



Swedish Language Teacher's Beliefs about Teaching and Students

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This presentation explores teachers' beliefs about teaching Swedish in Finnish-medium primary schools in Finland. The data is collected from 15 Swedish language teachers who sorted 28 statements about their teaching and classroom practices, language choice and students according to how much they (dis)agree with the statements. After the sorting task the teachers were interviewed. In the sorting, Q-method (Watts & Stenner, 2012) is used to capture and understand the beliefs of teachers. Applying inverted factor analysis, two sets of beliefs (depicted as F1 and F2) emerged.

The results show that only a few beliefs are shared by the teachers. What most united them was that they differentiated their teaching according to the students' needs and that grammar was not the most central part of teaching. Teachers' sharing the first viewpoint (F1) thought that they have highly motivated students. They felt that the school management wasn't supporting them and didn't cooperate with other teachers. They were aware of the students' language background and strove to support multilingualism. Teachers' sharing the second viewpoint (F2) felt they taught somewhat unmotivated students. Mainly Finnish was used in the classroom. Teachers felt secure in their role as language models, but they also felt that an excess use of Swedish would affect the learning negatively. They saw their students as monolingual Finnish-speakers and didn't strive to support multilingualism. They felt they were a part of the school community.

The results help to understand the current possibilities and challenges of the school subject Swedish as a second national language (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2023) at the same time as they enlighten us about the multifaceted reality of Swedish language teachers in Finnish-medium schools.

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