ACTION RESEARCH AND TRANSLATION STUDIES -

Understanding change of practice through the lens of translation studies

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Action research and translation theory

The purpose is to see what connective lines can be drawn between these traditions, which have so far had a life quite distinct from each other!
Context

• National reforms in education increases in speed; how is this handled on the local level?

• Schools working in networks are recommended as strategies
  ( i.e. Learning and ICT, Assessment for learning,...)

• Action research and translation theory as possible theoretical perspectives.
How to link action research to organisation theory

- *The Action research tradition in working place research in Nordic countries since the 1960s*

- *Translation theory:a normative – instrumental theory based on Scandinavian neo institutionalism*
So far they seem to have lived a life far from each other......

Still they both focus on change

Few references in literature to each other
Translation theory

• A growing interest in transfer processes between organisations, on the global and local level.

• «Travelling ideas» – «travelling practices»

• A pragmatic and normative-instrumental perspective in organisation theory

• Reference: Trend and translations (Røvik 2007)
Translation theory

• Inspirations from linguistic translation approach

• The «the cultural turn»: a shift towards understanding translations between organizations.

-Translation of ideas are «immaterial constructs» represented in language and therefore possible to be understood in different ways and also to be manipulated by those who translate and those who are recieving the ideas in an organization (Røvik, 2007, p. 254)
The region – a social landscape with innovative resources

• Networkings schools: a social landscape where each member can share and make contributions to the network and the region

-We exhibit our practical understandings of one another in our spontaneous responses to each other and that such understandings are inevitably novel. (Bakhtin 1986)
Networking schools

A Nordic AR tradition

Action research strategy; dialogue conferences

Outcome: Practical & theoretical

De-contextualization and contextualization processes

Translation Theory

Arenas

Translators

Translation competence

configuration
Networking schools

A Nordic AR tradition

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Arenas
Translators
Translation competence
Configuratio

Translation Theory
Development teams as translators of school reforms ideas

CONTEXT

• **School reform idea:**
  Assessment for Learning project (2009-2010)
  19 schools - 2, 5 years - 10 dialogue conferences with 80 persons

• **Translators:** Development team: 1 principal and 4-8 teachers at each school

• **Focus:**
  Translation process between the dialogue conference and the schools (decontextualization and **contextualizing**)
  1) Arenas in school?
  2) Translation competence (knowledge, skills, legitimacy)?

• **Methods:** 2 Focus group interviews (10 schools)
FROM PRACTICE TO IDEA – (decontextualization)
FROM IDEA TO PRACTICE – (contextualization)

Dialogue conference

Translating to signs, words, texts

The school
The learning structure in Dialogue conferences

The theory – practice discourse

Dialogues about practice, from different sites

Theory, concepts, models

Storytellings. Inside Developing Groups, sitebased

Presentations, different sites

Reflections and planning
The «travelling routes» inside the school

1. Development Team
2. Team Meeting
3. Staff Meeting

Class Room

Office

Staff Room

Team Meeting

Class Room

Class Room

Class Room

Development Team

Staff Meeting
TRANSLATION COMPETENCE AT THE DIALOGUE CONFERENCE

- the assessment for learning (practice and theory)
- organizational development
- oral presentations of new practices
- different arrangement for organizational talking

- Empowerment

Validation of new knowledge (Faust 1997)
TRANSLATION COMPETENCE AT SCHOOL

• Developing their own Assessment For Learning practice in classroom (From idea to practice)
• The role as leader at staff meeting
• Developing collective sharing culture at staff meeting
• As colleague at informal arenas: intertwining different ideas
• Legalicy and legitimacy (teacher and principal)
• Teachers in the Development Group got a salient position in the contextualizing process
1. By using «arena» as concepts we discovered different arenas for translation processes
2. We are inspired to explore what kind of translation is happening at the different «travelling routes»
3. When translating from idea to practice the language play in important role: constructing

**Collective development arenas**