



## **Finnish language teachers' collaboration practices - A study of teachers' understanding of teaching of native level Finnish through participation in teacher-researcher collaboration**

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In Swedish-medium schools in Finland the bilingual (Swedish-Finnish) students constitute most of the multilingual students, approximately 40%. Native level Finnish (NaFi) has been a part of the national curriculum since 1989 in grades 1–6, 1992 in grades 7–9 and 1994 in upper secondary school, even so, the research on the field of NaFi-education is very limited (Geber, 2013; Nummela & Westerholm, 2020). National evaluations regarding the learning outcomes in Finnish as the second national language, clearly show a need for developing the teaching of bilingual students in different educational stages. The evaluations also show that it's important for the Finnish language teachers to reach a shared understanding of the aim and task for teaching NaFi (Åkerlund et al., 2019). NaFi-teachers are calling for clearer guidelines and a clearer view of the task of teaching NaFi. Regarding NaFi-students language skills, the evaluations show a need of support in students reading comprehension and written production.

The aim of the paper is to examine how teachers relate to NaFi-teaching through teacher-researcher collaboration while participating in a research- and development project. Due to the project having its aim in producing new didactical knowledge regarding NaFi-teaching and supporting teachers in their practice development, the collaboration among the teachers highly touch upon their own teaching practices and the development related to those practices. For analyzing the different forms of collaboration practices, the theory of practice architectures is used (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). The data consists of twelve audio recordings (26 hours) of meetings involving 37 teachers and one researcher.

The preliminary results show that teachers, depending on their region, have different views on who Nafi-education is aimed for and what challenges they face as teachers. The tutor teachers' encouragement impacts the other teachers' involvement and motivation in project. The research findings contribute to the Nordic educational research field by providing a deeper understanding of how teacher-researcher collaboration can support teachers' professional learning.

**Keywords:** Native level Finnish, Teacher-researcher collaboration, Theory of practice architectures



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