

Astrid Neumann Symposium: On the borders between – written with oral communication

Chair: Jesper Bremholm

Discusant: Gert Rijlaarsdam

Writing on language skill's boarder

Language is a multimodal construct which has to be taught in all skills simultaneously. Teachers have to teach in reading, writing and oracy with a huge amount of linguistical and pedagogical awareness. Most of the time they concentrate on one aspect in particular. In international studies however, we assume that a percentage of students is more or less lost without additional support.

How can we find good student's support systems, which take several forms of language use into account? One opportunity would be to search down communicative practises which will solve central communicative problems (Fiehler et al. 2016). Thereby we would support students in using competencies they already have. Moreover, the school communication would be rather oriented towards a multimodal world (Kress 2016) where students are so-called experts. And we can focus on special central skills attending different tasks to solve in our society (Berge et al. 2016). Which contributions especially well fit in language education, above that we want to discuss.

Therefore, our symposium presents three different papers on the boarder of language use in writing.

Firstly, Robert Yagelsky presents a theoretical paper on the correlation of writing and wellbeing. He will start with common ideas, as how writing works in developing wellbeing for adults and kids? Especially in this area we can find assumptions that will give teachers instructions for a positive handling of diversity in texts, which is also connected to school's educational work.

The second paper of Winnie-Karen Giera presents a project combining teaching methods and writing research in vocational education. In this context meaning a group of learners who have already finished their regular school education will be prepared.

And in third paper Astrid Neumann discusses results from a project, with systematically changed linguistic levels of tasks for argumentative texts. She shows traces of that level-tasks in student's products with profounder insights in their texts.

In the help of these three symposium papers we will draw a picture of theory in practice. Outlaying the process of building hypothesis and proofing this hypothesis as well as depicting theory via quantitative and qualitative methods.

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Writing, Being, and Knowing: A Working Theory of Writing as an Ontological Act

According to the Call for Papers for the 2019 ARLE Conference, “It is through the mediating function of language that identity is built, that action and relationship abilities are consolidated, that knowledge is developed and communicated.” These connections among language, identity, and knowing are well established in philosophy (Merleau-Ponty, 2012; Newen and van Riel, 2012) and have influenced thinking in education. Less well explored is the role of writing, as a technology for language, in identity formation, knowing, and being. In formal education, writing is understood primarily as a cognitive process or a social activity. But writing can also be understood as epistemic (Berlin, 1987) and ontological (Yagelski, 2011). It is a form of knowledge-making as well as an ontological process whereby we express our very being in the world and thus plays a uniquely powerful role in identity formation.

This paper will explore the proposition that writing is an ontological act in order to argue for a working theory of writing that accounts for its ontological and epistemological character. Drawing on phenomenology, writing theory (Emig, 1983), and discourse theory (Ivanic, 1999), the presenter will show how writing is an orchestration of language skills that encompasses oracy and literacy and involves both body and intellect. As such, writing can be understood as a way of being in the world. Because writing pedagogies in formal schooling rest on narrower cognitive or social theories of writing, they exclude the transformative possibilities of writing as a means of identity formation. The working theory presented in this paper thus represents a necessary alternative to the way writing is understood in mainstream schooling.

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Writing Business Letters with "SRSD" in Grade Nine and with Students in the Hotel Business

This dissertation project was designed as a long-term intervention of eleven weeks with pretest-posttest-control group design in whole classes (N = 103 students). It was conducted with ninth-grade students (n = 77), and with trainees in the hotel business (n = 26) to fill an empirical gap about affect, behavior, content learning, metacognition in writing business letters during a pre-vocational writing project with "self-regulated strategy development" approach (Graham & Harris, 2017). The students' writing products and processes were monitored and collected by four kinds of assignments (548 letters), as well as tape recordings of peer feedback (09:12:13 h), six different questionnaires (1,269 questionnaires), modelling videos (76 min.), and keystroke logging data (pauses, writing time, words).

The general research question is: How does the literacy skills of general and vocational school students develop through SRSD, using business? These data were evaluated qualitatively and quantitatively (frequency, correlation analysis, regression analysis, analysis of variance, t-test, significance test).

In this presentation I will present a part of my results in the research fields behavior and content learning.

The results show, that participating students write business letters at the beginning of the writing project predominantly at a medium level with regard to the variables overall impression (text quality), language pragmatics, linguistic systematics, number of words, which they slightly increase in the course of the writing project. Students of the writing project have at the end of the writing project more textual knowledge about business letters than at the beginning of the writing project compared to the control group.

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How do students write while using different language levels of tasks?

Writing skills are closely connected to reading (Shanahan 2016). And reading abilities are to be shown in written or oral products. But measurements often depend on written tasks (Berkemeier 2010). The results of the PISA studies have shown that 20-25% of German students can merely decode basic information. Moreover, it has been noticed that the variability of skills further depends on social and language background than in other countries.

Regarding to writing argumentation skills this lack has also been found in greater studies. Students do more integrate their prior knowledge than reading material in that kind of tests (Böhme, Schipolowski 2016). Our research group developed a model of language variation via frequency, variance and complexity of linguistic forms (Heine et al. 2018) to vary tasks. We expect that students supported by linguistic more simple tasks will solve it better.

We wanted to figure out how students use different levels of language in similar writing task. Our hypotheses are

- 1) Easier language tasks present superior argumentation texts.
- 2) Weaker competent students further profit from linguistic easier tasks.

We tested 926 7th or 8th graders in northern Germany. Students had to write one of two different options of argumentations that were randomly differed in language. Every text was rated double-blind by 5 points on a linguistic and textuality scale. 25% of the texts was analysed qualitatively to search traces of writing tasks. Every student answered a C-test to divide linguistic competent groups.

We found with MEAN=2,7 (SD=1,0) in textuality vs. MEAN=2,8 (SD=1,0) in linguistically well tolerated quality of texts. But only weakest linguistic students profit from simple linguistic tasks.

In qualitative analyses we found 1841 paraphrases or citations of task materials in students' texts. Differentiated in linguistic ability by c-tests, as stronger linguistic students are as less citation they use. Paraphrase seems to be a learning transform in that age.

The results have shown that we must develop a broader view on student's writing products. Qualitative analyses outline the differences in various levels of competencies. These analyses will help us to support students more adequately while learning from sources.

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