Constructing and positioning oneself bilingual: Code-switching in classroom interactions of two Turkish-Norwegian fifth-graders.

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Abstract
This case-study compares the language use of two Turkish-Norwegian fifth-graders, examining how they utilize their bilingual resources in order to position themselves as learning and social individuals. A common perception of bilingualism as a mental quality of an individual often results in measurement of the bilingual practices in accordance to monolingual criteria. Thus, the fact that bilinguals daily appear to be a part of a setting with two or more languages present, often remains ignored.

Building on a social constructivist perspective, with bilingualism perceived as a social feature of an individual, the in-depth analysis of 14 interactional episodes will provide a comparison of how the two target-children use code-switching as a valuable resource in subject related context and in informal peer interactions.

The video observations of the classroom interactions providing the basis for the discussion are a part of a large-scale study on reading comprehension, conducted in a number of Norwegian schools with a large share of minority students – “Classroom discourse and text comprehension”. The study comes to a conclusion that both target-children use code-switching as a functional and meaningful resource, which allows them to use the entire subject competence in their learning-related interactions and in social negotiation with the peers. Also, despite the similar background and linguistic resources, they tend to have different strategies of utilizing bilingualism in identity negotiation processes. Finally, the study concludes that both girls show flexibility and sensitivity to the context in their language use. The language alternation in their classroom interactions is purposeful, context- and content-dependent.