Litteracitet genom interaktion

av

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Akademisk avhandling

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Abstract

The dissertation Litteracitet genom interaktion ['Literacy through Interaction'] spotlights how literacy interaction can work in the primary school’s multilingualistic environments. It investigates conversations that occur in and around teaching about writing. The study material was collected from three different schools from year zero to year three, and special focus is given to what I call literacy chains. These chains are connected by the fact that they all concern a writing assignment that every pupil must complete, which in my material involves the text types narrative, factual text and poem. During the teaching sequences that unfold, there is an interplay of literary events in connection with speech, writing and various artefacts. My main object of inquiry is the interaction that occurs in these literacy chains.

The dissertation demonstrates that the teachers’ lessons with the class as a whole lead to fixed conversational patterns, with pupils asked questions that require specific responses. The conversations tend to form either a so-called IRE pattern, where the reader’s initiative for a question demands a given answer in response which is then evaluated by the teacher, or a list pattern, with the pupils filling in answers.

In situations involving the whole class, persistent, determined pupils are needed to break into the teacher’s monologue. When persistence wins out, from the pupil’s perspective, pupils can contribute new aspects to these conversations. In small groups and in one-on-one conversations, there are more pupil initiatives, since conversational patterns are not as fixed or predetermined.

One key finding is that multilinguistic resources are sometimes made use of even though the schoolwork is usually based on a single-language conversational norm. Yet it is clear that multilingualism is a useful resource regardless of the teacher’s language background. On several occasions, we encounter participants who together construct a multilingualistic environment where languages are interwoven.

All three literacy chains provide pupils with clear templates for writing, which determine what the pupils are supposed to do. The writing template in the poem chain serves as support for their writing but is not a straitjacket. This can be compared to the template for the factual text, which includes a copy of the model text.

The written language norm of writing properly is communicated in great detail by the teachers to the pupils. Writing properly is not just having good, legible handwriting, but in school the writing norms to be applied in writing assignments are made relevant.

On a more general level, the study illustrates that material resources vary in the schools, from green chalkboards to classroom resources that include laptops. However, schoolwork is predicated on paper-based writing. There is built-in stress, since schoolwork is governed by time, with a schedule that determines learning activities down to the minute, with them ending at a precise time. There is a race against time.

Keywords: interaction, literacy, literacy events, literacy practices, literacy chains, multilingualism, translanguaging, initiative, lessons, onsets, lists, text conversations, stress

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