

Fredrikke

Organ for FoU-publikasjoner - Høgskolen i Nesna

Language learning – additional learning – learning environment – teacher's role

Classroom studies in Czech Republic and Poland

Harald Nilsen

Pris kr. 70,-
ISBN 82-7569-158-1
ISSN 1501-6889

2007, nr. 5



HØGSKOLEN I NESNA

Om Fredrikke Tønder Olsen (1856-1931)

Fredrikke Tønder Olsen ble født på handelsstedet Kopardal, beliggende i nåværende Dønna kommune. Det berettes at Fredrikke tidlig viste sin begavelse gjennom stor interesse for tegning, malerkunst og litteratur. Hva angår det siste leste hun allerede som ung jente "Amtmannens døtre".

Kildene forteller at Fredrikke levde et fascinerende og spennende liv til tross for sine handikap som svaksynt og tunghørt. Hun måtte avbryte sin karriere som gravørlærling fordi synet sviktet. Fredrikke hadde som motto: "Er du halt, er du lam, har du vilje kjem du fram." Fredrikke Tønder Olsen skaffet seg agentur som forsikringsagent, og var faktisk den første nordiske, kvinnelige forsikringsagent. Fredrikke ble kjent som en dyktig agent som gjorde et utmerket arbeid, men etter 7 år måtte hun slutte siden synet sviktet helt.

Fredrikke oppdaget fort behovet for visergutter, og startet Norges første viserguttbyrå. Hun var kjent som en dyktig og framtidsrettet bedriftsleder, der hun viste stor omsorg for sine ansatte. Blant annet innførte hun som den første bedrift i Norge vinterferie for sine ansatte.

Samtidig var hun ei aktiv kvinnesakskvinne. Hun stilte gratis leseværelse for kvinner, inspirerte dem til utdanning og hjalp dem med litteratur. Blant hennes andre meritter i kvinnesaken kan nevnes at hun opprettet et legat på kr. 30 000,- for kvinner; var æresmedlem i kvinnesaksforeningen i mange år; var med på å starte kvinnesaksbladet "Norges kvinder" som hun senere regelmessig støttet økonomisk.

Etter sin død ble hun hedret av Norges fremste kvinnesakskvinner. Blant annet er det reist en bauta over henne på Vår Frelses Gravlund i Oslo. Fredrikke Tønder Olsen regnes som ei særpreget og aktiv kvinne, viljesterk, målbevisst, opptatt av rettferdighet og likhet mellom kjønnene.

Svein Laumann



Harald Nilsen har vært lærer i grunnskole i 15 år, førsteamanuensis i Høgskole/Universitet i 15 år, og forelest og holdt foredrag ved Universiteter i Polen og Tsjekia. Han har embetseksamen i pedagogikk og Litteraturvitenskap fra Universitetet i Trondheim og Oslo, og doktorgrad i Anvendt språkvitenskap, NTNU. Har skrevet en rekke fagartikler som er publisert både på norsk, engelsk og polsk, og samarbeider for tiden med kolleger i utlandet om publiseringer.

Forord

Forskning på språklæring og læringsmiljø i faktiske klasseromssituasjoner er aktuelt tema. Studien henvender seg til språkinteresserte og pedagogisk interesserte fagfolk og til studenter som skal bli lærere. De tre studiene bygger alle på et spinkelt, empirisk materiale, og har derfor benevnelsen ”pilot-studie”. Etter hvert vil klasseromsstudiene fra 1st International School i Tsjekia bli supplert med oppfølgingsstudier.

Hver av de tre studiene har et eget avsnitt som presenterer et teorigrunnlag. Tre så nært fagbeslektete studier forholder seg til samme teorigrunnlag, og det er bare gjort små justeringer for hver studie. Det er likevel praktisk i forhold til potensielle lesere at teorigrunnlaget følger med hver av studiene. Rapportene er ikke tidligere publisert på annen måte enn at de er sendt til direkte involverte fagpersoner og til andre interesserte i de respektive land Tsjekia og Polen.

Høgskolen i Nesna, 01. april-2007.

Harald Nilsen

RESEARCH REPORT

Carried out by: Researcher of Language Harald Nilsen, Nesna University/College
hn@hinesna.no +47 45 01 04 94

An arena for multiple learning: Study Language Teaching and Learning.

Classroom observation, 3rd class, April 26th, 2006

1st INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF OSTRAVA, CZECH REPUBLIC¹

Teacher: Gabriela Sipulova

Observer: Dr. Harald Nilsen

Size of observation: One lesson = 45 min.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank teacher Gabriela and children at 1st International School who gave me a fair chance to visit the classroom and study parts of what was going on in the learning environment. Thanks to School Director ZS a MS Ostrava, Paed Dr. Dagmar Dluhosova for invitation, and thanks to Head of the Department of Teachers' Training, Ostrava University, Dr. Lucie Dokoupilova who organized the program. Without her help it would be hard for me to have this research program.

PRESENTATION OF THE 1st INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL²

The 1st International School, Ostrava was created in 2005, and is established in partnership with: the city of Ostrava, the Moravian-Silesian Regional Authority, the Czech Ministry of Education, Ostrava University and the Technical University of Ostrava.

"1st International School" is a school for children from age 3 to 18, divided in the system of Nursery school (age 3 – 6), "Basic school, primary level" (age 6 – 10), "Secondary level"

¹ This report addresses not only those involved from 1st International School, but addresses my professional colleagues from Nesna University/College as well.

² Reference: Brochure "1st International School of Ostrava. A World of Education in the Centre of Ostrava", and www.is-ostrava.cz

(age 11 – 15), and "Secondary school"/"Secondary vocational school" (age 15 – 19). In 2007 the school will expand to include coursework for adult.

The 1st International School is the only one of its kind in the Moravian-Silesian Region, and the school was started to provide education in English, offering Czech and foreign children/students the chance to meet, to practice and learn together in an English-linguistic environment. The school strives to allow visiting students to integrate with Czech society while at the same time providing the highest possible educational outcome. The students at secondary school will graduate with the Czech leaving exam, called the "Maturita", and have at the same time the option of completing one of the Cambridge English Competency tests, either FCE or CAE.

In the first year the school includes besides Czech students, German, French, Taiwan, Mexico, Israeli and still more nationalities.

To sum up the notion of "International" it represents two main functions: (i) all educational activities take place or should take place in English, and (ii) the school includes children/students from different world wide nationalities, i.e. *actual* including multi-cultural environment.

THE SCOPE OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Observation, one lesson (45 minutes)

Persons involved: one teacher, 13 pupils, 3rd class (age 8 - 9), nationality Czech.

Observers position: Not-participating, unknown (Patel & Davidson 1995:73-74)

Classification of Study:

- Preliminary, exploratory, qualitative based study³
- Interaction observation, natural setting (non-experimental) (Nunan 1995)⁴
- Interpretation of data: "High inference description", i.e. interpretation that require the observer to make inferences about the observed behaviour.⁵

³ This one-lesson classroom study was not in-depth prepared and structured by me. It is correct to classify the observation-method as something between strictly structured and unstructured, i.e. *semi-structured*. That means to observe (freely) classroom activities, mainly the social and professional relationship between teacher and pupils, the general "rules of the games" and how these activities are part of and intertwined with language activities (cf. Barton 1994 "literacy events").

⁴ Lemke (1985, in Nunan 1992:98) ...argues that classroom education is talk: *It is the social use of language to enact regular activity structures and to share systems of meaning (cf. Halliday 1975) among teachers and students. Interpreting education as the use of language in the context of social activity enables the researcher to observe, document, and interpret how teacher and students use language across all school subjects to build relationships, define roles and so on.*

- Case study: One may call this classroom observation a *case study* so far it concerns a single class.⁶
- Of major interest: The “trio”, i.e. classroom activities – social relationship – language.
- The scope of observation: The interpretation do not concerns “what is going on” in the present *only*, but gives some hint what can be for the *future* (the potential of the classroom-activities and classroom-community).
- What next? Follow-up study next year. Extended observation/interview.

THE OBSERVERS’ PERSPECTIVE ON STUDY LANGUAGE LEARNING

I study partly - or more correct to say - I *know* language as system, but mostly I study language as a mode of *meaning-making*. The arena for study belongs mainly to schools and classrooms; how do children progress in language competence, what is the conditions for making progress, what can we say about the connection between teachers role and progress in language, what is the connection between social activities and language learning, how to assess childrens language competence, what does it mean to be “good”, “mediocre” or “dull”? (cf. Nilsen 2005) This way of study language represents a *naturalistic-holistic perspective*⁷ This perspective has as its central tenet that the context in which a certain act occurs has a significant influence on that act. Transferring to the classroom: to study language learning, language progress, the quality of written and oral language and the like one has to connect these issues to the physical, mental and social environment in which language teaching and learning are framed – language learning in a holistic context (Chin 1994, Freeman 1992 (in Nunan 1992:55-56), Halliday 1975 and 1978, Hoel 1992, Leffa 1999, Mc Cormick 1994, Nilsen 1998, Nystrand 1989, Nystrand & Wiemelt 1993, Rommetveit 1974, Wertsch 1992). Study language learning in naturalistic-holistic perspective calls for qualitative preparation of data processing; i.e. description (facts), analysis and interpretation/explanation of data processing framed in a horizontal dimension over time (Nunan 1992).

Finally one should have in mind that study language learning and language processes in a holistic perspective calls for critical view upon the observers’ observation and interpretations

⁵ “High inference descriptors” is not easy for independent observers to control or agree with (Nunan 1995)

⁶ ... the qualitative case study can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit (Nunan 1995:77).

⁷ Wilson 1982, in: Nunan 1992:53

sketched out in this report. Language processes and language outcome framed in a dynamic, social context are intertwined in patterns not easy to study, summarize and verify. Language activities change continually, and one activity influences other contemporary activities (ecological based structures). Accordingly it is not easy to pick up *whom* or *what* has impact upon learning outcome in which way?

There is one more challenge studying language learning and language progress, and I illuminate this challenge by the following:

Going along the street my friend Dr. Siemieniecka-Gogolin from Torun (Poland) asked: “What do you think, Harald, will be the optimal time for children to learn language?” “Oh, it depends what do we mean that “learn” language is about”, I replied, “do we mean the sentence structure, the structure of whole text, do we mean to read for an audience, to write a message, write a poem, do we mean a particular “norm” of talking, writing, and the like?” “And”, I added, “my grandchildren 6 years old, they have learned a lot what concerns language to match they living world .” As we see it, there is neither a single understanding nor single answer to the conception of “learning language”. The English teacher Faltova at 1. International School, Ostrava touches the question in a letter to me (quotes from the letter):
... *... speak English or just to understand. [...], ...achieve the level of English communication. [...]* ...*I want them to participate actively in this and for me it is the sign they understand, ...*
Here we note that language competence has many faces: to *speak* (active) or to *understand* (make sense of), to *communicate* (on which level), to *participate* (i.e. social practice).

The famous professor of Linguistics, Michael Halliday (1975:viii) differs between language “learning” and language “acquisition”. “There is more than a simple matter of choice of phrase between “learning a language” and “acquiring a language”, he claim. To *acquire* means to pick up by chance in ordinary, social situations of life language structures for *making meaning* (my emphasis), language to match the living world. To *learn* language means learning *language systems* (my emphasis) and put the emphasis upon the process itself and to see the child as an active participant in the learning process.

There is neither a pure form of “learning” nor a pure form of “acquisition, so why should we not combine the two. That is what I discovered when observed the 3st class (age 8 - 9) at the International School, and I discovered something more still I had too little time to observe.

AN ARENA FOR MULTIPLE LEARNING

Atmosphere in general

The group of 13 pupils was organized on their desks two on each with one exception, number 13 sitting alone. From my point of view there was a pleasant, mutual dialogical based atmosphere mixed with pupils' ordinary "liveliness" and framed in teachers' control of "what is going on". Teacher was in fact in role of a leader of different activities strictly controlled, but at the same time activities partly on the "premises of the other", i.e. the pupils (cf. *take the perspective of the other*", Rommetveit 1974). One should appreciate this combination of mutual perspective-taking and not expect it as a pure matter of course. Interaction should be a good basis for learning of *what?*

Learning what?

The pupils, 8- 9 years old, were apparently prepared to be guided and addressed by teacher (they were addressed consistent in English of course, to complete the conception of "international"), and accordingly answered in English as if that is their mother tongue.⁸ To be "prepared" means that the pupils had gained a lot of experiences and internalized. To adopt and internalize a set of "rules" makes discipline but still not submission. One should not underestimate the value of learning *discipline* as context for other learning profit and for ongoing activities (cf. *psycho-educational* perspective and *interaction* framed in an accepted well disciplined, *holistic dialogue-pedagogy*).

There was listening to cassette player (input: auditory stimuli, concentration) song, rhythm, expression of letters and pupils responding (i.e. intake + output).⁹ Besides this cassette player based input – responses there is authentic conversation, accordingly (one notes) the pupils experience English-in-use carried out in natural situations. Here we see the example of mutual support; genuine teacher – pupils activities support language processes (language learning), and the use of language works (in a way) as supporting "tool" to complete teacher – pupils interaction and activities. So - what did they learn? Language without being stressed of teachers (warning) finger "now we go ahead to *learn* language". And to that we note

⁸ In accordance with the "common sense" of International, the pupils of this 3. class have met English language from the very first day in school (cf. teachers mail to me 1.June).

⁹ Input – intake – output; cf. "productive reception", Smidt 2004.

additional learning; they learnt to take care of ..., they learnt “turn-taking” (i.e. part of social properties), and they learnt to listen (input) – to reflect (intake) and reply (output).

I observed a classroom with variety of activities; mentioned above cassette player (auditory stimuli), teacher talks (tells), asks (auditory stimuli, ability to concentrate, to reflect, to feel, warning for “not-drop-out”, and the like). To these activities one may add group competition to solve a code of letters. I note the two groups made their assignment in a disciplined manner. Of course they learned to make sense out of letters seeming non-sense (cognitive stimulant, and stimulant for organizing). They learnt *competition* as well. I don't know if the school should be the proper arena for competition, *who* is the winner? what counts? Who is the best? and the like. However, competition constituted a very small part of what was totally going on this lesson.

The teacher introduced a series of pictures to which the pupils should replay (strategy: to *see* and to *say*), and in similar manner they should give replay to a conversation arranged by cassette player and pupils books (learning outcome: listening, reading, concentration, warning of “not-drop out”, learning/expanding vocabulary, to listen, to see and to say).

We note the *language-learning-strategy*: Language is social activities, language is to construct meaning for oneself and construct meaning to each other, social fellowship supports language learning, and language of use supports social fellowship and what else is going on in the classroom (cf. *reciprocity-based model* of communication, Nystrand 1986, Nystrand & Wiemelt 1991, *temporarily shared social reality, the principle of reciprocity*, Rommetveit 1974.

Here we are at the core of the classroom activities and at the core of language learning; two issues that are intertwined in a social texture. The group *lived* and *acted* language, and the language supported ongoing activities. What is this about? Language is not a linguistic system only, but mostly a social system and a psycho-linguistic system (cf. Leffa 1999) and first and foremost a system of mutual *meaning-making* (cf. Halliday 1975 “Introduction”).¹⁰

Teachers role

Teacher was in the role of actor (active participant), organizer and designer of classroom activities in which the language was invaluable integrated. We can explain or confirm her

¹⁰ We can link this practise to “style” of learning, cf. “declarative” knowledge and “procedural” knowledge (Johannessen 2000, ref. in Hertzberg 2001:93)

strategy in this way: *They* (teacher plus pupils) *acted the language and lingualized*¹¹ *the acts*. Social practice, external acts and use of language – those three are intimately interwoven (cf. *literacy events*, Barton 1994).

What concerns teachers role of *designer*, I wonder: Were all those non-stop activities planned in advance, or were a core planned in advance and the rest carried out by way of pupils feedback? That means: was this lesson mainly teacher-based, subject-based or pupil-based. I feel mostly teacher-based, but I am not sure. Something in the social atmosphere sent signal of jointly-based.

Additional learning¹²

Those pupils learnt a lot besides what is typical “learning-for-school”. By teachers acting and design they learnt (mostly unconscious, I suppose, however of great value) partly “the rules of the game”; i.e. “it should be unprofitable for me to drop out”. They learnt “I am of value” for something/someone, they learnt “I/we are contributors”, “I/we can”. Still more, I suppose, they learnt about a positive self, may be the classroom-activities and classroom-experiences founded partly their *identity*, the “I am”, in this occasion a positive one.¹³ Most of all (in my mind) they learnt hard concentration and attention, an *investment* for the future, I suppose. And so are learning of (positive) identity, and so are the feeling of being accepted in the “social club”.

What did they *not* learn? The ongoing activities prevented (in my mind) the pupils to *wonder about ...*, close connected to *silence*.

Final comments

One should have in mind this study is founded on a tiny observation, and on cannot generalise beyond this small-scale study to wider activities in this class nor to other populations at 1st International school. However I discovered a lot of interest that I can link to my lifelong study of language learning. This third class practiced what is the “clue” in language learning. Language learning should go ahead in true social setting so far we claim language is *communication*, language is *meaning-making*, language is expressing the living world to each other.

¹¹ I know well the word “lingualized” is not current. In Norwegian we could say “språkliggjøre”, and that is current.

¹² Additional learning, see also the section “Learning what?”

¹³ About language and identity, cf. Smidt 2004:24f.)

I wonder where and when and why in the educational system and class level in school will this educational design “*language-as-social practice*” be changed and replaced by “declarative knowledge”, replaced by “language-as grammar”, or replaced by language outcome that can be subordinated to strict test program? (cf. Nilsen 2004). I suppose it makes sense that language should be lived and practised in natural, social settings, language to process the living world rather than language as formalism and language for tests.

REFERENCES

- Barton, D. (1994): *Literacy. An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language* (chap. 1, 2, 3, 4, 12). Blackwell.
- Chin, E. 1994: "Redefining Context in Research on Writing." *Written Communication*, vol. 11, no. 4.
- Halliday, M. A. K. 1975: *Learning how to mean – Exploration in the development of Language*. Edward Arnold. Australia.
- Halliday, M. A. K. 1978: *Language as social semiotic*. Edward Arnold. Australia.
- Hertzberg, F. 2001: "Tusenbenets vakre dans". *Rhetorica Scandinavica*, no. 18/June.
- Hoel, T. L. 1992: *Det sosiale samspelet i den skrivande klassen*. Rapp. Nr. 10, SKRIVE-PUFF, Trondheim.
- Leffa, V. J. 1999: Speech, AILA '99 Conference, Tokyo.
- MC Cormick, K. 1994: *The Culture of reading and teaching of English*. Manch. Univ. Press.
- Nilsen, H. 1998: "Språk som sosial praksis". *Spesialpedagogikk*, nr. 5.
- Nilsen, H. 2005: „Szkola Norweska dnia dzisiejszego. Krytyczne spojrzenie na testowanie umiejetnosci rozumienia tekstu.” . I: K. Wenty & E. Perzyckiej: *EDUKACJA INFORMACYJNA*. Technologie informacyjne w ponowoczesnym swiecie. Szczecin.
- Nilsen, H. 2005: "Hva sier sensor? Sensorcommentarer om tekstkvalitet. I: Berge, K. L. mfl. (red.): *Ungdommers skrivekompetanse. Bind I*. Universitetsforlaget. Oslo.
- Nystrand, M. 1989: "A Social-Interactive Modell of Writing." *Written Communication*, vol. 6, no. 1.
- Nystrand, M. & J. Wiemelt 1991: "When is a text explicit?" *Text 11* (1), 25-41.
- Rommetveit, R. 1974: *On Message Structure. : A framework for the study of language and communication*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Smidt, J. 2004: *Sjangrer og stemmer i norskrommet*. Universitetsforlaget. Oslo.
- Wertsch, J. V. 1992: *Voices of the Mind*. Harward Univ. Press.

Harald Nilsen Nesna, Universitet/College

RESEARCH REPORT¹⁴

By: Researcher of Language: Harald Nilsen, Nesna University/College
hn@hinesna.no +47 45 01 04 94¹⁵

Study Language Teaching and Learning: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Classification of study: Initial (pilot), case study, small scale

STUDY OF WHAT?¹⁶

- What kind of language activities are in progress during the lessons
(i.e. literacy practices: writing, reading, conversation, listening, drawing),
- What about organization of the activities/organization of the pupils?¹⁷
- The interplay between teacher – pupils; pupils - pupils; composition of groups, individual activities, and the like?
- What kind of learning outcome?

FACTS

1st INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF OSTRAVA (CZECH REPUBLIC)

Teacher: Hanna Faltova faera@seznam.cz

Grade 1 and 2, subject: Language learning (English)

Grade 1: 26. April – 2006, size of observation: 5 min. + one lesson = 45 min

Grade 2¹⁸: 21. & 22. November, size of observation, 2 + 2 lessons¹⁹

¹⁴ This report addresses not only those involved from 1st International School, but addresses my professional colleagues from Nesna University/College as well.

¹⁵ More: www.NETOLA.no

More: <http://hinesna.no/>

Menu: head column: (press): Forskning og utvikling

left column: (press): Ansatte- fagseksjoner

(press): NORSK

(turn pages to): Harald Nilsen

¹⁶ Complete guidance from observer to involved teachers, see Appendix.

¹⁷ Classroom-culture (Hoel 1992, Halse 1991 (cf. cognitive theory "scripts", Smidt 1992, "schemas", Anderson 1985).

ABSTRACT

The research report is divided into four main sections, I – IV. Section I gives a short presentation of the 1st International Schools. Section II sketches out a theoretical perspective related to language in general and language teaching and learning in particular. Part III discusses the observers' role *as* observer, and issues linked to observation as research method. Part IV introduces and discusses knowledge gathered from the class observation made in April and in November. Focus in the study is the learning environment in which all school subjects and all teaching and learning activities are framed. The report presents and discusses the classroom atmosphere, the learning activities and learning outcome, main learning goal as well as additional learning. The report emphasizes the teachers' role, the interaction between teacher and pupils and pupils' identity related to language learning. Part V presents final comments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank teacher Hana Faltova and children at 1st International School who gave me a fair chance to visit the classroom and study parts of what was going on in the learning environment. Thanks to School Director ZS a MS Ostrava, Paed Dr. Dagmar Dluhosova for invitation, and thanks to Head of the Department of Teachers' Training, Ostrava University, Dr. Lucie Dokoupilova who organized the program. Without her help it would be hard for me to have this research program. Thanks to Nesna Univ./College who gives financial support to study educational issues abroad.

I PRESENTATION OF THE 1st INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL²⁰

The 1st International School, Ostrava was created in 2005, and is established in partnership with: the city of Ostrava, the Moravian-Silesian Regional Authority, the Czech Ministry of Education, Ostrava University and the Technical University of Ostrava.

"1st International School" is a school for children from age 3 to 18, divided in the system of Nursery school (age 3 – 6), "Basic school, primary level" (age 6 – 10), "Secondary level"

¹⁸ 2. grade, November 2006 was 1. grade in April 2006.

¹⁹ One lesson is about 45 min.

²⁰ Reference: Brochure "1st International School of Ostrava. A World of Education in the Centre of Ostrava", and www.is-ostrava.cz

(age 11 – 15), and "Secondary school"/"Secondary vocational school" (age 15 – 19). In 2007 the school will expand to include coursework for adult.

The 1st International School is the only one of its kind in the Moravian-Silesian Region, and the school was started to provide education in English, offering Czech and foreign children/students the chance to meet, to practice and learn together in an English-linguistic environment. The school strives to allow visiting students to integrate with Czech society while at the same time providing the highest possible educational outcome. The students at secondary school will graduate with the Czech leaving exam, called the "Maturita", and have at the same time the option of completing one of the Cambridge English Competency tests, either FCE or CAE.

In the first year the school includes besides Czech students, German, French, Taiwan, Mexico, Israeli and still more nationalities.

To sum up the notion of "International" it represents two main functions: (i) all educational activities take place or should take place in English, and (ii) the school includes children/students from different world wide nationalities, i.e. *actual* including multi-cultural environment.

II A THEORETIC PERSPECTIVE ON STUDYING LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM.

II. 1 Language as meaning-making

Still we know the importance of the rules of languages, the grammar of language, I mostly study language as a mode of situated *meaning-making*. The theoretical basis is the *dialogism* (Bakhtin 1998, Evensen 2005, Halse 1991, Hoel 1992, Wertsch 1992; cf. "the circular, dialogic model", Berge 1994:614f.). Implicit in dialogism/ the dialogic model is that verbal language (written or oral) is a vital part in communication, i.e. *language IS communication*, and thus a social activity, and to study language teaching, language learning and language progress one should study language related to social activities in which language is a vital component. In this perspective language learning is conceived of as a *process* ("social reality") open for modification of different kinds, such as restructuring and creativity during use, but at the same time learning process is tied to a *signification system*, a kind of stable over-individual, cultural based structure (Berge 1994:616). In the perspective of dialogism, however, the signification system has the form of a variation grammar, a system of multifunctional potentialities allowing for flexible regularities. Language is, as we see it, a

socially based internalized system. But language as communication is also the creation of such a system. Language balances the social environment and the environment shapes and expands the language. In this perspective the pupils in classroom-context are not passive agents in the learning situation, but active meaning-seeking and meaning-making individuals who engage themselves and try to adapt themselves to interaction (dialogue) towards the environment and communicators in the environment.²¹ About this perspective, cf. psychologist Vygotsky, literary critic Bakhtin and the social – psychologist Rommetveit.

II. 2 Dialogism: combining concrete (dyadic), cultural and cognitive interaction

We should underline the multifunctional property linked to dialogism. It combines the concrete here-and-now contact - for instance one-to-one or one-to-group – with the perspective that links the concrete interaction to social and cultural practice. Thus language learning and language progress, i.e. language competence should be linked both to here-and-now use of language and at the same time linked to social and cultural based, interpersonal relationship. Of course, there is one more perspective, the internal (cognitive) activities linked to meaning-making, it means the state of observation, understanding, organizing, re-organizing and construction.²²

Further - the consequence of the dialogic model is that teaching and learning should be restricted neither to respectively teachers teaching strategies nor pupils learning strategies, but should be conceived of as form of physical, socio-cultural and cognitive interaction (reciprocity) between the two – teacher and pupils acting in complementary roles to construct meaning for oneself and meaning for each other. In this context one should underline the importance of cognition of which the Finish researcher of the brain, M. Bergström, writes in the book *Neuropädagogik* (1995) that the brain has three main functions: one to receive impulses from the environment outside (represents *order*), one function to receive impulses from the body (the inside environment that represents *chaos*) and the third function is to harmonize the outer and inner impulses. The readers of this report should have in mind this cognitive aspect when reading part IV “Observation and Interpretation”.

II. 3 An educational arena for study

The arena for my studies of language teaching and learning belongs mainly to what is going on in the classrooms; what is the conditions for learning and making progress, what can we

²¹ Cf. “The definition and selection of key competencies.”, DeSeCo 2003.

²² Cf. input, intake, output, cf. Piaget assimilation and accommodation.

say about the link between teachers role and classroom-activities in general and progress in language, what is, *in fact*, language competence, and how to judge learning outcome? This way of studying language represents a *naturalistic-holistic perspective*²³ This perspective has as its central tenet that the context in which a certain act occurs has a significant influence on that act. Transferring to the classroom: to study language learning, language progress, the quality of written and oral language and the like one has to connect these issues to the physical, mental (cognitive) and social environment in which language teaching and learning are framed – language learning in a holistic context (Chin 1994, Freeman 1992 (in Nunan 1992:55-56), Halliday 1975 and 1978, Hoel 1992, Mc Cormick 1994, Nilsen 1998 og 2000 (1999), Nystrand 1989, Nystrand & Wiemelt 1993, Rommetveit 1974, Smidt 1992, Wertsch 1992).

II. 4 Qualitative based preparation of data

Study language teaching and learning in naturalistic-holistic perspective calls for qualitative preparation of data processing; i.e. description (facts), analysis, interpretation and discussion of data processing framed in a “horizontal dimension” over time (Nunan 1992).

Finally one should have in mind that study language learning and language processes in a holistic perspective calls for critical view upon the observers’ observation and interpretations sketched out in this report. Language processes are intertwined in patterns not easy to study, check and verify. Language activities change continually, and one activity influences other contemporary activities (ecological based changes, cf. “ecolinguistics”, Fill 1998, Nilsen 2002). Accordingly it is not easy to pick up *whom* or *what* has impact upon learning outcome in which way?

II. 5 What do we study when studying language?

There is one more challenge studying language learning and language progress, and I illuminate this challenge by the following:

Going along the street my friend Dr. Dorota from Torun (Poland) asked: “What do you think, Harald, will be the optimal time for children to learn language?” “Oh, it depends what do we mean that “learn” language is about”, I replied, “do we mean the sentence structure, the structure of whole text, do we mean to read for an audience, to write a message, write a poem, do we mean a particular “norm” of talking, writing, and the like?” “And”, I added, “my

²³ Wilson 1982, in: Nunan 1992:53

grandchildren 6 years old, they have learned a lot what concerns language to match their living world”. As we see it, there is neither a single understanding nor single answer to the conception of what do we learn or what *should* we learn when learning language.²⁴ I met the English teacher Faltova (Ostrava, CZECH REPUBLIC) in April 2006, and in a letter to me she touches the question about learning English. She comments the difference between *just to understand and to speak*, but at the same time she drew a link between the two: ... *I want them to participate actively in this* (i.e. to speak, my supplement) *and for me it is the sign they understand*, ... In the letter she stressed too the link between language and communication: [...] ...*achieve the level of English communication*. [...]

The famous professor of Linguistics, M. A. C. Halliday (1975:viii) differs between language “learning” and language “acquisition”. “There is more than a simple matter of choice of phrase between “learning a language” and “acquiring a language”, he claim. To *acquire* means to pick up by chance in ordinary, social situations of life language structures for *making meaning* (my emphasis), language to match the living world. To *learn* language means learning *language systems* (my emphasis) and put the emphasis upon the process itself and to see the child as an active participant in the learning process.

There is neither a pure form of “learning” nor a pure form of “acquisition, so why should we not combine the two. That is what I discovered in the role of observer in the first grade (age 6-7) and in the second grade (age 7 – 8) at the 1st International School, Ostrava.

III INTRODUCTION OF METHOD, KIND OF STUDY, OBSERVERS’ POSITION

Observers’ position

One may differ between participating and not-participating position, and known versus unknown for those being observed (Patel & Davidson 1995:72f.). In the first observation period (April 2006) I was in the position of complete unknown and (physical) not-participating, however cognitive present. In November I was still not-participating in relation to what was going on in the classroom, but I was not complete unknown in so far some of the pupils smiled and nodded recognisable, and the pupils knew that the teacher knew me.

²⁴ ²⁴ Halliday (1988) adds profound question related to an adequate definition of language, i.e. “what is language”, and he answers that “in a sense the only satisfactory response is *why do you want to know?* Are you interested in language planning in multilingual communities? Or in words and their histories? Or in dialects? Or in how one language differs from another? Or in the formal properties of language as a system? Or in the function of language and the demands that we make on it? In each case language *is* something different”, Halliday concludes

Classification of study

On reference to Nunan (1992) these classroom studies are *case-studies* so far it concerns one single class in two different periods, and investigated in a way that involves close description and analysis of phenomenon in social context. Related to theory of language as communication, i.e. social practice, the observation has the form of *interaction analysis*²⁵ made in natural setting, i.e. non-experimental (Nunan 1992: 102f.). The studies are *preliminary, exploratory* and *qualitative* based in so far the collection of data is interpreted, restructured and summed up by me (subjective preparation of data, see below). The items of observation were not in-depth prepared and structured by me, but still not unfocused. It is safe to classify my observation-method as something between strictly structured and unstructured, i.e. *semi-structured* (Nunan 1992: 91-114; Patel & Davidson 1995:67). “Semi-structured” means to observe freely classroom-activities explicit linked to a focus (foreground), in my case activities that are part of and intertwined with language learning (cf. Appendix “Observation of what?” 5 items).

Interpretation of data

On referring to Nunan (1995) one may differ between “a low inference descriptor”, i.e. description of observed behaviour on which it is easy for independent observers to agree or disagree. High inference behaviours, on the other hand, are those requiring the observer to make inferences about the observed behaviour, and not easy for independent observers to control or agree (disagree) with (ibid.). In its nature my observation and interpretation belong to *high inference behaviour*.

Observation and selection

The classroom is an arena with a variety of activities. Children are naturally active, and in the classroom the teacher is responsible for a scenario of activities that generate learning. All learning presupposes activity: physical, verbal and mental (cognitive) activity. This is how I experienced the classroom situation in the 1st International School. It is a difficult task to summarize, describe, and interpret the multitude of experiences, and the solution is to choose single activities that are of importance for the learning environment. It is a known fact that the atmosphere in the classroom, the teacher’s role in the communication between pupils and

²⁵ Cf. “dialogism” introduced above, and Lemke (1985) referred to in Nunan (1995): “Interpreting education as the use of language in the context of social activity enables the researcher to observe, document, and interpret how teachers and students use language (...)” (p. 98).

teachers, order in the classroom, and a variation of activities are all important for learning. Most important, however, is that pupils feel safe and that they are seen.

My observations focus on the general atmosphere in the classroom, which learning activities the teacher initiated, how the activities were administered, and how the pupils responded to the teacher's instruction and guiding. Furthermore I aimed at registering the social atmosphere between teacher and pupils, as well as the social climate among the pupils.

The report is based on hand-written notes, the pupils teaching material, and some notes sent by e-mail from the teacher to me.

The structure of the classroom:

G = girl, B = boy

Grade 1) (April 06)

15 pupils²⁶

Grade 2) (Nov. 06). Lesson Tuesday

18 pupils²⁷

TEACHER (in front)

B	B	B	B
G	G	G	G
G	B	G	G
B	B	B	G
B		B	

Lesson Wednesday

TEACHER

B	G	G	B
G	B	G	G
B	G	B	B
B	G	B	G
		B	

The placement of boys vs. girls calls for no particular comments.

I don't know if the pupils place themselves freely, or if the teacher had decided a specific system.

²⁶ Most of them from CZECH + German, French, Indian, Tchaiwan

²⁷ Most of them from CZECH + German, Indian, Tchaiwan, Korean and Czech-American

However, in general one can say that the educational situation is strictly structured, a placement we are used to for long time in school. But pupils did not sit permanently at their tables throughout the lesson, but were free to walk now and then to the teacher to receive help, approval, comments and the like, sometime walking to the blackboard; furthermore there were some sequences of collective walking, collective “stand up” and cooperation. In general, however, permanent places signal order and routine and control – and (I suppose) safe atmosphere.

IV OBSERVATION and INTERPRETATION

IV. 1 Atmosphere in general

April 2006

From my point of view there was an (unexplainable) smooth, pleasant atmosphere mixed with pupils “liveliness” and classroom-structure, i.e. teachers’ control of “what is going on”. One should appreciate this combination and not expect it as a pure matter of course. Nor should one call it a kind of magic, but the issue calls for reflection. The teacher tells me about this group of children coming from different states and different cultures and societies thought they can be free in everything, and what then? Call for discipline with the slogan: “*To be nice to the others*”. Mutual politeness, mutual respect framed in mutual confidence make sense of safety, and still sense of freedom, “liveliness”; a well basis for learning.

November 2006

Half a year later the teacher proves this atmosphere between freedom and organization. A clear teacher as well as clear structures and routines create predictability, and such elements are commonly regarded as a basis for a safe environment. In other words, speaking about atmosphere, I witnessed the interesting balance between teachers’ firmness to *design* the teaching situation and learning activities, and at the same time she approved freedom for the pupils. What is it about, this balance between freedom and firmness? We may refer to the fable about the beautiful dance of the millipede.²⁸ Every morning the millipede was entertaining the animals in the forest with its graceful dance. The amfibium did not like this

²⁸ In Hertzberg, F.: “Tusenbenets vakre dans”, *Rhetorica Scandinavia*, no. 18, June 2001.

enjoyment about the millipedes' dance (envious we may suggest!), and asked *how can you practice this wonderful dance?*

We may guess what happened! When our millipede was forced to reflect upon *how do I in fact practice my dance*, it was quite confused, and next day going to practice its dance everything failed, and after that it never danced. This calls for a simple moral; one cannot explain everything. Relaxed, "free" atmosphere combined with organization and firmness (mentioned above) makes a good classroom-climate for activities for learning. *What activities? And learning what?*

IV.2 The classroom with high degree of activity and variation

April 2006

What concerns specific learning activity I noted teachers' strategy to expand pupils' vocabulary: that strategy was to give the pupils *manifold of impressions*. Show of pictures (visualise) plus show of complementary words plus conversation (audio-visual stimulation) plus play with words (acting, concentration, visualisation).

One interesting act was teacher telling fairy-tale in a witty "voice" and relaxed setting, and at the same time invited pupils to engage, stimulating their fantasy, their attention and their creative mind to construct their own world of imagination. They did not in ordinary sense *learn* language, but they *lived* and *acted* language, and the language supported the fairy-tale as such and the setting. What is this about? Language is not a linguistic system only, but mostly a social system of *making meaning* for oneself and meaning for each other (cf. Halliday 1975 "Introduction"). Learning language is interplay between on the one side activities made for practicing language and on the other side reflection (cognitive act) about the practice, i.e. outer activities synchronized with inner, and framed in teachers design.

November 2006

The activities confirmed the strategy and design half a year ago; multiplicity of activity, and – more important – keeping the focus of language learning and social training interwoven. The most notable characteristic of the many different activities is the alternation between teacher based initiative (communication, instruction, guiding, actualization and concretisation) combined with teaching material stimulation (work books and separate exercise sheets) and partly a kind of spontaneous pupil-initiated collective or individual activity. The "red thread" was as already suggested above, the link between the activities and enlargement of language

competence, mainly talking competence and expanding of vocabulary. And, one may add, enlargement of language competence means enlargement of social competence.

Despite of flexibility in organization and despite of diversity of activities there was a visible structure and organization, partly linked to teachers visible role, and partly linked to themes. During the period of observation the class touched the themes “shapes” showing different figures, “The visit to the dentist” (exercise sheet) and “At the post office” (exercise sheet).

Teachers’ organization and guiding and use of “school-based” teaching material does by no means imply a stereotypical setting; to the contrary the interaction between teacher and individual pupils or groups of pupils created variation and both predictable and unpredicted (improvised) initiatives from both teacher and pupils. I ask the teacher “do you prepare your lessons step by step in advance, or what is the connection between preparation, improvisation, organization, learning outcome and the like”? “Of course”, the teacher comments, “one ought to have superior cues (themes), but often one has to capture the situations and react and give feed back on the premises of the pupils acting.”

Different activities activated a number of senses, a well documented principle in educational strategy (cf. “Additional learning” below). Pupils were challenged for *attention* and *understanding* (inner, cognitive stimulation), they were strongly challenged to *listen* (auditory stimulation) and to *watch/see* (visual stimulation). Furthermore there was writing, drawing and speaking (stimulating for muscular coordination and control), and there was planned cooperation (social stimulation). Many of these activities were supported by dialogue between teacher and pupils, either as a conversation between teacher and the entire class (collective strategy), or at times as conversation or question – replay between teacher and one and one pupil (dyadic strategy).

There is one more issue related to the activities and to language learning in the social setting (the classroom is always a social arena); the issue is human being and shape of *identity*. We admit that learning language is learning communication is learning social practice, i.e. language is a tool that regulates inter-human relationships. Language ability or disability has therefore a strong impact on pupils’ self-image, “who am I”? (cf. Smidt 2004, Dysthe 2006). Some times during the lesson the activities invited for collective behaviour (collective replay, physical acts, listening to teachers story telling, and the like), and accordingly – I suggest – pupils feeling of belonging to the group, the “we”, “I am we”. The most obvious sign of collective belonging (social identity) was when the pupils gathered themselves on a carpet, and the teacher in front to call for attention, listening and

concentration. On my comment for those social arrangements, the teacher explained she works a lot to form a (good) social atmosphere. However, during the lessons there was a lot of activities confirming “I am I”²⁹, i.e. the teacher asks “me”, the teacher expects me to answer, to do something, the teacher confirms me; all in all *the teacher see me*. There is nothing more important than to be seen and be confirmed by other, preferably an important “other” – the teacher. In this circuit of activities linked to language learning one may claim there is a fair chance that young pupils partly form their identity, a sense of self; hopefully strong, valuable self? But we may add less favourable: Insecure self? Weak self? There are a lot of possibilities. So - what about these 18 pupils in grade 2? It depends heavily on the role of the teacher.

IV. 3 The role of the teacher

April 2006

Teacher was in the role of organizer of classroom activities in which the language was invaluable integrated. We can explain or confirm teachers strategy in this way: **They** (teacher plus pupils) *acted the language and lingualized*³⁰ *the acts*. Social practice, external acts and use of language – those three are intimately interwoven (cf. *literacy events*, Barton 1995). Teacher was a *designer* of structure as well, and a designer of mutual respect and designer of mutual kindness – an educational atmosphere for well-being, I suggest.

November 2006

In general there is a connection between teachers’ roles and learning activities. In my position I assessed the role of the teacher as planner, organizer and strategist.³¹ Furthermore the teacher played the role of a respondent, meaning that she confirmed the abilities of the pupils, gave advice, answered “yes” or “no”, and encouraged (“good”, “very good”, visual, appreciating signs in the pupils books, and the like). The teacher underlined (for me) the importance of being positive, to maintain the pupils feeling of being accepted.

In particular I will comment teachers’ role of becoming visible and central for maintaining a high level of activity, learning community and learning outcome. I experienced

²⁹ Cf. the relation between the individual “I” and the cultural “Me” (Mead 1934, referred to by Evensen, In: Berge, K. L. et al. 2005:105)

³⁰ I know well the word “lingualized” is not current. In Norwegian we could say “språkliggjøre”, and that is current.

³¹ Now and then I use the word *designer* (“strategist” reminds me of war).

the educational environment in a way that the teacher evaluated her role as central for the learning yield, and that the pupils should learn to listen, see, do and reflect. The distinction of the teacher was an integral part of the social climate. She practiced the dialogic model of giving attention to the link between teaching and factual learning and pupils learning potential as well.³²

One more comment linked to the teachers' role in the classroom – her role of producer (staging). Introducing the theme “At the post office” she arranged an authentic like situation, let the pupils write on postcard, let them have money (“pretending” genuine money) for stamps, and the teacher dressed herself pretending postman. All together this was a learning situation highly inspiring.

IV.4 Learning what?

April and November 2006

The pupils, 7 - 8 years old, were “free”, relaxed to be addressed by teacher (they were addressed consistent in English to complete the conception of “international”), and accordingly answered in English as if that is their mother tongue. Question – answers are in the mode of authentic conversation, accordingly (one notes) the pupils experience English-in-use carried out in natural situations. Here we see the example of mutual support; genuine teacher – pupils situations support language processes (language learning), and the language works (in a way) as supporting “tool” to complete teacher – pupils interaction. So - what did they learn? Language in natural settings without being stressed of teachers (warning) finger “now we go ahead to *learn* language”.

There are a lot of outer based literacy events (pupils talking, answering, writing and the like) by which pupils can prove their competence. To this we may add informal learning. On my direct, individual request to some of the pupils, they freely answered in English. In a specific situation for individual work I listened to a pupil expressed himself in the mode of “thinking aloud” in English; “... I do not have a yellow pencil ...”, and a girl close to me mumbled in English she could not find her book. One more example; in a social founded game guided by the teacher, pupils were not allowed to talk, however (as we may imagine) they did. The teacher tells me: *Of course, children talk. Although I said DO NOT TALK. They try to talk quietly and they use mainly English when they are in group – so then, everyone could understand. They all share this language in the same level and they use it in group*

³² The dialogic model, see item II.2, cf. Dysthe, O. 1995, referred to in Åsvoll, H. NPT 6/2006.

activities to be fair. We can conclude that the pupils practiced English equal to their mother tongue. But learning language only was not all.

IV.5 Additional learning³³

April and November

Those pupils learnt a lot besides what is intentional “learning-in-school”. By teachers acting and design they learnt (mostly unconscious, I suppose, however of great value) partly “the general rules of the game”; i.e. school is a community for learning, it should be unprofitable to drop out. They learnt “I am of value” for something/someone, they learnt “I/we are contributors”, “I/we can in fact do/construct/produce ...”. Still more, I suggest, they learnt about a positive self, may be the classroom-activities and classroom-experiences founded partly their *identity*, the “I am”, in this occasion a positive one.

They learnt to take care of *turn-taking* (i.e. part of social properties), they listened to teachers voice and to recording tape, that means learning *attention* and *concentration*, they practiced (accordingly they learnt) connection between visual (to *see/look*) and audio based stimuli, they learnt to *reflect* and to *understand* (cognitive activity). Part of the reflection is *meta-cognition* (however unconscious): what language in fact is about, language to match the social, living world.

V FINAL COMMENTS

One should have in mind this study is founded on a tiny observation. However I discovered a lot of interest related to what I already know about language teaching and learning and the environment in which those educational activities occur. This first and second class at 1st International School practiced what is the “clue” in language learning and language progress. Language learning should go ahead in true social setting so far we claim language is *communication*, language is *meaning-making*, language is expressing the living world for oneself and for other and to each other. Further - discussing educational strategies, the teachers role, the dialogic relation between teacher and pupils and the learning outcome one should appreciate learning language *processes* in advance of a expected, fixed product, language-in-use and language as meaning-making in advance of language as grammar, language for the actual life in advance of language for school. In the extension of teachers’

³³ Additional learning, see also the section “Learning what?”

role we should mention the role of designer. The multi-active and inter-active class-room presupposes no doubt a teacher in the role of designer, a designer of teaching and learning. And we can go further and ask: What is the code? What is the link between the design, the designer and the learning outcome? We have the grammar of language, well known, and – for a moment in the class-room of Hanka Faltova, I asked myself, “what is the code for success, is there a “grammar” for successful educational activity?”

It makes sense to claim that language should be lived rather than being learnt, or better: lived *and* learnt, language to process the living world. In South-Africa there is in the Pedi-language a saying “motho ke motho ka batho”,³⁴ that means: human being comes into human being among human beings. In case of language one may claim: language comes into language and expands among human beings.³⁵

³⁴ Referred to in the Norwegian newspaper GD, 08.01.07

³⁵ For comparison I will advise the reader to read the Research Report from classroom observation in primary schools in Szczecin, November 2006 (Nilsen, H. 2007). The research report is not yet official published.

References

- Anderson, R. C. 1985: Role of the Readers' Schema in Comprehension. Learning and Memory: In: H. Singer & R. B. Ruddell (edit): *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading* (p. 372-385). International reading Association.
- Bakhtin, M. 1998: *Spørsmålet om talegenrane*. Ariadne forlag.
- Barton, D. (1994): Literacy. An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language (chap. 1, 2, 3, 4, 12). Blackwell.
- Berge, K. L. 1994: "Communication." I: Asher, R. E. & J. M. Y. Simpson (edit.): *The Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics*. Oxford. Pergamon Press.
- Chin, E. 1994: "Redefining Context in Research on Writing." *Written Communication*, vol. 11, no. 4
- DeSeCo 2003: "The definition and selection of key competencies." On web: www.oecd.org/edu/statisticcs/deseco www.deseco.admin.ch
- Dysthe O. 2006: "Bakhtin og pedagogikken." *Norsk pedagogisk tidsskrift*, 6/2006, 456-469.
- Evensen, L. S. 2005: "Perspektiv på innhold. Relieff i ungdomsskoleelevers eksamens-Skriving" (kap. 7) In: Berge, K. L. mfl. (ref.): *UNGDOMMERS SKRIVEKOMPETANSE, bind II*. Universitetsforlaget.
- Fill, A. 1998: "Ecolinguistics – State of the Art 1998". In: *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik*. Band 23, Heft 1 (1-16).
- Halliday, M. A. K. 1975: *Learning how to mean – Exploration in the development of Language*. Edward Arnold. Australia
- Halliday, M. A. K. 1978: *Language as social semiotic*. Edward Arnold.
- Halse, M. E. 1991: *Elevteksten i et tekstrom*. Rapport nr. 11, Skrive-PUFF, ALLFORSK, Trondheim.
- Hoel, T. L. 1992: *Det sosiale samspelet i den skrivande klassen*. Rapp. Nr. 10, SKRIVE-PUFF, Trondheim
- MC Cormick, K. 1994: *The Culture of reading and teaching of English*. Manch. Univ. Press.
- Nilsen, H. 1998: "Språk som sosial praksis". *Spesialpedagogikk*, nr. 5.
- Nilsen, H. 2000 (1999): *På leiting etter tekstens implisitte leser*. Thesis for the Doctorate. NTNU. Trondheim. <http://www.diva-portal.org/ntnu/theses/abstract.xsql?dbid=456>
- Nilsen, H. 2002: "Learning Norwegian as a Second Language (NSL) through E-mail Correspondence between Russian Immigrants and Natives of Norway. A Critical Investigation. Summary in: Fill, A. & H. Penz & W. Trampe (eds.): *Colorful Green Ideas*. Peter Lang AQG.

- Nilsen, H. 2004: „Szkola Norweska dnia dzisiejszego. Krytyczne spojrzenie na testowanie umiejetnosci rozumienia tekstu.” . I: K. Wenty & E. Perzyckiej: *EDUKACJA INFORMACYJNA*. Technologie informacyjne w ponowoczesnym swiecie. Szczecin.
- Nilsen, H. 2005: “Hva sier sensor? Sensorkommentarer om tekstkvalitet. I: Berge, K. L. mfl. (red.): *Ungdommers skrivekompetanse. Bind I*. Universitetsforlaget. Oslo.
- Nunan, D. 1992: *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Nystrand, M. 1989: A Social-Interactive Model of Writing. *Written Communication*, vol. 6, no. 1.
- Nystrand, M., S. Green & J. Wiemelt 1993: “Where did Composition Studies Come From?” *Written Communication*, vol 10, no 3.
- Rommetveit, R. 1974: *On Message Structure. A framework for the study of language and communication*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Smidt, J. 1992: *Elevers skrivning og lærers kommentarer til elevtekster i et interaksjonistisk perspektiv*. Rapport nr. 9, Skrive-PUFF, ALLFORSK, Trondheim.
- Smidt, J. 2004: *Sjangrer og stemmer i norskrommet*. Universitetsforlaget. Oslo
- Wertsch, J. V. 1992: *Voices of the Mind*. Harvard. Univ. Press
- Åsvoll, H: “Hvordan fortolke Bakhtins dialog?” *Norsk Pedagogisk Tidsskrift*, 6/2006, 445-455.

APPENDIX

Prof. Dr. Harald Nilsen, Department of Language & Literature
Phone: +47 75057866 +47 610-54788 +47 45010494 email: hn@hinesna.no

Classroom observation, 1st International School, Ostrava (CZECH REPUBLIC),
21 and 22 November-2006.

SUBJECT: Learning English

Age: Grade 2 (8 – 9 years old)

To teacher(s) it may concern

There is a growing interest in the Nordic States and other countries in Europe as well for study Language teaching and Language learning in social contexts, i.e. naturalistic classroom settings (community of practice); i.e. using *interactional* and *ethnographic* based techniques to collect, investigate, interpret and systematize new knowledge (ref. prof. Dysthe (Nor.), prof. Westman (Sv.) and Rienecker (Denm.).³⁶ Theoretical basis is *dialogism*.³⁷

OBSERVATION OF WHAT?

- ***What kind of language activities are in progress during the lessons?***
(i.e. literacy practices: writing, reading, conversation, listening, drawing, and so on)
- ***What about organization of the activities/organization of the pupils?***³⁸
- ***What is the starting point of the lesson (teachers guiding, and the like)?***
- ***The interplay between teacher – pupils; pupils - pupils; composition of groups, individual activities, and the like?***
- ***What about the learning outcome (evaluation)?***

THE RULES OF ETHICS:

The participants should be safe that the researcher (observer) prof. Harald Nilsen will follow the regular rules of ethics.

STUDY FOR WHAT?

We agree to the growing interest in general for teaching and learning in ordinary classroom activities. What is about this specific study, I will go for similar follow-up observation in Ostrava (CZECH REP.) in November. Then there will be chance to compare what is similar and what is different between polish and Czech practices.

PUBLICATION

Article, contribution at conference, lesson for students in Poland/Czech/Norway

Sincere Harald Nilsen

³⁶ Interaction analysis (Nunan 1992, Nystrand 1986, Rommetveit 1972, Hoel 1997, Nilsen 2000); ethnographic techniques (Nunan 1992).

³⁷ Bakhtin 1986 in: Evensen 2005.

³⁸ Classroom-culture (Hoel 1992, Halse 1991 (cf. cognitive theory "scripts", Smidt 1992)).

RESEARCH REPORT

By: Researcher of Language: Harald Nilsen, Nesna University/College
hn@hinesna.no +47 45 01 04 94 ³⁹

Study Language Teaching and Learning: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION.

Szczecin (POLAND)

Grade 2 and 3, subject: learning English as second Language

Classification of study: Initial (pilot), case study, small scale

OBSERVATION OF WHAT? ⁴⁰

- What kind of language activities are in progress during the lessons
(i.e. literacy practices: writing, reading, conversation, listening, drawing),
- What about organization of the activities/organization of the pupils? ⁴¹
- The interplay between teacher – pupils; pupils - pupils; composition of groups,
individual activities, and the like?
- What kind of learning outcome?

³⁹ More: www.NETOLA.no

More: <http://hinesna.no/>

Menu: head column: (press): Forskning og utvikling

left column: (press): Ansatte- fagseksjoner

(press): NORSK

(turn pages to): Harald Nilsen

⁴⁰ Complete guidance from observer to involved teachers, see Appendix.

⁴¹ Classroom-culture (Hoel 1992, Halse 1991 (cf. cognitive theory "scripts", Smidt 1992, "schemas", Anderson 1985).

1. Observation: 06.11.2006, public school, grade 3a & 2 a

Subject: English as Second Language

Size of observation: 2 hours

Grade 3a: 24 students (more boys than girls)

Grade 2a: 22 ” (12 girls, 10 boys)

2. Observation: 07.11.2006, public school, grade 3b & 2 b

Subject: English as Second Language

Size of observation: 2 hours

Grade 3b: 14 students (5 girls, 9 boys)

Grade 2b: 16 ” (7 girls, 9 boys)

3. Observation: 08.11.2006, private school, grade 3 & 2

Subject: English as Second Language

Size of observation: 2 hours

Grade 3: 7 students (2 girls, 5 boys)

Grade 2: 16 ” (10 girls, 6 boys)

ABSTRACT

The research report is divided into five main sections, I – V. Section I sketches out a theoretic perspective related to language in general and language teaching and learning. Part II discusses the observers' role *as* observer, and issues linked to observation as research method. Part III introduces and discusses knowledge gathered from the public schools. Focus in the study is the learning environment in which all school subjects and all teaching and learning activities are framed. The report presents and discusses the classroom atmosphere, the learning activities and learning outcome, main learning goal as well as additional learning. Further it presents the teachers' role, the interaction between teacher and pupils and pupils identity related to language learning. Part IV gives summary from public schools. Section V constitutes a separate presentation of knowledge gathered from the Private Primary School.⁴²

⁴² The reader of the report should not separate this section V from the rest, but should read section I and II as background knowledge, and section III as well for comparison.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank teachers and children who gave me a fair chance to visit the classrooms and study parts of what was going on in the learning environment. Thanks to Nesna Univ./College who gives financial support to study educational issues abroad. Thanks as well to Dr. Elzbieta Perzycka, University of Szczecin who organized the program. Without her help it would be hard for me to get into contact with schools and teachers in Szczecin.

I A THEORETIC PERSPECTIVE ON STUDYING LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM.

I. 1 Language as meaning-making

Still we know the importance of the rules of language, the grammar, I mostly study language as a mode of situated *meaning-making*. The theoretical basis is the *dialogism* (Bakhtin 1998, Evensen 2005, Halse 1991, Hoel 1992, Wertsch 1992) (cf. “the circular, dialogic model”, Berge 1994:614f.). Implicit in dialogism/ the dialogic model is that verbal language (written or oral) is a vital part in communication, i.e. *language IS communication*, and thus a social activity, and to study language teaching, language learning and language progress one should study language related to social activities in which language is a vital component. In this perspective language learning is conceived of as a *process* (“social reality”) open for modification of different kinds, such as restructuring and creativity during use, but at the same time learning process is tied to a *signification system*, a kind of stable over-individual structure (Berge 1994:616). In the perspective of dialogism, however, the signification system has the form of a variation grammar, a system of multifunctional potentialities allowing for flexible regularities. Language is, as we see it, a socially based internalized system. But language as communication is also the creation of such a system. In this perspective the pupils in classroom-context are not passive agents in the language learning situation, but active meaning-seeking and meaning-making individuals who engage themselves and try to adapt themselves to interaction (dialogue) towards the environment and communicators in the environment.⁴³ About this perspective, cf. psychologist Vygotsky, literary critic Bakhtin and the social – psychologist Rommetveit.

⁴³ Cf. “The definition and selection of key competencies”, DeSeCo Project 2003.

I. 2 Dialogism: combining concrete (dyadic), cultural and cognitive interaction

We should underline the multifunctional property linked to dialogism. It combines the concrete here-and-now contact - for instance one-to-one or one-to-group – with the perspective that links the concrete interaction to social and cultural practice. Thus language learning and language progress, i.e. language competence should be linked both to here-and-now use of language and at the same time linked to social and cultural based, interpersonal relationship. Of course, there is one more perspective, the internal (cognitive) activities linked to meaning-making, it means the state of observation, understanding, organizing, re-organizing and construction.⁴⁴

Further - the consequence of the dialogic model is that teaching and learning should be restricted neither to respectively teachers teaching strategies nor pupils learning strategies, but should be conceived of as form of physical, socio-cultural and cognitive interaction (reciprocity) between the two – teacher and pupils acting in complementary roles to construct meaning for oneself and meaning for each other.

I. 3 An educational arena for study

The arena for my studies of language teaching and learning belongs mainly to what is going on in the classrooms; what are the conditions for learning and making progress, what can we say about the link between teachers role and classroom-activities in general and progress in language, what is, *in fact*, language competence, and how to judge learning outcome? This way of studying language represents a *naturalistic-holistic perspective*⁴⁵ This perspective has as its central tenet that the context in which a certain act occurs has a significant influence on that act. Transferring to the classroom: to study language learning, language progress, the quality of written and oral language and the like one has to connect these issues to the physical, mental and social environment in which language teaching and learning are framed – language learning in a holistic context (Chin 1994, Freeman 1992 (in Nunan 1992:55-56), Halliday 1975 and 1978, Hoel 1992, Mc Cormick 1994, Nilsen 1998, 2000 (1999), Nystrand 1989, Nystrand & Wiemelt 1993, Rommetveit 1974, Smidt 1992, Wertsch 1992).

⁴⁴ Cf. input, intake, output, and cf. Piaget assimilation and accommodation.

⁴⁵ Wilson 1982, in: Nunan 1992:53

I. 4 Qualitative based preparation of data

Study language teaching and learning in naturalistic-holistic perspective calls for qualitative preparation of data processing; i.e. description (facts), analysis, interpretation and discussion of data processing framed in a “horizontal dimension” over time (Nunan 1992).

Finally one should have in mind that study language learning and language processes in a holistic perspective calls for critical view upon the observers’ observation and interpretations sketched out in this report. Language processes are intertwined in patterns not easy to study, check and verify. Language activities change continually, and one activity influences other contemporary activities (ecological based changes, cf. “ecolinguistics”, Fill 1998, Nilsen 2002). Accordingly it is not easy to pick up *whom* or *what* has impact upon learning outcome in which way?

I. 5 What do we study when studying language?

There is one more challenge studying language learning and language progress, and I illuminate this challenge by the following:

Going along the street my friend Dr. Dorota from Torun (Poland) asked: “What do you think, Harald, will be the optimal time for children to learn language?” “Oh, it depends what do we mean that “learn” language is about”, I replied, “do we mean the sentence structure, the structure of whole text, do we mean to read for an audience, to write a message, write a poem, do we mean a particular “norm” of talking, writing, and the like?” “And”, I added, “my grandchildren 6 years old, they have learned a lot what concerns language to match their living world .” As we see it, there is neither a single understanding nor single answer to the conception of what do we learn or what *should* we learn when learning language.⁴⁶ I met the English teacher Hana Faltova (Ostrava, CZECH REPUBLIC) in April 2006, and in a letter to me she touches the question about learning English. She comments the difference between *just to understand and to speak*, but at the same time she draw a link between the two: ... *I want them to participate actively in this* (i.e. to speak, my supplement) *and for me it is the*

⁴⁶ ⁴⁶ Halliday (1988) adds profound question related to an adequate definition of language, i.e. “what is language”, and he answers that “in a sense the only satisfactory response is *why do you want to know?* Are you interested in language planning in multilingual communities? Or in words and their histories? Or in dialects? Or in how one language differs from another? Or in the formal properties of language as a system? Or in the function of language and the demands that we make on it? In each case language *is* something different”, Halliday concludes

sign they understand, ... In the letter she stressed too the link between language and communication: [...] ...*achieve the level of English communication*. [...]

The famous professor of Linguistics, M. A. C. Halliday (1975:viii) differs between language “learning” and language “acquisition”. “There is more than a simple matter of choice of phrase between “learning a language” and “acquiring a language”, he claim. To *acquire* means to pick up by chance in ordinary, social situations of life language structures for *making meaning* (my emphasis), language to match the living world. To *learn* language means learning *language systems* (my emphasis) and put the emphasis upon the process itself and to see the child as an active participant in the learning process.

There is neither a pure form of “learning” nor a pure form of “acquisition, so why should we not combine the two. That is what I discovered in the role of observer in a 1st class (age 6-7) at the 1st International School, Ostrava. So – what about schools of Szczecin?

II INTRODUCTION OF METHOD, KIND OF STUDY, RESEARCHERS’ POSITION

Observers’ position

One may differ between participating and not-participating position, and known versus unknown for those being observed (Patel & Davidson 1995:72f.). I was in the position of unknown and (physical) not-participating, however cognitive present.

Classification of study

On reference to Nunan (1992) these classroom studies are *case-studies* so far it concerns single classes investigated in a way that involves close description and analysis of phenomenon in context, i.e. study language learning in social context. Related to theory of language as communication, i.e. social practice, the observation has the form of *interaction analysis*⁴⁷ made in natural setting, i.e. non-experimental (Nunan 1992: 102f.). The studies are *preliminary, exploratory* and *qualitative* based in so far the collection of data is interpreted, restructured and summed up by me (subjective preparation of data, see below). The items of observation were not in-depth prepared and structured by me, but still not unfocused. It is safe to classify my observation-method as something between strictly structured and unstructured, i.e. *semi-structured* (Nunan 1992: 91-114; Patel & Davidson 1995:67). “Semi-structured”

⁴⁷ Cf. “dialogism” introduced above, and Lemke (1985) referred to in Nunan (1995): “Interpreting education as the use of language in the context of social activity enables the researcher to observe, document, and interpret how teachers and students use language (...)” (p. 98).

means to observe freely classroom-activities explicit linked to a focus (foreground), in my case activities that are part of and intertwined with language learning (cf. Appendix “Observation of what?” 5 items).

Interpretation of data

On referring to Nunan (1995) one may differ between “a low inference descriptor”, i.e. description of observed behaviour on which it is easy for independent observers to agree or disagree. High inference behaviours, on the other hand, are those requiring the observer to make inferences about the observed behaviour, and not easy for independent observers to control or agree (disagree) with (ibid.). In its nature my observation and interpretation belong to *high inference behaviour*.

Observation and selection

The classroom is an arena with a variety of activities. Children are naturally active, and in the classroom the teacher is responsible for a scenario of activities that generate learning. All learning presupposes activity: physical, verbal, and mental (cognitive) activity. This is how I experienced the classrooms of Szczecin. It is a difficult task to summarize, describe, and interpret the multitude of experiences, and the solution is to choose single activities that are meaningful in relation to the learning environment. It is a known fact that the atmosphere in the classroom, the teacher’s role in the communication between pupils and teachers, order in the classroom, and a variation of activities are all important for learning. Most important, however, is that pupils feel safe and that they are seen.

My observations focus on the general atmosphere in the classroom, which learning activities the teacher initiated, how the activities were administered, and how the pupils responded to the teacher’s instruction and guiding. Furthermore I aimed at registering the social atmosphere between teacher and pupils, as well as the social climate among the pupils.

The report is based on hand-written notes, the teaching material that the pupils used, and some of the teacher’s notes.

The structure of the classroom:

G = girl, B = boy.

The classroom followed a traditional pattern that was typical for city schools in the second half of the 20th century and cannot be labelled an attractive learning environment for children.

There were between 20 and 30 tables with chairs, a blackboard with necessary equipment, and the teacher's place was designed to be in front of the pupils, while the tables of the pupils were orderly placed in 4 – 5 rows.

3a)	Teacher		2 a)	Teacher	
	X X X X	X X		G G G G B G	G G
	X X X X	X X		B B B B	G G
	X X X X	X X		B B G G	G
				B B B	
	X X				
	X X				
	X X				

3b)	Teacher		2 b)	Teacher	
	B G B	B B		G	
	B B	G		G G	B B
	B G B			G	B B
	G G			B	B G G
	B			B B	B

Pupils did not sit permanently at their tables throughout the 45 minutes of the lesson but walked now and then up to the blackboard and sometime to the teacher to receive approval or help; furthermore there were some sequences of collective walking and cooperation. Generally, however, permanent places signal a certain order and routine, similar to schools in Norway.

The Language in use during the lessons:

	<u>Use of English</u>	<u>Use of Mother tongue</u>
One class, Publ. School (roughly estim.)	40%	60%
One class, Publ. School (“ “)	60%	40%
Private School (“ “)	90%	10%

III OBSERVATION and INTERPRETATION

III.1 Atmosphere

The atmosphere was marked by the teacher's role as a clear leader and organizer. In all four classes the teachers signalled that the classroom was an arena for learning, and the response of the pupils demonstrated that the clear role of the teacher was seen as routine. A clear teacher as well as clear structures and routines create predictability, and such elements are commonly regarded as a basis for a safe environment. I noticed a difference between the two teachers and the classroom atmosphere they created. While one of the teachers displayed a clear control over teaching situation and learning activities, the other displayed a less pronounced control, although she did not lose control of her classroom. With other words, here I witnessed the interesting balance between control and freedom. Both teachers were friendly and conscious about their role as administrators of learning activities and progression. However, while the structured activities of the first were relatively strict in regard to the prescribed teaching material, the other teacher aimed at a freer and more inspiring form of teaching. The freer form lead to noise in the form of unarticulated loud voices, sometimes from several pupils at once, and it was difficult for the teacher to reach the pupils with content, instruction, response, etc. This teacher *wanted* much for her pupils, and although her pupils did not consciously sabotage the learning environment, at a certain stage they tended to abuse their freedom and the inspiring style of the teacher. I interpreted these situations as a disharmony in the learning process, although the atmosphere between teacher and pupils remained good. The teacher reacted openly and friendly at all times, listened, and was helpful. I would argue that the pupils learned to accept that a relatively uncontrolled level of noise was OK. Nevertheless I believe that the more controlled classroom provided the *safest* teaching environment (see chapter III.6). In both classes I noticed an individual and collective willingness to work, and the pupils appeared to be generally motivated and, during the free and creative sequences, sometimes enthusiastic. Social interaction as well as learning-focused interaction functioned well from my point of view.

III. 2 The classroom with a high degree of activity and variation:

The most notable characteristic of the many different activities was that they started with a repetition of earlier learned material and went on with covering new material. The "red

thread” of the activities was their repetitive style, or drilling in the acquisition of new material. This was valid for the repetition of single sentences where simple grammatical features should be exercised, as well as for different methods to expand the vocabulary. The repetition activated a number of senses; there was attention and understanding (cognitive stimulation), listening (auditory stimulation), watching, (visual stimulation), and touching (tactile stimulation) for example of body parts. Furthermore there was individual activity such as writing, drawing, or speaking (exercise words or phrases). Many of these activities consisted of a dialogue between teacher and pupils, either as a conversation between teacher and the entire class (collective strategy), and at times there was a dialogue between pupils. In the dialogues it was obvious what language learning is all about: to produce meaning and to articulate the world for oneself and for others (see paragraph I. 1).

III. 3 Textbook-based activities

The various language stimulating and language promoting activities were mostly based on teaching material (work books and separate exercise sheets) as well as on the teacher’s organization of the activities. Using teacher-based teaching material does by no means imply a stereotypical setting; to the contrary, the interaction between teacher and individual pupils or groups of pupils created variation and both predictable and unpredicted (improvised) initiatives from both teacher and pupils. Even if the pupils were not always enthusiastic, they were active. Both teachers displayed a varying level of engagement and spontaneity; while one “obeyed” the structure and order of the textbook to a large degree, the other allowed a freer interaction between teacher and class as well as between teacher and individual pupils (see III.1 above). Although the learning yield may have been different, it is difficult to detect a qualitative difference here.

III. 4 The role of the teacher

There is a connection between teachers’ roles and learning activities. I assessed the role of the teacher as planner, strategist, and organizer. Furthermore the teacher played the role of a respondent, meaning that he or she confirmed the abilities of the pupils, gave advice, answered “yes” or “no,” and encouraged. The role of the teacher was highly visible and central for maintaining a high level of activity. I experienced the pedagogical environment in a way that the teacher saw his or her role as central for the learning yield, and that the pupils should learn to listen (pronunciation and vocabulary), see, (orthography and vocabulary), and

do (practice pronunciation, conversation, find out, etc.). The distinction of the teacher was part of the social climate. The relationship between pupils was stable and clear, as so much of the collective attention was aimed at the teacher and as the relationship between teacher and class was characterized by routine and a friendly, accepting atmosphere, as well as a sometimes humorous interaction.

III.5 Language and identity⁴⁸

Language is communication as well as it is a social practice, this means a tool that regulates inter-human relationships. Language ability or disability or different levels of ability has therefore an unquestionable impact on pupils' self-image, and this includes English as a second language. The teachers alternated well between diverse strategies, between seeing the class as a collective "we" ("we" are smart, "we" get positive feedback from the teacher, etc) and seeing it as individuals ("I am me"),⁴⁹ where individuals could make themselves visible and be affirmed by their environment. There was, of course, a wide variety in the *manner* pupils made themselves visible, and *how much* they made themselves visible, ranging from the completely passive to the very active and visible pupil.

III. 6 Additional learning

All activities were primarily geared towards language acquisition: understanding of content (oral or written), pronunciation (intonation), basic writing and extension of vocabulary. However, the pupils learned much in addition to what was the main aim of the activities. Through the teacher's staging the pupils learned certain rules and routines for classroom behaviour such as to listen and to be attentive. Furthermore they learned to compare techniques and insights that could be transferred from one learning arena to another. They learned that "I am valuable as I am" (because I can achieve something) and that I am valuable as a participant for the class (my social "I").⁵⁰ One of the classrooms was marked by at times distracting activities (verbal noise), and here the pupils probably unconsciously learned that "it was OK" to learn even in the absence of clear rules, order, and control.

III.7 What the pupils did not learn

⁴⁸ Readers are advised to read more in-dept about language and identity in Research Report, 1st International School, Ostrava (CZECH) (Nilsen, H. 2007), not yet official published (request email: hn@hinesna.no)

⁴⁹ See Relation between the individual "I" and the cultural "Me". (Mead 1934, referred to by Evensen, In: Berge, K.L. et al. 2005: 195).

⁵⁰ About language and identity see Smidt 2004:24 f.)

In chapter II. 2 I have pointed out the importance of a high level of activity, such as running relay, where it is important not to have to stop because someone loses the baton. Personally I think that the teacher should give the pupils more room for reflection, stop to think, ask questions, and let them connect teaching activities to extramural experiences. Thus pupils would better understand the foreign language as a real tool for communication, a social, cultural, and practical tool for life and not just as a school subject.

As it is in most classrooms, also in this class there was no room given to silence. Pupils should learn that complete silence is also an important activity, and each lesson should have some moments of silence where one does not have to do anything but thinking inward and outward.

IV SUMMARY

Imagine a group of children of age eight coming to the classroom, enthusiastic to learn, they know well the verb “learn” has positive value, something for expanding their experiences, something yet not known. Just so what concerns learning language too, just so what concerns “my” classes in Szczecin. However – learning language – what did they in fact learn? Or more – what should they learn? What should be the contract between school/teacher on one side and pupils on other side? And more – what should be the conditions to achieve the goal? My small, preliminary classroom studies cannot give answer to these questions, but I can refer to what I registered, and give some interpretations. And for my readers – please do well to reflect upon my interpretations.

The atmosphere of a classroom is ordinary a representation, even an abstraction, of events and acts and human interaction combined with a particular physical surrounding. I noted the atmosphere to be fairly good, fairly harmonic. However, different belonging to educational rules made a little difference in the atmosphere. I suggest that stronger belonging to the educational rules makes clearer perception of mental safety and better condition for learning? In both classrooms there was high level of activities related to language and language learning, like visual, aural and tactile stimuli, and there were different activities that pupils should reinforce and confirm their language competence. In a way they did not learn second language *only*, but they lived and practiced language, and the language supported the activities. Accordingly, they proved that language is not linguistic rules or linguistic grammar only, but a social system of meaning-making, a system to match the living world. To this I

add that the two teachers were not in front to connect the use of language in classroom setting to pupils' potential use of language outside school – i.e. in their ordinary living world.

The activities were obviously linked to standard learning material, however sometime freely adapted to improvisational situations, more freely adapted in the one classroom than in the other. However, in both cases, teacher – pupils interaction proved language as tool for factual communication. Teachers' role was to administer and guide the manifold of activities, to guide pupils, to confirm and encourage pupils doing well (and sometimes not well) and in general to be visible as leader, a functional role I suggest. To confirm and encourage pupils language competence has as its outcome bringing about pupils image or identity because, as already mentioned, language is a social tool by which human being shapes one's self.

Obvious, the eight and nine years pupils learned language, but what more? A lot. They learned to understand and to reflect, they learned attention, they learned to see, to listen and to answer and to make small comments, they learned discipline and they learned educational rules, that is what I call additional learning, and that is an important part of the intentional goals.

In adding up what functions well, one should point toward what was not particularly visible, that is pupils own time. Small, small periods for genuin reflection during the lesson. And, one may add, small periods for complete silence. Who will be the first to implement ...?

V REPORT Private Primary School, grade 3b & 2b⁵¹

Subject: English as Second Language

Size of observation: 2 hours

Class 3b: 7 students (2 girls, 5 boys), one teacher (f)

Class 2b: 16 ” (10 girls, 6 boys) (same teacher as for 3b)

The classrooms: This private school was located in a “good-looking”, renovated building. The classrooms were pleasant with nice colour walls, childrens' paintings visible on the wall confirm the friendly atmosphere.

⁵¹ Note: Item I above “A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE (...)” and II “INTRODUCTION OF FACTS” with exception of “The classroom structure” are valid for this report as well.

	3 b.		2 b				
G	G	B	B	G		G	G
B	B	B	G	G	G	G	G
	B		B	B	B	G	G
			B	B			

V OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION

V. 1 Atmosphere in general

From my point of view the pupils “liveliness” and friendly faces combined with teachers’ open-minded appearance situated in the physical attractive classroom made an unquestionable smooth, pleasant atmosphere. Pleasant, in a way “free” atmosphere combined with structure and control of “what is going on” make as a rule good learning conditions. One should appreciate this combination of control and freedom and not expect it as a pure matter of course. Nor should one call it a kind of magic, but the issue calls for reflection. About harmonizing freedom and control a teacher from CZECH REPUBLIC told me as follows: In my class we call for discipline with the slogan: “*To be nice to the others*”. I go further to reflect about this. Mutual politeness, mutual respect framed in mutual confidence make feeling of safe environment, and still sense of freedom, a well basis for learning. Learning of *what?*

V. 2 Learning what?

The pupils, at age about 8, were “free”, relaxed to be addressed by teacher (they were addressed consistent in English, and accordingly answered in English as if that is their mother tongue. Question – answers are in the mode of dialogue; authentic conversation, accordingly (one notes) the pupils experience English-in-use carried out in natural situations. Here we see the example of mutual support, that means: genuine relationship teacher – pupils supports and motivates language processes (language learning), and the language works (in a way) as supporting “tool” to complete teacher – pupils interaction. So - what did the pupils learn? They learned language-in-use in authentic situations, and they learned language without being stressed of teachers (warning) finger “now we go ahead to *learn* language”. But learning language as part of natural communication was not all.

V.3 Additional learning

Those pupils learnt a lot besides what is typical “learning-for-school”. By teachers acting and design they learnt (mostly unconscious, I suppose, however of great value) partly “the rules of the game”; i.e. “it should be unprofitable for me to drop out”, they learnt “I am of value” for something/someone, they learnt “I/we are contributors”, “I/we can”. Still more, I suggest, they learnt about a positive self, may be the classroom-activities and classroom-experiences founded partly their *identity*, the “I am”, in this occasion a positive one.⁵²

They learnt to take care of *turn-taking* (i.e. part of social properties), they learnt to *listen* to teachers voice and to recording tape, that means learning *attention* and *concentration*, they practiced connection between visual (to *see/look*) and audio based stimuli, they learnt to *reflect* and to *understand* (cognitive activity) and they learnt to *produce* language when reading and writing and talking (reply, comment “Yes” or “No” and the like)

V. 4 Learning strategies

There is close connection between learning outcome and ongoing educational activities. I noted that teachers’ strategy to expand pupils’ vocabulary was that of producing manifold of impressions and activities. There was talking (conversation between teacher and pupils), listening, reading, singing, writing (copying words from the blackboard), concretization (shopping centre/use of money, etc), turn-taking (question – answer). To these activities one may add the strategy of *repetition*, to pronounce a word again and again, to visualize again and again, to see again and again ...

How can we sum up the manifold of activities related to language learning? Of course there were activities linked to learning language system, learning correct pronunciation and spelling and the like. However, one should say something more, that is: different activities and language of use *merged*, that means: pupils (together with teacher) *lived* and *acted* language, and the English language supported what they lived. These pupils experienced language not as a linguistic system only, but mostly as a social system of *making meaning* for oneself and meaning for each other (cf. Halliday 1975 “Introduction”).

⁵² About language and identity, cf. Smidt 2004:24f.). About language and identity one should read Nilsen, H. 2007: Research report, data and interpretation drawn from classroom study, 1st International school, Ostrava (CZECH), in the serial *Fredrikke*, Nesna Univ./College, and will be printed in periodical, English form, later 2007.

V. 5 Teachers' role

Teacher was very visible and in the role of organizer of classroom activities in which the use of language was invaluable integrated. We can explain or confirm her strategy in this way: *She acted the language and lingualized⁵³ the acts*, and so did her pupils. Social practice, different activities and use of language – those three are intimately interwoven (cf. *literacy events*, Barton).

Teacher was a *designer* of structure as well, and a designer of mutual respect and designer of mutual kindness – an educational atmosphere for well-being, I suggest.

V. 6 Final comments

One should have in mind this study is founded on a tiny observation. However I discovered a lot of interest related to my lifelong study of language learning. These grade 3 and 2 at the Private Primary School experienced what is the “clue” in language learning, second language and mother tongue as well. Language learning should go ahead in true social settings so far we claim language is *communication*, language is *meaning-making*, language is expressing the living world for oneself, expressing the living world to other and to each other. I suggest it makes sense that language should be learnt by being lived, language integrated in processes of the living world rather than language as formalism and language for tests.

⁵³ I know well the word “lingualized” is not current. In Norwegian we could say “språkliggjøre”, and that is current.

References

- Anderson, R. C. 1985: Role of the Readers' Schema in Comprehension. Learning and Memory: In: H. Singer & R. B. Ruddell (edit): *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading* (p. 372-385). International reading Association.
- Bakhtin, M. 1998: *Spørsmålet om talegenrane*. Ariadne forlag.
- Barton, D. (1994): *Literacy. An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language* (chap. 1, 2, 3, 4, 12). Blackwell.
- Chin, E. 1994: "Redefining Context in Research on Writing." *Written Communication*, vol. 11, no. 4
- DeSeCo 2003: "The definition and selection of key competencies." On web: www.oecd.org/edu/statisticcs/deseco www.deseco.admin.ch
- Evensen, L. S. 2005: "Perspektiv på innhold. Relieff i ungdomsskoleelevers eksamens-Skriving" (kap. 7) In: Berge, K. L. mfl. (ref.): *UNGDOMMERS SKRIVEKOMPE-TANSE, bind II*. Universitetsforlaget.
- Fill, A. 1998: "Ecolinguistics – State of the Art 1998". In: *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik*. Band 23, Heft 1 (1-16).
- Halliday, M. A. K. 1975: *Learning how to mean – Exploration in the development of Language*. Edward Arnold. Australia
- Halliday, M. A. K. 1978: *Language as social semiotic*. Edward Arnold.
- Halse, M. E. 1991: *Elevteksten i et tekstrom*. Rapport nr. 11, Skrive-PUFF, ALLFORSK, Trondheim.
- Hoel, T. L. 1992: *Det sosiale samspelet i den skrivande klassen*. Rapp. Nr. 10, SKRIVE-PUFF, Trondheim
- MC Cormick, K. 1994: *The Culture of reading and teaching of English*. Manch. Univ. Press.
- Nilsen, H. 1998: "Språk som sosial praksis". *Spesialpedagogikk*, nr. 5.
- Nilsen, H. 2000 (1999): *På leiting etter tekstens implisitte leser*. Thesis for the Doctorate. NTNU. Trondheim. <http://www.diva-portal.org/ntnu/theses/abstract.xsql?dbid=456>
- Nilsen, H. 2002: "Learning Norwegian as a Second Language (NSL) through E-mail Correspondence between Russian Immigrants and Natives of Norway. A Critical Investigation." In: Fill, A. & H. Penz & W. Trampe (eds.): *Colorful Green Ideas*. Peter Lang AQQ.
- Nilsen, H. 2004: „Szkola Norweska dnia dzisiejszego. Krytyczne spojrzenie na testowanie umiejtnosci rozumienia tekstu.” Szczecin.

- Nilsen, H. 2005: "Hva sier sensor? Sensor kommentarer om tekstkvalitet. I: Berge, K. L. mfl. (red.): *Ungdommers skrivekompetanse. Bind I*. Universitetsforlaget. Oslo.
- Nunan, D. 1992: *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Nystrand, M. 1989: A Social-Interactive Modell of Writing. *Written Communication*, vol. 6, no. 1.
- Nystrand, M., S. Green & J. Wiemelt 1993: "Where did Composition Studies Come From?" *Written Communication*, vol 10, no 3.
- Rommetveit, R. 1974: *On Message Structure. : A framework for the study of language and communication*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Smidt, J. 1992: *Elevers skrivning og lærers kommentarer til elevtekster i et interaksjonistisk perspektiv*. Rapport nr. 9, Skrive-PUFF, ALLFORSK, Trondheim.
- Smidt, J. 2004: *Sjangrer og stemmer i norskrommet*. Universitetsforlaget. Oslo
- Wertsch, J. V. 1992: *Voices of the Mind*. Harward Univ. Press

Fredrikke – Organ for FoU-publikasjoner – Høgskolen i Nesna

Fredrikke er en skriftserie for mindre omfangsrige rapporter, artikler o.a som produseres blant personalet ved Høgskolen i Nesna. Skriftserien er også åpen for arbeider fra høgskolens øvingslærere og studenter.

Hovedmålet for skriftserien er ekstern publisering av Høgskolen i Nesnas FoU-virksomhet. Høgskolen har ikke redaksjonelt ansvar for det faglige innholdet.

Redaksjon

Hovedbibliotekar

Trykk

Høgskolen i Nesna

Omslag

Grafisk design: Agnieszka B. Jarvoll

Trykk: Offset Nord, Bodø

Opplag

Etter behov

Adresse

Høgskolen i Nesna

8701 NESNA

Tlf.: 75 05 78 00 (sentralbord)

Fax: 75 05 79 00

E-postmottak: ninfo@hinesna.no

Oversikt utgivelser Fredrikke

Hefter kan bestilles hos Høgskolen i Nesna, 8700 Nesna, telefon 75 05 78 00

Nr.	Tittel/forfatter/utgitt	Pris
<u>2007/4</u>	På den åttende dag : en reise i en lærers erfaringer / Harald Nilsen	35,-
<u>2007/3</u>	The School Reform – 2006: Knowledge Promotion : a critical view Den norske skolereformen – 2006: Kunnskapsløftet : et kritisk blikk / Harald Nilsen	30,-
<u>2007/2</u>	Holocaust : rapport fra et dramaforløp med utgangspunkt i Joshua Sobols' skuespill "Ghetto" / Tor Helge Allern	200,-
<u>2007/1</u>	Curriculumtenkning innen TIMSS : metodeutvikling	120,-
<u>2006/11</u>	Forskjellighet og likeverdighet : en dekonstruktiv lesning av kunnskap og utdanning i den fådelte skolen / Anita Berg-Olsen	50,-
<u>2006/10</u>	Små skoler i små samfunn : å studere utdanning og læring i kontekst / Anita Berg-Olsen	50,-
<u>2006/9</u>	Bruk av Moodle som læringssystem og et sosialt samspill mellom studenter / Tom Erik Nordfonn Holteng og Laila Matberg	40,-
<u>2006/8</u>	Veiledning av nyutdannede lærere på Helgeland : nyutdannede lærere – halvfabrikata eller ferdigvare? / Knut Knutsen	100,-
<u>2006/7</u>	Om styrking av samisk språk og identitet med vekt på Helgeland og Västerbotten : rapport fra seminar i Hattfjelldal 26.-27.januar 2006 / Knut Berntsen (red.)	60,-
<u>2006/6</u>	Psykologisk subdeprivasjon hos barn i tidlige leveår og konsekvenser for den semantiske og fonologiske språkutviklingen / Oddbjørn Knutsen	50,-
<u>2006/5</u>	Phonetics : A Practical Course (cd-rom) / Patrick Murphy	100,-
<u>2006/4</u>	Barn og unges digitale hverdag : lærere og lærerstudenter diskuterer overgrepssproblematikk i digitale medier / Per Arne Godejord (red.)	250,-
<u>2006/3</u>	News og BitTorrent som verktøy for formidling av overgrepssmateriale : studentrapporter fra Prosjekt Gå inn i din tid, 1.år bachelor informatikk, HiNe / Per Arne Godejord (red.)	40,-
<u>2006/2</u>	Learning Management System og foreleserens opplevelse av jobbytelse / Laila Johansen Matberg og Tom Erik Nordfonn Holteng	50,-
<u>2006/1</u>	Samspillet betydning for den semantiske og fonologiske språkutviklingen i tidlige leveår / Oddbjørn Knutsen	70,-
<u>2005/11</u>	IKT-basert norskundervisning i utlandet / Ove Bergersen (red.)	85,-
<u>2005/10</u>	Drama Nettverk : rapport fra samling på Nesna 20. – 23. oktober 2004 / Anne Meek m.fl. (red.)	95,-
<u>2005/9</u>	Slik vi ser det : hva synes studenter om sin egen IKT-kompetanse etter avsluttet allmennlærerutdanning? / Laila J. Matberg og Per Arne Godejord (red.)	35,-
<u>2005/8</u>	Praksiskvalitet i allmennlærerutdanningen : en studie av adopsjonspraksis ved Høgskolen i Nesna / Kåre Johnsen	90,-
<u>2005/7</u>	Argumenter for og erfaringer med fysisk aktivitet i skolen hver dag : en analyse av et utvalg relevant litteratur og prosjekter i og utenfor Nordland / Vidar Hammer Brattli og Kolbjørn Hansen	55,-
<u>2005/6</u>	Praksisorientert lærerutdanning : presentasjon og evaluering av Dalu 2003 (rapport 1 og 2) / Hallstein Hegerholm	145,-
<u>2005/5</u>	Kjønnsrelatert mobbing i skolen : utfordringer for lærerprofesjonen / Arna Meisfjord	30,-
<u>2005/4</u>	Deltids allmennlærerutdanning : opplæringsboka som verktøy i praksisfeltet (2.utg) / Patrick Murphy	45,-

<u>2005/3</u>	Om styrking av samisk språk og identitet med vekt på Helgeland og Västerbotten : rapport fra seminar i Hattfjelldal 27.-28.januar 2005 / Knut Berntsen (red.)	60,-
<u>2005/2</u>	Norsk som minoritetsspråk – i historisk- og læringsperspektiv / Harald Nilsen (red.)	75,-
<u>2005/1</u>	Mobbing i skolen : årsaker, forekomst og tiltak / Oddbjørn Knutsen	55,-
<u>2004/13</u>	IKT skaper både variasjon og læring / Per Arne Godejord	30,-
<u>2004/12</u>	Deltids allmennlærerutdanning : opplæringsboka som verktøy i praksisfeltet / Patrick Murphy	45,-
<u>2004/11</u>	www.fruktkurven.no : systemering och utveckling av ett webbaserat abonnemang system / Peter Östbergh	90,-
<u>2004/10</u>	Utvikling av studentenes reflekterte og praksisrelaterte læring / Elsa Løfsnæs	90,-
<u>2004/9</u>	Utvärdering av IT och lärkulturer : ett samarbetsprojekt mellan Umeå Universitet och Høgskolen i Nesna / Peter Östbergh, Laila Johansen og Peter Bergström	85,-
<u>2004/8</u>	Med sparsomme midler og uklare odds : oppfølgingstilbud for nyutdanna lærere / Harald Nilsen og Knut Knutsen	100,-
<u>2004/7</u>	Prosessen bak det å ta i bruk mappe som pedagogikk og vurderingsform / Tom Erik N. Holteng og Hallstein Hegerholm	60,-
<u>2004/6</u>	Utdanning og forskning innenfor samiske miljø på Helgeland og Västerbotten : rapport fra seminar i Hattfjelldal 22. – 23.januar 2004 / Knut Berntsen (red.)	70,-
<u>2004/5</u>	Behov for kompetanseheving innenfor reiselivsnæringa på Helgeland / Knut Berntsen og Ole Johan Ulriksen	35,-
<u>2004/4</u>	Evaluering av databasert undervisning av 3Bi ved Sandnessjøen videregående skole / Johannes Tveita	20,-
<u>2004/3</u>	Skolens verdigrunnlag i et rawlsiansk perspektiv / Ole Henrik Borchgrevink Hansen	25,-
<u>2004/2</u>	Multiplikasjon i småskole og på mellomtrinnet / Bente Solbakken (red.)	45,-
<u>2004/1</u>	Humanistisk eklektisme i spesialpedagogisk rådgivning / Oddbjørn Knutsen	45,-
<u>2003/9</u>	RedBull NonStop 2002 : utveckling av et web-baserat resultatrapporteringsystem för en 24 timmars mountainbike tävling / Peter Östbergh	50,-
<u>2003/8</u>	"Kan du tenke deg å jobbe for Høgskolen i Bodø" : om Høgskolen i Nesnas etablering av informatikkutdanning i Mo i Rana / Geir Borkvik	25,-
<u>2003/7</u>	Lærerutdannere i praksisfeltet : hospitering i barnehage og grunnskole / Oddbjørn Knutsen (red.)	55,-
<u>2003/6</u>	Teori og praksis i lærerutdanning / Hallstein Hegerholm	50,-
<u>2003/5</u>	Nye perspektiver på undervisning og læring : nødvendige forskende aksjoner med mål om bidrag av utvidet innhold i lærerutdanningen / Jan Birger Johansen	30,-
<u>2003/4</u>	"Se tennene!" : barnetegning – en skatt og et slags spor / Nina Scott Frisch	35,-
<u>2003/3</u>	Responsgrupper : en studie av elevrespons og gruppekultur - norsk i 10.klasse våren 2003 Korgen sentralskole / Harald Nilsen	80,-
<u>2003/2</u>	Informasjonskompetanse i dokumentasjonsvitenskapelig perspektiv / Ingvill Dahl	40,-

<u>2003/1</u>	"Det handler om å lykkes i å omgås andre" : evalueringsrapport fra et utviklingsprosjekt om atferdsvansker, pedagogisk ledelse og sosial kompetanse i barnehager og skoler i Rana, Hemnes og Nesna kommuner i perioden 1999-2002 / Per Amundsen	80,-
<u>2002/1</u>	Augustins rolle i Albert Camus' Pesten / Ole Henrik Hansen	35,-
<u>2001/6</u>	Etniske minoritetsrettigheter og det liberale nøytralitetidealet / Ole Henrik Hansen	35,-
<u>2001/4</u>	Evaluering av prosjekt "Skolen som grendesentrum" / Anita Berg-Olsen og Oddbjørn Knutsen	70,-
<u>2001/3</u>	Fra Akropolis til Epidaurus / Tor-Helge Allern	40,-
<u>2001/2</u>	Hvordan organisere læreprosessen i høyere utdanning? / Erik Bratland	45,-
<u>2001/1</u>	Mjøs-utvalget og Høgskolen i Nesna : perspektiver og strategiske veivalg / Erik Bratland	30,-
<u>2000/11</u>	Implementering av LU98 / Knut Knutsen	120,-
<u>2000/9</u>	Moralsk ansvar, usikkerhet og fremtidige generasjoner / Kristian Skagen Ekeli	40,-
<u>2000/8</u>	Er dagens utdanningsforskning basert på behavioristisk tenkning? : drøfting av TIMSS' læreplanmodell fra et matematikdidaktisk synspunkt / Eli Haug	90,-
<u>2000/7</u>	Sosiale bevegelser og modernisering : den kommunikative utfordring / Erik Bratland	50,-
<u>2000/6</u>	Fådeltskolen - "Mål og Mé" / Erling Gården og Gude Mathisen	60,-
<u>2000/4</u>	Bidrar media til en ironisk pseudo-offentlighet eller til en revitalisering av offentligheten? / Erik Bratland	40,-
<u>2000/3</u>	FoU-virksomheten ved Høgskolen i Nesna : årsmelding 1998 / Hanne Davidsen, Tor Dybo og Tom Klepaker	35,-
<u>2000/2</u>	Maleren Hans Johan Fredrik Berg / Ann Falahat og Svein Laumann	150,-
<u>2000/1</u>	TIMSS-undersøkelsen i et likestillingsperspektiv : refleksjoner rundt dagens utdanningssektor og visjoner om fremtiden / Eli Haug.	30,-
<u>1999/2</u>	Kjønn og interesse for IT i videregående skole / Geir Borkvik og Bjørn Holstad	20,-
<u>1999/1</u>	Fortellingens mange muligheter : fortellingsdidaktikk med analyseeksempel / Inga Marie Haddal Holten og Helge Ridderstrøm.	70,-