Pre-service subject teachers’ views on second language when negotiating on integration of content and language in multilingual classroom

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There is a widely shared understanding that language is not considered a skill to be learnt first and only then used as a means to communicate content, but rather language and content objectives should be integrated (e.g. Bunch 2013). Thus, engagement in disciplinary practices and interaction with peers and teachers in joint activities are regarded as key elements for both content and language learning (Walqui 2006; Gibbons 2007). Therefore, language-related expertise is required from all teachers. However, in Finnish schools, subject teachers are largely unprepared to encounter and deal with plurilingual students in their classrooms, and it is clear that some students are not provided with the support needed for quality learning.

In this paper, pre-service subject teachers’ (science and ethics) views on Finnish as a second language are explored when they negotiate with pre-service Finnish teachers on integration of content and language in multilingual classroom. The study focuses on the following questions: What kind of discourses are involved by pre-service teachers and what sorts of relationships are involved among different discourses? The data consist of audio-recorded planning sessions and video-recorded lessons (process data) and student teachers’ diaries and interviews (reflection data) collected during 3 months period of training. The case studies were conducted in the multilingual and multicultural teaching settings. The data has been analyzed by using discourse analysis to display the prevailing patterns of meaning-making during the planning process.

Based on the results, we will discuss pedagogical language knowledge of pre-service subject teachers and their transferable skills to promote learning in the multilingual and multicultural settings and how this should be taken into consideration in the teacher education.

Keywords: second language learning across curriculum, pedagogical language knowledge, language perceptions, teacher education.