ovo Kuvani

Talta näytän englannin kielen oppijana
An interdepartmental research project

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Scholars

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• a few MA students
Project: background 1

- **Second Language Acquisition** (SLA)
  (Ellis 1994: *four* key areas)

1) Learner language
2) Learner-external factors (e.g. context)
3) Learner-internal mechanisms
4) **The language learner**
Project: background 2

- Individual learner/teacher characteristics/differences or IDs (e.g. Skehan 1987, Breen 2001, Dörnyei 2005, Griffiths 2008)

1) Attributes, conceptualizations & affects
2) Actions (e.g. learning strategies)
3) Learner output
4) Identity
Project: background 3

- to approach IDs from an **emic** (vs. etic) perspective

- to view IDs as **lived/subjectively experienced** over a longer period of time (vs. classroom observation, CA)
• “… focusing on variables is, if nothing else, misguided, since it is not the variables that should be our concern, but the **concrete individuals who come to the learning site with specific histories, personalities and agencies.**” (Lantolf & Pavlenko 2001: 157)

• “… learner difference is a **complex** construct that **cannot be reduced to the influence of isolated variables.** This complexity is particularly brought out through investigation of learners’ **stories of their experiences.**” Nunan & Benson 2005: 156.
The project is *longitudinal* in that it seeks to trace the development of language expertise, or more specifically, **beliefs about and attitudes towards** language(s), and **language learning and teaching** held by English majors (teacher trainees vs. non-trainees, N= 120) entering a MA program and graduating as language teachers or experts of the language and its culture(s).
Project description 2

The project draws mainly on research on beliefs about SLA within a contextual approach (see Kalaja & Barcelos 2003; Bernat & Gvozdenko 2005)

- Discursive research (Potter & Wetherell)
- Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky)
- Dialogism (Bakhtin)
More specifically, the project focuses on teaching foreign languages (English) in higher education, viewing it as a process in which students, by participation in different discourses, by their agency in different situations and activities and/or by their appropriation of different ways of speaking gradually become language professionals. The beliefs (and attitudes) the students hold – and their potential development, change and reformulation, or transformation – play an important role in this process.
Project description 4

To this end, pools of data have been (and will be) collected over the next few years, including

- questionnaires
- drawings (or visual narratives)
- life stories (written narratives)
- official study records,

and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.
# Data collection by stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of study</th>
<th><strong>Data collection methods</strong></th>
<th><strong>Topics</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Questionnaires, life stories, drawings</td>
<td>School experiences, using L2 vs. L1, beliefs &amp; attitudes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Drawings, teaching philosophies</td>
<td>Using L2 vs. L1, beliefs</td>
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<td>Year 5</td>
<td>Follow-up questionnaire (internet)</td>
<td>University experiences, using L2 vs. L1, beliefs &amp; attitudes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Study records</td>
<td>Rate and success of studies</td>
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Importance?

The results can be used to assess the **quality and efficiency of our own teaching**, both at the level of curriculum design and instruction practices. In addition, the results will be important from the point of view of **social impact**: as future language professionals – e.g. teachers, textbook writers, evaluators and administrators – our students will be mediating their beliefs and attitudes to new generations of language learners over their professional careers of some 40 years.
Findings: Stage 1?

Findings from Stage 1 (with methodological innovations) are reported internationally in a collection of articles *Narratives of Learning and Teaching EFL* edited by P. Kalaja, V. Menezes & A.M.F. Barcelos (Palgrave Macmillan 2008) with contributions from Finland, Spain, Brazil and Japan.
International networks?

The scholars are also part of a recently established network interested in language learning histories of EFL learners/teachers, and with links to an international corpus of language learning histories written by EFL learners, AMFALE (see http://veramenezes.com/amfale.htm) housed in Brazil.
Key references
