Dynamics in interaction in bilingual team teaching in a Finnish preschool classroom

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In our presentation we focus on dynamic patterns of interaction between teachers in a bilingual preschool classroom in Finland. As for context, we selected a typical team-teaching routine in Finnish preschools: circle time. The data consist of two video-recorded circle times (about 30 minutes each) team taught by two teachers. One of them had a predefined role as a Finnish speaker while the other was assigned a bilingual, Swedish/Finnish-speaking role. In the two recorded sessions, they also had predefined pedagogical roles: the Finnish-speaking teacher was in charge of both circle times, with the bilingual teacher acting as a co-teacher. All the recorded material was transcribed and categorized and analysed for activity (categorized according to their content, e.g. calendar, reading books, etc.) participant roles (type of leadership, Park 2014) and language use and distribution. The results showed that all the three types of leadership in Park (co-leadership, single leadership, alternated leadership) were present during the course of the circle times. There was also flexibility in how the predefined language roles were implemented: both teachers communicated monolingually as well as bilingually in the various circle time activities and used both disciplinary and instructional register. We further selected three activities – each representing one type of leadership – for a micro-level analysis of teacher turn-taking patterns and language practices. The microanalysis showed that the bilingual teacher who had the main responsibility of the bilingual pedagogy adapted her language use to the communication situation, using equal amounts of the two languages when single-leading an activity and more Swedish when co-leading an activity. Further, the Finnish-speaking teacher gave the floor to the bilingual teacher to create opportunities for the children to receive Swedish input whenever she asked for it.


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