

Deconstructing Communicative Work-Related Activities Using the 'Continua of Biliteracy'

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Research on teaching Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) is notably limited, particularly in exploring initiatives that bridge SFI education with real-world contexts. This paper extends from a follow-up investigation (see Walldén, 2023) of a municipal program aimed at integrating formal SFI instruction with practical work placements (known as *språkpraktik*, as outlined by Thornéus, 2018). The study aims to enrich understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of multilingual development activated when students engage in teaching moments related to job search and participation in language internships.

Employing ethnographically inspired methods including observations, note-taking, and transcribed audio recordings, this research documents seven SFI lessons targeting C and D level students, focused on preparing them for placement interviews and tasks. Theoretical underpinnings draw from the continua of biliteracy (Hornberger, 1989; Winlund, 2020), which delineate four crucial dimensions: contexts, development, content, and media, conceptualized as continua.

Findings reveal a predominant emphasis on written language, such as discussing appropriate vocabulary and structure for crafting cover letters ahead of placement interviews. This process necessitated fluid transitions between everyday and abstract language. Preparations for placement tasks also facilitated movement between students' first languages (L1) and Swedish (L2), particularly evident when the teacher encouraged discussions leveraging their multilingual competence to explore grammatical features. However, the concentration on written language occasionally shifted tasks intended to enhance students' oral L2 proficiency into exercises adhering to written language conventions.

While previous studies have advocated for increased utilization of L1 in L2 teaching, this study underscores the importance of challenging the overemphasis on written language in basic language instruction to promote biliteracy development among adult migrants.

References

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