore, the future teachers, working mostly on their own, would emphasize the practising of oral skills, using a language for authentic purposes and addressing cultural issues. Importantly, the teacher would take on the *identity of a guide*, ensuring interaction among his or her students, irrespective of the classroom arrangements. In other words, it was believed that the teaching of English and other foreign languages would be *social* in nature once the students entered the teaching profession.

Overall, we managed to identify two competing discourses in this study (Table 3), supported also by previous



Figure 1. The teacher standing in front of a traditional classroom, desks in rows (originally in full colours).



Figure 2. The teacher standing in the middle of a modern classroom, pupils interacting among themselves at desks in different constellations (originally in black-and-white). Translation: *ope* 'teacher'.

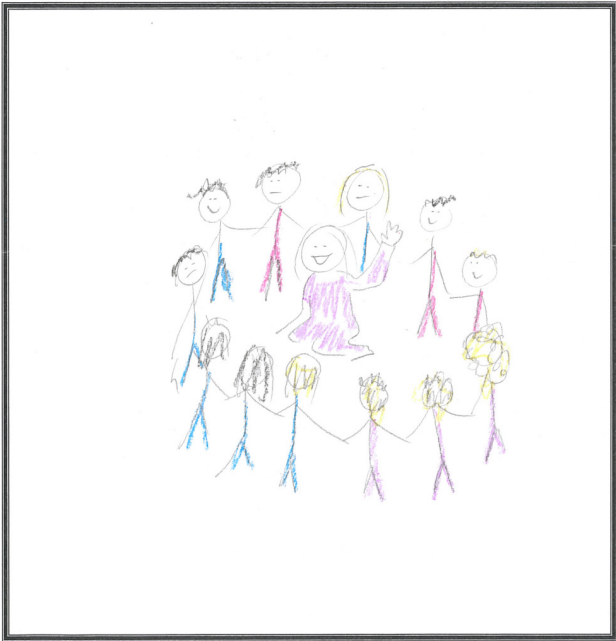


Figure 3. A joint activity in a classroom, involving both the teacher and her pupils (originally in full colours).

Table 3. Two competing discourses of –or ways of believing about foreign language teaching (and learning) (adopted from Kalaja, 2016b, p.142).

Aspect	Discourse 1: <i>Past foreign language teaching</i>	Discourse 2: <i>Future foreign language teaching</i>
Teacher?	Transmitter of information	Guide ensuring interaction/ learning opportunities
Teaching what?	Language as a formal system: vocabulary and grammar	Language use: functions, communication
Teaching how?	Transmittal of information; teacher-controlled classes	Interaction; student-centred classes
Teaching material?	Contrived: written by authors of foreign language textbooks for educational purposes	Authentic: written (by native-speakers) for other, non-teaching purposes
Students?	Passive recipients of information; learners of a foreign language	Active participants with agency; users of a foreign language
Learning?	Acquisition: mental activity	Interaction/negotiation: social activity

studies conducted in the project “From Novice to Expert”, including Study 1.

The students ended up drawing mostly on aspects of the second discourse. The two discourses are comparable to the findings of two other studies but carried out in different contexts and with future teachers of English who will be teaching in elementary schools (Clarke, 2008; Borg *et al.*, 2014).

In summary, Study 2 indicates that the student teachers would take on quite different identities from the teachers of their school years, once they enter the profession, and accordingly also assign different identities to their learners. These are reflected in the principles and practices they would apply in their future classes.

Study 3: Envisioning an English class to be given in the next few years

Study 3 (Kalaja, & Mäntylä, 2018, with further data collected a year later, see Mäntylä, & Kalaja, 2019) is part of an on-going research project – and it was carried out with student teachers who were only half-way through with their studies on the MA programme (cf. Studies 1 and 2). Like in Study 2, visual narratives were used in looking

forward in time. Study 3 was, however, conducted from different starting points and with some refinements in the research methodology used.

Inspired by the ideas of *vision* and *envisioning* by Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014), closely related to the motivation of L2 students and teachers, we found it of interest to see how this group of student teachers made sense of the pedagogical knowledge they had acquired so far during their studies and how they managed to turn it into a set of principles and practices that they could imagine applying in their teaching of English after entering the profession.

The participants in Study 3 were a group of student teachers ($n=35$), English majors (second- or third-year students) and minors (more advanced in their studies). They were all attending one of the first professionally oriented courses as part of their English studies “Current Issues in Teaching English” during the academic year of 2015–2016. As the final home assignment of the course the students were asked to envision an ideal class of English to be given by them after graduation (i.e., in a few years’ time) visually and verbally. The students had a week to complete the task. The idea was to

have the future teachers reflect on the key issues addressed on the course (and the accompanying textbook) and what sense these made to them at that point in time. Our instructions for Task 1 were: "Create a picture 'The English class of my dreams'" (for details, see Kalaja, & Mäntylä, 2018).

In Study 3 the students had greater freedom in producing the picture or visual narrative than in Study 2. On the other hand, an attempt was made by us to make the verbal commentaries more comparable by asking the students to provide answers to a set of questions (as Task 2). This time we decided to report findings as contextualized *case studies*, as defined by Duff (2007), based, firstly, on the physical environment where the ideal class would

be given; secondly, what identities the future teacher and his or her students would take on; and thirdly, what would be taught and how in the class of their dreams. The pools of visual and written data were coded accordingly.

Let us compare four cases: Ada, Nea, Mike and Sue (all English⁴ pseudonyms).

Ada was a second-year English major, and she had only begun to take some introductory courses in pedagogy. She had no previous teaching experience.

Ada would give the English class of her dreams in a regular classroom (or "possibly outdoors", as she notes) (Figure 4). Her class would be pretty teacher-centred. In her teaching she would stick to the L2 (instead of switching to Finnish, the L1) and



Figure 4. An English class of Ada's dreams (originally in black-and-white).

⁴ Sue chose to use English in completing Tasks 1 and 2.

she would apply some principles of Total Physical Response, one teaching approach reviewed on the course. She would involve her students in an activity of giving orders – “to teach verb forms” (i.e., grammar), as she put it. She expected her students to find the activity fun as it involved physical movement. In addition, she would rehearse some vocabulary items in another type of activity (unrelated to the teaching approach chosen).

Nea was a fourth-year French major and an English minor. She had completed all pedagogical studies to qualify as a subject teacher of foreign languages in the Finnish educational system. She had taken part in a language camp organized for children on our campus each June, and so she had some experience of teaching young learners, and she had worked as a supply teacher.

Nea would *not* give the English class of her dreams in a traditional classroom but in a modern one (preferably in a romantic/fancy mansion, close to nature), furnished so that students could sit at desks, on a couch or comfortable chairs, or lie on the floor, either working on their own, in pairs or groups (Figure 5). In addition, the classroom would be equipped with modern technology (including a smart board, älytaulu, and tablet computers, *ipädit*), books, games, and scissors, glue, pens/crayons, etc. The classroom would be decorated with posters in a variety of languages, including English, French and Spanish. Nea would like to teach content (e.g., history or visual arts) and ensure a relaxed atmosphere in her class. Nea’s class would be student-centred: she expected her students to be active and take responsibility of their learning. Before the class Nea would



Figure 5. An English class of Nea’s dreams (originally in black-and-white).

have her students pay visits (to places or people) and then return to class to finish projects related to cultural issues. In the classroom Nea would be standing aside (i.e., not behind a teacher's desk), overseeing what is going on and being available for help, if needed. The teacher would be "the one speaking the least in class", she stressed.

Mike was a Russian major and English minor, and he had spent quite a long period in Russia as an exchange student. He had completed all pedagogical studies but had no experience of teaching English yet (e.g., as a supply teacher).

Unlike Ada, Nea or Sue (see below), Mike would *not* confine his teaching within the walls of a classroom, traditional or modern. As he put it, "any event" could be turned into a learning event. His class would be student-centred (Figure 6): he would base

it on the interests of his students, and he would have his students learn by doing (including cooking and visits). He would make use of authentic materials, including literature and social media, apply CLIL, and have his students observe use of English in the environment. In addition, he was prepared to differentiate his teaching, depending on the English skills of his students, and to switch into the L1 to ensure his students got something out of his class culture-wise, if not language-wise.

Sue, the fourth case, was in her final year of studies and about to graduate as an elementary school teacher. As she wished to qualify as a CLIL teacher, she had studied English as a minor subject (a Government requirement). She had already completed all pedagogical studies and had some teaching and study-abroad experience in the UK.



Figure 6. An English class of Mike's dreams (originally in full colours).

Sue would give the English class of her dreams in a modern classroom (or beyond) (Figure 7). Her class would be “partly student-centred and partly teacher-centred”. Her class would be based on the needs and interests of her students and she would adjust her teaching, depending on the English skills of her students. She would emphasize communication and interaction, learning for life, and multiculturalism. She would make use of authentic materials. In addition, she was into CLIL. Sue envisioned herself to have quite a number of identities in her class (and beyond): she would not only be teaching English or content through English but also assessing learning outcomes, motivating students, ensuring a relaxed atmosphere, fostering multiculturalism and agency in her students, cooperating with her colleagues, etc. (for details, see Figure 7).

In summary, Study 3 reports four case studies (as part of an on-going project) to illustrate the variation in a group of student teachers regarding their professional thinking, identities and stances on multilingualism.

Discussion of Studies 1-3: Identities and multilingualism

Studies 1–3 focus on student teachers of English (and partly of other foreign languages) attending an MA programme at a Finnish university but they were in different stages in their university studies. The studies (conducted over a period of a dozen of years) focus primarily on the beliefs they hold about teaching foreign languages, but we could also make inferences about their identities and understanding of multilingualism.

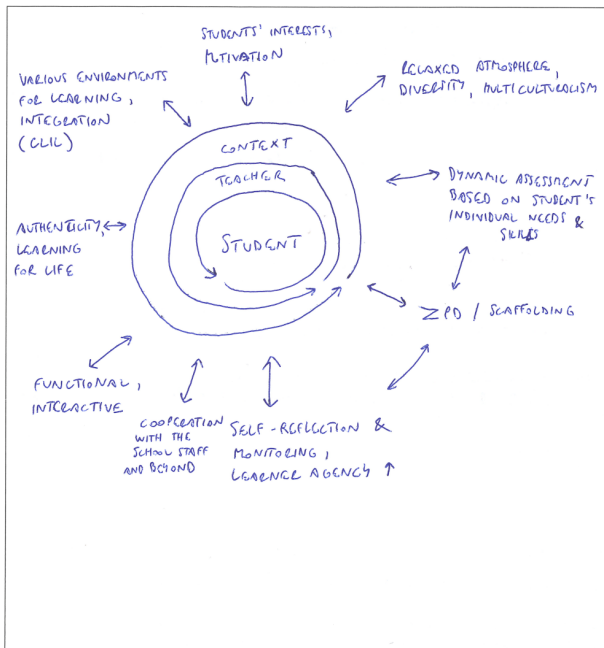


Figure 7. An English class of Sue's dreams (originally in blue-and-white).

Overall, we can, firstly, conclude that as learners of English the students' identities tend to develop once they become aware of the changing status of the language in Finland (and globally): a shift from learners of English as a foreign language to users of the language as a *lingua franca* or a global language, as is evident from Study 1.

Secondly, as future teachers they seem to prefer to take on quite a different identity from the teachers of their school years: with a shift from transmitters of information to guides, ensuring interaction in class and providing their students opportunities for learning (reflected in classroom arrangements). Accordingly, they tend to assign their students quite different identities, too: with a shift from passive recipients of information to active participants with agency or seizers of learning opportunities; and from learners of English to users of the language. These are, in turn, reflected in the principles and practices they claim they would apply in their teaching once they enter the profession as qualified teachers of English (and other foreign languages), as is evident from Studies 2 and 3. Interestingly, Studies 2 and 3 provide evidence for another shift in aims in teaching English by student teachers in their future classes: instead of focusing on teaching the language (i.e., its formal aspects such as grammar and vocabulary) they would like to focus on communication and teaching content (or even CLIL, i.e., teaching other school subjects) through English as the medium of instruction.

Interestingly, faced with the challenge of envisioning giving just a class (let alone a full course) the decisions by student teachers seem to become more complex the more advanced they are in their

studies on the MA programme, including pedagogical studies. This is evident from Study 3: for Ada, as a future teacher, the decision involved simply choosing a specific teaching approach to apply in her class (i.e., Total Physical Response, with some misunderstandings), for the others (from Nea to Sue) the decisions or choices were much more complex and concerning many more issues than just the teaching approach. In other words, the studies with us do seem to make a difference – in student teachers' professional thinking.

Conclusions can also be made about multilingualism.

Firstly, Study 1 provides evidence that student teachers (of the late 2000s) still had a tough time considering themselves *multilingual*, based on quite a traditional understanding of the term. This is because they seem to assume that they should have acquired the two (or more) languages early on (i.e., as children) and have a full command of each language. In other words, they (still) suffer from the monolingual bias (see Introduction). Study 3 with its four cases illustrates the overall variation in stances towards multilingualism in English classes given by student teachers in the future: Ada advocates sticking to "English only" in her class (monolingualism); Mike advocates the use of English and Finnish, the L1, if needed (bilingualism), to ensure his students would learn something culture-wise, if not language-wise; Nea would like to expose her students not only to English but also to a number of other foreign languages in her classroom (multilingualism) with posters and project reports in French, Spanish, etc. hung on the classroom walls. However, she is not explicit about the use of any other languages (besides English) for

communication or teaching content (CLIL) in the class of her dreams. At any rate, the four case studies illustrate that students could be exposed to more than one language or that more than one language could be used for communication in the classroom. On the other hand, when entering the profession, student teachers will be faced with a new challenge: these days there are schools (especially in the Capital area) where even over half of the students speak other languages as their L1, and so the use of Finnish (or Swedish⁵) in class or in textbooks (including grammar sections and vocabulary lists) can be problematic. Both have been standard practice until recently.

Secondly, Studies 2 and 3 provide some evidence for student teachers being aware of language and culture going hand-in-hand, or *multiculturalism*. This is reflected in some principles and practices they envision using in their future classes: using authentic materials (including newspapers, books, movies, music, social media, and games), inviting visitors, having students visit places (such as museums) or people, co-teaching, e.g., with a Home Economics teacher to learn say about French cuisine, taking a class to a school kitchen, e.g., to make cookies of American style. Some of these would involve stretching the walls of

a regular classroom – physically or virtually. Of course, it is true that the time a teacher can devote to discussing aspects of culture in a single class (even of their dreams) is limited; a full course could be a different matter!

To conclude, on a more critical note, it seems that as teacher educators we would need further discussions with our student teachers to challenge their current (partly naive) understanding of the two key issues addressed in this article to raise their awareness of more recent developments in the fields, including the possibilities of *translanguaging pedagogy* (e.g., Canagarajah, 2013; Garcia, & Wei, 2013) to re-consider the use and/or role of more than one language in their classes, teaching materials and assessment practices. This is becoming even more relevant in the Finnish educational system, with the ever increasing number of learners speaking other languages than Finnish (or Swedish) as their L1, and these languages are estimated to be close to 140 in number (in the Capital area in 2018)! In other⁶ words, English classes (among others) are getting more and more diverse linguistically (and culturally) in their student population, but it remains to be seen how the future teachers' might cope with this new challenge.

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⁵ Finnish and Swedish are the two national languages in Finland, with a few others viewed as minority languages.

⁶ This is based on an article "Helsingissä on jo alueita, joilla jo yli puolet pikkulapsista on vieraskielisiä – Hilja Alava, 2, oppii sujuvasti somalia", published in a national newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, April 14, 2019 (pp. A6–A8).

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