Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Boxed Text

Prologue

Acknowledgements

1 Introduction

1.1 Why a book on failure?
1.2 Aims of the book and who it is for
1.3 On theories, paradigms and epistemologies
1.4 How to read this book

2 Teacher Change Research: a Critical Overview

2.1 What constitutes teacher change
2.2 Challenges in researching teacher change
2.3 Studying change in the language teacher cognition domain
2.4 Summary

3 Theories of Learning and Change in Psychology

3.1 Attitude change
3.2 Conceptual change
3.3 Possible selves theory
3.4 Summary

4 Pulling it Together: an Integrated Model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change

4.1 Introduction to LTCC
4.2 The key features of LTCC
4.3 The process of language teacher conceptual change
4.4 Summary

5 The Study of Language Teachers' Conceptual Change: Grounded Theory Ethnography

5.1 Teaching and learning foreign languages in Slovakia: a brief sketch of the territory
5.2 The eight EFL teachers
5.3 The researcher 75  
5.4 Research design and data collection methods 76  
5.5 Data analysis 92  
5.6 Summary 98  

6 It’s Not What They Know, It’s Who They See: Ideal Selves as Central Cognitions in Conceptual Change 101  
6.1 Motivation to teach 102  
6.2 Motivation to join the project 105  
6.3 Emerging connection between motivation and ideal selves 107  
6.4 LTCC: ‘Nice-but-not-for-me’ route 110  
6.5 Summary 121  

7 Emotional Dissonance: Essential but Insufficient Catalyst for Conceptual Change 124  
7.1 Teacher development as an emotionally charged process 125  
7.2 LTCC: ‘Couldn’t-agree-more’ route 126  
7.3 When dissonance does not lead to conceptual change 133  
7.4 Summary 134  

8 When Change Threatens the Teachers’ Sense of Self: Emotional Battles in Balancing Ideal, Ought-to and Feared Selves 137  
8.1 Ought-to Language Teacher Selves 138  
8.2 LTCC: ‘Nice-but-too-scary’ route 144  
8.3 Summary 159  

9 It’s not as Simple as It Sounds: Teacher Change as a Multifaceted, Situated, Emerging and Dynamic Process 161  
9.1 Monika’s developmental U-turns and reconnecting with her ideal self 162  
9.2 Traces of ‘I’ve-got-to-teach-differently’ route in Erika's development 177  
9.3 Summary 187  

10 Conclusion: New Metaphors for Researching and Educating for Teacher Change 190  
10.1 Complexity theory as a constructive metaphor for ecological language teacher cognition research 190  
10.2 Creating conditions for conceptual change: if you want to walk on water ... 195  

Epilogue 197
References 199
Author Index 214
Subject Index 218
1
Introduction

1.1 Why a book on failure?

This book documents the impact of a language teacher development programme that had a grand mission to transform language classrooms – and failed. The naivety of such an objective and the predictability of this outcome in the context in which the programme was delivered are admittedly all too obvious in the light of the latest theorising about how language teachers learn. We have come to understand that language teachers develop in unique and individual ways (S. Borg, 2006). We also know that their prior experiences, personal histories, beliefs and knowledge, often gained through many years of the ‘apprenticeship of observation’ (Lortie, 1975), play a critical role in influencing their teacher education experience. And there is no doubt also that the unique sociocultural contexts in which the teachers do their work shape the influence that teacher education has on actual classroom practices (K. E. Johnson, 2006).

This awareness is a result of important epistemological shifts in second language teacher education research which has moved away from the behaviourist focus on the implementation of discrete sets of techniques and skills to understanding why teachers do what they do in the classroom and how they engage with and interpret the content of teacher education (K. E. Johnson, 2009). Our understanding of the nature of teacher learning and change has been greatly deepened thanks to these shifts and has led to some important and fruitful, if at times a little heated, debates about what should constitute the language teacher education knowledge base and how we should go about the business of educating teachers (Freeman and Johnson, 1998, 2004, 2005a; K. E. Johnson, 2003, 2006, 2009; Tarone and Allwright, 2005; Yates and Muchinsky, 2003).
Yet, the results of the research project described in this book testify that, as illuminating as these debates have been, they have not eliminated the need to study ‘failure’.

The teachers who took part in this study can without exaggeration be described as the best of the best, conscientious and hard-working individuals who deserve much respect for the work they do, often in the face of adverse conditions. They are highly qualified professionals open to a wide range of opportunities for continuing professional development (such as attending national conferences and workshops, involvement in national and international educational projects with their students, and pursuing further studies, including MAs and PhDs), even though most of these were, at the time of the project, not formally recognised in the state school sector as professional development and certainly did not count towards the teachers’ heavy teaching load. Most of these teachers were highly regarded by their students and colleagues and some held senior advisory positions in their schools. And, quite remarkably, all of them voluntarily sacrificed their time, including their weekends, to participate in this yearlong research project.

At the same time, the teacher development course which was at the heart of this research was carefully developed to reflect, as much as was practicably possible, the latest developments in applied linguistics and language teacher cognition. The content responded to the teachers’ specifically articulated concerns regarding learner motivation and group dynamics in their English language classrooms. The teacher education processes, in turn, were developed to account for how teachers learn; recognising the importance of experiential knowledge and the need to bring to a conscious level teachers’ tacit beliefs about language education through reflection. A conscious effort was made not only to create a caring and supportive environment, but also to extend teacher learning opportunities beyond the confines of the training room.

And yet, despite the conditions appearing ‘right’, the said teacher development course failed to inspire these teachers’ conceptual change; that is, change in their understanding of the principles for creating a motivational climate for language learning, a shift in their beliefs about the role of teachers in creating these conditions and a transformation of their teaching practices, which would make a difference for students’ language learning. Individual and variable ways of teacher learning, the unfavourable sociocultural context or, quite simply, an ineffective course may be perfectly valid research conclusions explaining the failure. Yet, without extending the inquiry and offering an in-depth anatomy of the intricacies of teacher change (or, crucially for this book, the lack
thereof), this project would risk painting an incomplete and unconstructive picture of language teacher development. Incomplete, for it would not allow us to address questions about why teacher change does not come about even if the latest theorising in applied linguistics is translated into teacher education course design. Unconstructive, for it would remain powerless and silent on the issue of alternative teacher education interventions that are needed to facilitate development. This book has been written with the purpose of addressing these concerns.

1.2 Aims of the book and who it is for

This book's inquiry has been motivated by concerns very similar to those outlined in Hattie's (2009, p. 3) recent synthesis of research on student achievement:

> How can there be so many published articles, so many reports providing directions, so many professional development sessions advocating this or that method, so many parents and politicians inventing new and better answers, while classrooms are hardly different from 200 years ago ...? Why does this bounty of research have such little impact? (Hattie, 2009, p. 3)

Yet, being fully aware of the complexity of such questions, I do not for one moment pretend to offer a comprehensive solution, nor do I claim to have once and for all cracked the code of teacher conceptual change. This study is far less ambitious in its scope and, admittedly, tackles no more than just a fragment of the immense complexity of educational change in classrooms and schools around the world. Yet, I have written this book in the belief that, as Georgia O'Keeffe, the American painter, once noted about her paintings, it is equally if not more soul-nourishing to take just a small slice of things and blow it up than to try to describe the whole.

In this vein, then, the book offers a detailed account of a ‘small slice’ of specific language teachers’ lives as they engaged with the latest research in second language motivation on a yearlong teacher development initiative. It does so in the hope that the insights might inspire some answers to important questions that applied linguists, language teacher educators, second language acquisition lecturers, school managers and policy makers around the world may be asking about how research is enacted in the classrooms, why educational reforms are not always implemented in the intended ways, and why language classrooms do not always become ‘acquisition-rich’ and ‘motivating’ environments when teachers
Teacher Development in Action

are introduced to ‘revolutionary’ findings in SLA and innovative pedagogies, which are not only assumed to be highly relevant to the teachers in question, but for which there is also abundant anecdotal as well as empirical evidence of their effectiveness.

It is important to note that this book does not aim to analyse the effectiveness of educational reforms (for an excellent recent discussion of this issue, the reader is referred to Wedell, 2009a), but rather offers an in-depth account of how language teachers mobilise (or not) their vast inner resources when they make sense, individually as well as in collaboration with others, of the new teacher education content and attempt (or not) to come to terms with it in the light of their own personal and professional histories in the specific sociocultural contexts of their teaching activity. In doing so, I hope to open up a new space for exploring second language teaching, which would be useful to anyone working with or researching language teachers, be it language education researchers, lecturers on MAs in applied linguistics or TESOL courses, research students, teacher trainers, mentors, as well as those language teachers who wish to explore their own development.

1.3 On theories, paradigms and epistemologies

In the introduction to her recent book-length discussion of second language teacher education, Karen Johnson makes the following point:

What does a sociocultural perspective have to offer L2 teacher education? The professional education of teachers is, at its core, about teachers as learners of teaching. And if the learning of teaching constitutes the central mission of L2 teacher education, then as a field we must articulate an epistemological stance that enables us to justify the content, structure, and processes that constitute L2 teacher education. In essence, this is the central goal of this book: to articulate the various ways in which a sociocultural perspective on human learning transforms how we understand teacher learning, language, language teaching, and the enterprise of L2 teacher education. (K. E. Johnson, 2009, p. 2)

My purpose for this book is quite different. I initiated the study in the hope to piece together an empirically supported mosaic of how language teachers’ thinking and practices are transformed through formal teacher development programmes and how a teacher educator can facilitate the process. This research did not start with an allegiance to a particular world
view, although it is true that in developing the theoretical framework, I have predominantly borrowed from disciplines which have traditionally been researched from a specific paradigmatic stance, most of them aligning with the social cognitive perspectives in psychology (e.g. Bandura, 2002). This is simply because the concepts I discovered in this perspective seemed to facilitate my sense-making of the data best, to an extent that even surprised myself and forced me to revisit and re-evaluate my own epistemological beliefs and pedagogical practices. It is my hope, however, that researchers working from a range of epistemological positions will still find the conceptual framework developed in this study useful and be able to apply their sets of concepts and metaphors in a theoretical explanation of the phenomena documented in this research project.

1.4 How to read this book

This book is organised into ten chapters. Following this Introduction, Chapter 2 provides a critical overview of teacher change research. I first briefly review current debates in general teacher education before introducing key themes, findings and future directions in researching teacher change in the language teacher cognition domain. Chapter 3 surveys relevant theories of change in psychology which form the theoretical basis for the newly developed integrated model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC) and this is further described in detail in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 provides a detailed account of the grounded theory ethnographic study on which this book is based, while the central principles of teacher change derived from the findings are discussed in Chapters 6–9. Chapter 10 concludes the book by outlining new metaphors for researching and educating for teacher change.

There is no one way of reading this book and I anticipate different readers approaching this book in different ways. Those who are predominantly interested in the theoretical foundations of language teacher conceptual change will probably want to follow a conventional way and begin with the first four chapters. Those who, in contrast, prefer to explore the data first before arriving at a theoretical consolidation may find it more satisfying to skip Chapters 3 and 4 and only return to them after immersing themselves in the data discussed in Chapters 6–9. And, finally, readers who wish to understand the sociocultural context of this study first and examine the methodological basis of the research project that is at the centre of this book may well want to jump straight to Chapter 5.
Subject Index

accommodation, 36, 38, 41, 56, 64
  see also conceptual change

applied linguistics, xiv, 2, 3, 12, 25, 30, 36, 162, 191

apprenticeship of observation, 1, 8, 13, 14, 51

assimilation, 36, 38, 41, 43, 56, 65
  see also conceptual change

autonomy-supporting teaching strategies, 167

beliefs about L2 motivation, see conceptions of motivational teaching

CAMCC (Cognitive–Affective Model of Conceptual Change), 41–4
  compared with LTCC, 55–6, 65

challenge appraisal, 43, 63, 64, 183–4, 196

change
  attitude, 30–5
    conceptual, 2, 8, 35–44, 181–4, 186–7
    definition of, 7–9, 56–7, 92
  dynamic, 56, 60–1, 174, 176–7, 187–9
  generative, 8
  intentional conceptual, 40, 56–7, 58, 92, 101, 177
  multidimensional, 162–3, 184–5
  significant and worthwhile, 8
  teachers’ conceptual, 41–4

complexity theory, 190–1
  principles for teacher change research, 192–5


CRKM (Cognitive Reconstruction of Knowledge Model), 40–1

downward self-revision, 159

dual process models of attitude change, 31–4

ecological research, 190–5

emotional dissonance, 21, 51, 55, 62, 63, 65, 125–6, 156, 182, 185, 187, 190, 196
  lack of, 114, 119, 120, 126–36, 137, 159, 161, 179
  emotional tensions, 114, 116, 133–4, 125, 158
  versus emotional dissonance, 139
  see also threat appraisal

empirical–rational tradition, 7

epistemology, 1, 4–5, 15, 23, 26, 36–7

ethics, 11, 72, 73, 79, 99, 134

ethnography, 28, 75, 80, 87, 126, 194
  see also grounded theory ethnography

feared selves, 49, 58, 59, 63, 116, 144, 159, 160, 169, 181

Feared Language Teacher Self, 59, 61, 137, 156, 158, 159

goal-setting theory, 49, 51

grounded theory ethnography, 66–7, 76–99

heuristic cues, 31, 33–4, 58, 61, 119

heuristic engagement, 62, 113–14, 120–1, 130–2, 144, 154–7, 180, 181

heuristic route of development, 32–3, 35, 43, 172–3, 179

hope, 28, 45, 61, 121, 162, 187, 196, 197

ideal selves, 45, 46, 63, 101, 107–10, 114, 120, 124, 139, 144

Ideal Language Teacher Self, 58–9, 116–19, 121–3, 126–30, 133, 145–8, 155–6, 159, 164, 176, 177–9
  versus ought-to, 64, 118, 139, 163–4, 184, 187, 189

emerging from narratives, 109–10
images of future selves, see possible selves; ideal selves; ought-to selves; vision

images of good teaching, 14, 23, 50, 158

see also ideal selves; vision

impact

of in-service language teacher development, 20–2
of pre-service language teacher education, 15–19

implementation of course input

entertaining activities, 164

group norms of listening to each other, 131–2

group norms of tolerance, 165
group processing, 165
group responsibility, 164–5

ice-breaker, 148–57

principles, 164–5, 166–70

replicated activities, 148–57, 179, 181

trust, 148–57

wait time, 166–70

instructed SLA

connections with language teacher cognition, 3–4, 13, 16, 17, 24–5

language proficiency, 56, 63, 71, 102, 106, 107, 108, 109, 116, 117

language teacher cognition

concept, 12, 55, 61

field of study, 2, 5, 7, 12–29, 37, 52, 54, 55, 58, 65, 78, 99, 101, 102, 138, 190–5

overlaps with other theories, 34–5, 44, 49–52

LTCC (an integrated model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change), 44, 54–65, 92, 100, 135, 162, 177, 189, 190, 194

‘couldn’t-agree-more’ route, 126–33, 178–81, 184–5
developmental U-turns, 162–74

implications for teacher education, 195–6

‘I’ve-got-to-teach-differently’ route, 182–4, 186–7

multiple developmental cycles, 158, 163, 174, 185, 188

‘nice-but-not-for-me’ route, 110–21, 158–9

‘nice-but-too-scary’ route, 144–59, 166–73, 175–6

methodological rich points, 27

motivation

and ideal selves, 107–10
to join the project, 105–7
to teach, 102–5

narrative inquiry, 6, 9, 14, 21–2, 25, 109, 110, 125, 126, 197

no belief change, 43–4, 63, 65, 119, 144–5, 159

non-engagement, 138

normative–re-educative tradition, 7

NVivo analysis, 93–9, 141

observer paradox, 138

ought-to selves, 45–6, 58, 61, 64, 114, 117, 118, 119–20, 138–44, 159–60, 166, 184, 187, 189

Ought-to Language Teacher Self, 137, 145, 152, 156–8, 164, 167, 169, 173, 175, 177

parenthetical remarks, 141–4

person-in-context relational view, 193

persuasive cues, 61

possible selves, 56, 59, 61, 62, 64, 134, 161

versus fantasies, 46–9, 117

Possible Language Teacher Self, 55, 58–9, 61, 65

theory, 30, 44–52, 55, 58, 159

prior knowledge

impact on change, 13–14, 31, 37, 42, 43, 101

see also heuristic engagement

reaffirmation of beliefs, 125–33, 135

reality check appraisal, 56, 62–4, 65, 159, 172

reflection, 2, 5, 9, 10, 19, 34–5, 49, 57, 65, 101, 122, 125, 173

lack of, 113, 114, 130–3, 155, 180–2

in research, 6, 79, 80, 91, 93, 95, 116, 140
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Index</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>research participants, 71–5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denisa, 103, 144</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erika, 103, 104, 177–89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jana, 81, 103, 106, 107, 110, 112–15, 117–19, 122, 126, 127, 134, 144, 162</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenka, 103, 112, 114–17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monika, 81, 103, 133, 134, 135, 139–41, 162–77, 181, 182, 184, 187, 189, 197–8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silvía, 103, 104, 124–33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamara, 103, 104, 108, 116, 133, 134, 139, 141, 144–60, 162, 165, 169, 173, 177, 181, 182, 189</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-efficacy beliefs, 40, 43, 58, 64, 147, 157, 175, 184</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-implication, 43, 50, 55, 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of, 43, 110–15, 119, 120, 122, 126–33, 144, 158–9, 179–81, 184–5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia, 67–71, 102, 105, 106, 155, 180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social cognitive theory, 5, 36, 49, 52, 54, 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sociocultural context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impact on change, 14–15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>systematic engagement, 32–4, 39, 41, 43, 49, 51, 55, 57–64, 182–3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of, 130–3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see also reflection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher discourse, 130, 140, 141–4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher education interventions, 13–15, 25, 195–6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technicist view of teacher training, 179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theory building, 26, 29, 44, 54, 56, 98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see also grounded theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethnography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>threat appraisal, 44, 63, 64, 116, 124, 136, 137, 141, 145, 154–60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>versus emotional dissonance, 124</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>values, 23, 28, 127, 192, 197</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vision, 46, 49, 50, 51, 52, 59, 63, 101, 109, 110, 120, 121–2, 127, 135, 137, 154, 157, 159, 160, 162, 163, 167, 173, 176, 177, 180, 185, 187, 189, 190, 192, 195–6, 197</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see also possible selves; ideal selves; ought-to selves; images of good teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>