

# Multiliteracies and translanguaging pedagogy in the adult L2-classroom: The case of basic literacy education in Swedish for Immigrants

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*In this article, we study space for multiliteracies in basic literacy education for adult second language learners of Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). The teaching observed was categorised as translanguaging pedagogy, and the study was part of an action research project with Linguistic Ethnography as the methodological framework. The material used comes from classroom observations in three schools and consists of fieldnotes, recordings of teaching, photographs, handouts and other artefacts. Hornberger's (2003) continua of biliteracy was used for the analysis. Findings show there to be space for multiliteracies in these classrooms; however, since most students in these classes have limited literacy skills in their earlier languages, the written texts used in class are mainly in Swedish. Findings also show that teaching includes practices from all points on the continua, which Hornberger (1989) highlights as important for biliterate development, in this case to a lesser extent for written language. The shuttling between the ends of all continua is particularly important for students in SFI, Study Path One, who tend to have low status in, for example, the workforce and society. Findings also show that images tend to be used as tools rather than as objects for interpretation. Our conclusion is that space for multiliteracies varies depending on the earlier literacy skills of students, the number of students in a group who understood a particular language and the availability of study guidance assistants in the students' mother tongues.*

*Keywords:* multiliteracies, translanguaging pedagogy, adult L2 classroom

## 1 Introduction

This article directs interest towards space for multiliteracies in basic literacy education in adult L2-teaching in Sweden. The programme Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) is aimed to teach basic Swedish to immigrants, and one of the three study paths, Study Path One, is for students with fewer than four years of education upon their arrival in Sweden. For an adult, learning a new language to a level needed for everyday life is challenging: when it involves the acquisition of basic literacy skills, then this means hard work for both teachers and students alike (Filimban et al. 2022; Wedin & Norlund Shaswar, 2019,

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2021). In Sweden, SFI is free of charge and arranged by the local municipality. It is taught in *Komvux* (municipal education for adults) or by private companies. The aim of SFI includes both school knowledge and everyday knowledge since it focuses on competence in relation to work, societal life and personal development (Education Act, SFS 2010:800, chapter 20, section 2). What may sometimes be perceived as basic literacy skills is a complex and political question. In that respect, the final test in SFI sets a standard for the education, and in the test, basic literacy skills in Swedish are important yet are often a stumbling block for students in Study Path One.

The focus of this article is translanguaging pedagogy as an important way to develop students' multiliteracies. The benefit of including students' diverse language skills in education is stated in many official documents, with the UNESCO report from 1953 being perhaps the most cited document and the study by Thomas and Collier (2001) being among the most influential within research. By using *multiliteracies*, we draw both on the New London Group (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) and the concept *multilingual literacies* (Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000), while using Hornberger's *continua of biliteracy* (1989, 2003) as the analytical tool.

Researchers such as García (2009) and Cummins (2000, 2021) have stressed the importance of including languages of minoritised students in education as a means of activating their voice and promoting the development of their L2-language skills. As such, they oppose a monolingual norm in education. There remains little research on multilingual approaches in adult L2-education, and this is particularly the case for the group of students in focus here, who are sometimes referred to as "Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education" (SLIFE) (King & Bigelow, 2020) or LESLLA students (in the research and teaching network Literacy Education and Second Language Learning of Adults) despite the fact that this group of students constitutes an increasing part of students globally (UNHCR, 2022). King and Bigelow (2020) argue that pedagogies that involve all the linguistic resources of students may be particularly critical for SLIFE as they face the challenge of acquiring the new language while simultaneously developing both basic literacy skills and other skills they need for life in their new country. Translanguaging pedagogy have the potential to help bridge between students' rich life experiences and skills and the proficiency they need to develop for their new life.

Our own earlier studies (Wedin & Berg, submitted; Wedin & Norlund Shaswar, 2019, 2022) have shown there to be a wider acceptance among SFI teachers of multilingual practices than compared to what King and Bigelow (2020) found in education for adult and adolescent refugees in the US. However, there is still little lack of research on translanguaging in early literacy education in L2 education for adults. Thus, the specific aim of this article is to study space for multiliteracies in basic literacy education for adult second language learners of SFI. The material was created in a research project on basic literacy education.

## 2 Earlier research

The importance of immigrants developing a multilingual repertoire is highlighted by Simpson (2020). She argues that adult migrants typically learn English as an L2 as part of a repertoire that is used fluidly and flexibly in spaces that are often characterised as multilingual and multimodal. The particular importance of using multilingual pedagogies in education for SLIFE is also highlighted by King and Bigelow (2020), who view it as a bridge to students' rich life experiences that can enhance their learning.

Earlier research on the development of basic literacy skills among adults draws mainly on projects conducted in developing countries (e.g., Kerfoot, 2009; Wedin, 2007) and literacy practices in and outside schools (Street, 1984; Prinsloo & Breier, 1996; Barton, 2007; Vollmer, 2019). Studies on literacy education for adult L2-learners have been conducted in a number of countries, including Sweden (Franker, 2011; Wedin & Norlund

Shaswar, 2019, 2021), Finland (Malessa, 2018) Norway (Monsen, 2021), the US (King & Bigelow, 2020), and Luxembourg, Canada and Belgium (Choi & Ziegler, 2015). Kerfoot reports on research that critically discusses literacy education for adults in relation to democratic issues and citizenship. Franker examined teacher identities and teaching in relation to literacy and students' languages while Wedin and Norlund Shaswar focused on interaction and students' everyday literacy practices.

Drawing on biliteracy research, researchers such as Rivera and Huerta-Macías (2008) argue that learning is more effective if students are taught in a language they know. Auerbach (1993) warns that the use of L2-only policies in early literacy education for adults may have negative effects on students' self-esteem. Based on the research they conducted in the Peruvian Amazon, Hornberger and Dueñas (2018) suggest that the shyness of students can be transformed into voice when there is support for the retention of their indigenous languages. Baynham (2020) argues that translanguaging is important in teaching because it gives students a voice: "if translanguaging is multilingualism from below (...) then it can be seen as a creative/political project *vis-à-vis* the normativities of monolingualism and separate bilingualism, in other words a *speaking back*" (p. 15. italics as in the original).

### 3 Theoretical framework

The focus on space for multiliteracies means that the concept *literacy practices* from New Literacy Studies (Barton, 2007; Street, 1995) is central. In New Literacy Studies and the closely related Critical Literacy (Janks, 2010), aspects of power relate to practices in relation to literacy - that is to say, to socially and culturally situated practices where people engage with written text through reading, writing and talking.

The use of Hornberger's continua of biliteracy (2003) enables the analysis of such a complex phenomenon as multiliteracies, which includes power aspects related to linguistic diversity and the use of varied linguistic resources, as well as multimodality. This means that focus in this study is on what teachers and students *do* rather than on what they *know*. Rather than focus on the importance of students' writing skills for their education, this article focuses on their use of and attitudes towards written text. Literacy practices are embedded in the web of ongoing practices. Hornberger's (2003) continua of biliteracy is grounded in an ecological perspective on language and offers a theoretical model for the study of multiliteracies with its four sets of continua: *content*, *context*, *media* and *development*. The combination of New Literacy Studies with the continua allows for the study of space for multiliteracies in classrooms. The intersection of the continua enables the analysis of variables at the micro level in relation to the complexity at the meso and macro levels. The power dimensions of the model include power aspects in the three dimensions of each continuum.

The continua included in *content* (minority - majority; vernacular - literary; and contextualised - decontextualised) have on their left side what commonly relates to low status in education: minority, vernacular and contextualised. Meanwhile, on their right side they have majority, literary and decontextualised, which are often promoted as being linked to high status. Thus, the *content* set of continua allows for the analysis of aspects of power since they direct focus on how diverse meanings may be linked to multiliteracies by considering the intersection of school knowledge and everyday, personal knowledge.

The continua included in the set of *context* are micro - macro; oral - written; and multilingual - monolingual. The left end of the continua, which tends to relate to low status in education, is therefore micro, oral and multilingual in contrast to the right ends, which tend to be given higher status: macro, written and monolingual. In the Swedish context of SFI, this may be exemplified by standard written Swedish, which is commonly given high status, and what is specifically assessed.

The third set of continua, *media*, addresses diversity by investigating whether languages are used in parallel or separately, diversity in textual form and orthographic variation. The three continua included in *media* are as follows: simultaneous exposure – successive exposure; dissimilar structures – similar structures; and divergent scripts – convergent scripts. Thus, this set turns the focus towards diversity in the use of media in relation to literacy and language.

The fourth set, *development*, consists of reception – production; oral – written; and L1–L2. The tendency in education is that less power is weighted towards the left side – reception, oral and L1 – while more power is given to the right side – production, written and L2. In the context of SFI, this means that students are assessed on their ability to produce written texts in Swedish, while skills in other languages, including literacy skills, are seldom valued at all.

The analysis becomes particularly relevant for language education because, according to Hornberger, “the more the learning contexts allow learners to draw on all points of the continua, the greater are the chances for their full biliterate development” (1989, p. 286). Here we use *multiliteracies* while building on Hornberger’s definition of biliteracy as “any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing” (1990, p. 213) and her description of continua of biliteracy:

The framework uses the notion of intersecting and nested continua to demonstrate the multiple and complex interrelationships between bilingualism and literacy and the importance of the contexts, media, and content through which biliteracy develops. Hornberger (2003, p. xiv)

By using *multiliteracies*, we acknowledge the understanding of translanguaging of language as being fluid and as varying. Thus, the use of *multiliteracies* makes the pluralism of language and language use apparent. This includes varied modalities, language repertoires, scripts and settings both in highly valued standard varieties and in less valued everyday vernacular styles. Martin-Jones and Jones (2000) showed how when it comes to linguistic minorities, language use often includes communication in diverse networks spanning over continents as well as how they often include written language. As Blommaert (2010) stresses, just as humans travel, so do written texts, which implies that adult immigrants are often involved in multiliteracy practices.

We would define the teaching that we observed in our study as translanguaging pedagogy (Leoneth et al., 2017; Lin, 2020). According to Lin (2020), there is no single translanguaging pedagogy; however, “the principles and spirit of translanguaging pedagogies can provide useful ideas for teachers and curriculum planners to adapt or innovate these pedagogies for their own unique contexts” (p. 6). We use translanguaging pedagogy to refer to teaching that creates what Li Wei (2011) termed *translanguaging space*, which is a space that results from and is for translanguaging processes. The concept includes the sense of security that Conteh and Brock (2011) refer to as *safe space*, which is where all learning experiences, including diverse linguistic resources, are recognised and valued. This relationship between translanguaging and security is also highlighted by Canagarajah (2011). The value of inviting students both to use all their linguistic resources in creative and playful ways as resources for learning and to expand their repertoires is typical for practices characterised as translanguaging, which is thus highly relevant for literacy education – particularly so for adults with little or even no prior schooling: SLIFE.

The concept translanguaging has been expanded to include multimodality (Lindahl, 2015) and dynamic processes such as intensity (Novosel & Dahlberg, 2021). This is relevant for this study with its focus on multiliteracies and on translanguaging space as space for multiliteracies.

## 4 Methodology

The material for this article was produced in an action research project titled *Literacy Education at a Basic Level in Swedish for Immigrants* (2020–2022). The project involved researchers and teachers working together in three action research cycles to develop teaching of basic literacy Study Path One of SFI. The methodological framework for the project was Linguistic Ethnography (Copland & Creese, 2015). The material used in this article resulted from 117 hours of classroom observations in three schools of ten teachers and consists of fieldnotes, recordings from teaching (four hours audio and 13 hours video), photographs, handouts and other artefacts. Observations were made in three courses included in SFI A, B and C. No lessons were observed in course D since only a few students progressed to that level during the period of study. In some lessons, an assistant was present who provided what is termed Study Guidance in the Mother Tongue (SGMT). All observations were made by the first author and transcriptions of talk were made with the help of interpreters. The second author provided transcriptions of Arabic, while the first author worked with a professional interpreter to transcribe Kurdish varieties and an SGMT assistant to transcribe Somali in the observed classes. Other languages, such as English, Punjabi, Thai and Tigré, were not frequently used during observations despite students knowing these.

Hornberger's continua of biliteracy was used for the analysis. The analytic unit was sequences of *literacy events*, with literacy events defined by Heath (1982, p. 93) as "any occasions in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participant's interactions and their interpretative processes sequence involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role" and as "any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role". Street expanded the concept *literacy practices* (Scribner & Cole, 1981) to "the broader, cultural conception of particular ways of thinking about and doing reading and writing in cultural contexts" (Street, 2003, p. 79). Thus, sequences from classroom observations that include literacy events which are relevant for the respective set of continua were identified to create understanding about the literacy practices that became evident. In most sequences, all four sets were relevant and could be related to most continua because most classroom time could be described as being spent shuttling between the points on several of the continua. Thus, in the selected sequences, other continua also became apparent. Saying that, they may nonetheless not be the focus in that specific part of the analysis.

There were three steps in the analysis. The first involved the analysis of all field notes and recordings to identify sequences where multiliteracies appeared. The second involved the identification of sequences that related to the four sets of continua. Such sequences were deliberately chosen that represented the respective set well. Finally, the third step involved the analysis of these sequences in relation to each of the continua. To enable the analysis of each continuum in each set, we selected sequences where we identified the appearance of that specific continuum.

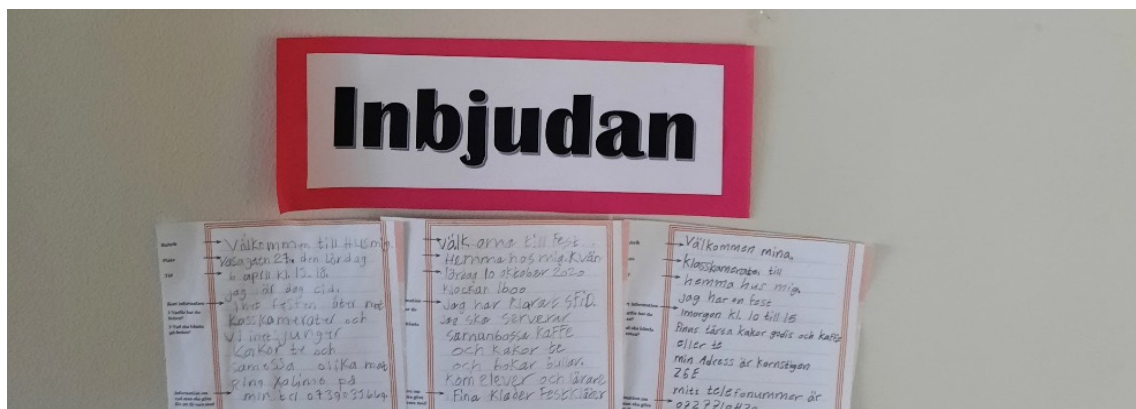
Ethical aspects were considered throughout the study and all participants provided their written consent to participate. The project was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Dnr. Xxx). Those sections of this article that discuss the participants will be written in such a way that they – the participants – will not be identifiable: in addition, pseudonyms are used, not names.

## 5 Findings

The results will be presented set by set, starting with content.

### 5.1 Content

The set of continua included in content are minority – majority; vernacular – literary; and contextualised – decontextualised. This set enables the intersection of school knowledge and everyday knowledge and thereby focuses interest on how meaning is negotiated in relation to multiliteracies. As SFI includes both school knowledge and everyday knowledge, focus of the teaching was on Swedish skills and, in particular, literacy skills, while content was often close to what may be perceived as relevant for students in their everyday life. Consequently, the teaching observed focused on Swedish language skills such as vocabulary, the alphabet, reading, writing, pronunciation, spelling and morphosyntax. Various phenomena were presented by teachers, and students were invited and encouraged to practise these. Commonly, oracy and literacy were used in parallel, and teachers typically began each lesson by presenting something orally and successively introducing this in written language. One example was in a group in course B when the teacher planned some lessons on the theme of written invitations. She started each lesson by asking such questions as the following: How do you invite somebody to something? What can you invite somebody to? What can you serve your guests? In the first lesson, she had students compose an invitation with her on the chalkboard while she pointed out useful expressions and features, and in the final few lessons, students wrote their own invitations individually. This demonstrates how talk about everyday topics was used in parallel to formal written language (see picture 1).



PICTURE 1. Students' written invitations attached to the wall. *Inbjudan* is Swedish for "Invitation".

This demonstrates that interaction included shuttling between oracy and literacy in whole-class interaction and small-group or individual work. In addition, the writing related to students' experiences. Other course themes where teaching moved between formal written Swedish and students' everyday life and experiences were recycling and rules for the use of mobile phones in the classroom, such as in Example 1 (T stands for teacher and S1, S2, etc. for students).

## EXAMPLE 1.

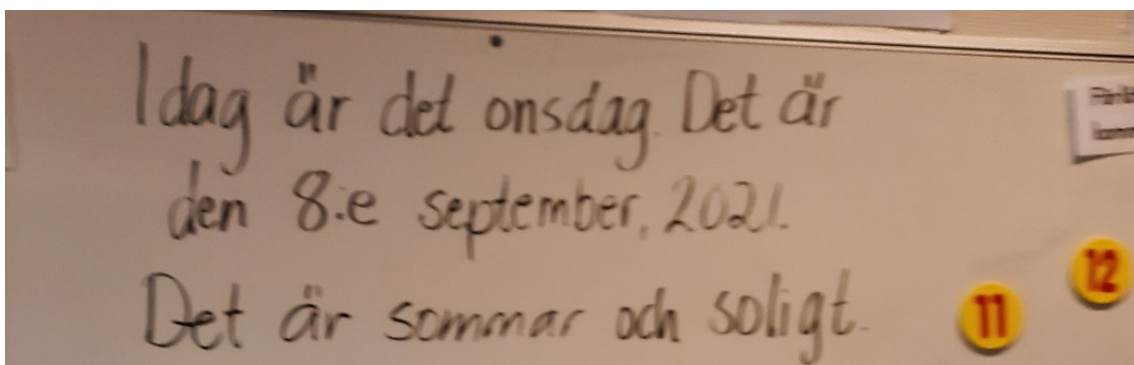
<p>L: E1 kan du prata med E2, ni får skriva tre regler som ni tycker är bra ni kan göra så en, två, tre om ni bara kan två det är också bra eller en men jag tror att man kan skriva flera regler förstår ni uppgiften?  E1: Ja  L: E2? Förstår du?  S3: Nej (skratt)  S2: Ja  L: Då får ni en tavla, det finns sudd också, S2 du får också skriva</p>	<p>T: S1 can you talk to S2, you can write three rules that you think are good you can write one, two, three if you only can [write] two that is also fine or one but I think you can write several rules do you understand do you understand the task?  S1: Yes  T: S2? Do you understand?  S2: No (laughs)  S2: Yes  T: Here is a board, there is an eraser too, S2 you can also write</p>
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In these interactions, students frequently used other languages, and teachers invited them to do so. Students' Swedish language skills were frequently related to their skills in other languages. One example was in a group in course A when the teacher discussed vocabulary and asked students to state a colour. The word *regnbåge* (rainbow) came up, and the teacher asked the Somali-speaking students what rainbow is in Somali. In Example 2, the teacher asks a student to answer a question in Somali.

## EXAMPLE 2.

<p>L: Varför?  S1: E e jag förstår jag förklara inte svenska  L: Mm (skrattar) men du kan du kan förklara på somaliska  M: Ah ja  L: Förklara till H, H kan ni förklara tillsammans på svenska  S2: Ja förstår</p>	<p>T: Why?  S1: Um I understand, I do not explain Swedish  T: Um (laughs) but you can you can explain in Somali  M: Ah yes  T: Explain to S2, S2 you can explain together in Swedish  S2: Yes understand</p>
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In this way, teachers frequently linked the learning of Swedish to students' other languages. The topics discussed in the classroom related very much to students' everyday lives: for example, greetings, weather, dates, calling in sick and appointments at a health centre. an example of this is that most classes began with talk about the date and the weather; this information was also frequently put into writing on the whiteboard (Picture 2).



PICTURE 2. (Today it is Wednesday. It is September the 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. It is summer and sunny.)

The talk was often about the seasons, the weather or a special day, such as Valentine's Day. For example, when talking about the date, one teacher told students that it was

*kanelbullens dag* (Cinnamon Bun Day). (For many Swedes, cinnamon buns symbolise a cozy home and a caring family member.) The talk led to a discussion between Somali-speaking students and the Somali assistant about the purchase of cinnamon buns and whether they preferred to buy them pre-packaged in bags or by the individual bun. Their discussion was in Somali and when they had finished, the assistant presented their conclusion to the rest of the class. Thus, an initial talk about the date often resulted in small talk that was often initiated by students and that involved talk in various languages.

Questions of grammar arose during discussion about everyday matters, such as in example 3 when past tense is exercised (XXX stands for unintelligible talk):

### EXAMPLE 3

<p>L: Du E1, vad gjorde du igår?  E1: Jag och min dotter promenera till Ica Maxi  L: Mm, till?  S: Till Ica Maxi  L: Du promenerade på stan, vad gjorde du på Ica Maxi?  E1: Jag köpte en blomma  E2: XXX  L: Vilken blomma köpte du?  S1: Ee, vad heter det, den här stycken 25  L: Tulpaner kanske?  S1: Nej, inte tulpaner, va heter, hjärtans dag    L: Rosor?  S1: Ja, ja rosor  L: Rosor på alla hjärtans dag. Firar ni alla hjärtans dag?  S1: Ja  L: Ni firar det? Så du köpte blommor, köpte (skriver &lt;köpte&gt; på tavlan)</p>	<p>T: You, S1, what did you do yesterday?  S1: Me and my daughter walked to Ica Maxi  T: Um, where?  S1: To Ica Maxi  T: You walked to town, what did you do at Ica Maxi?  S1: I bought a flower.  S2: XXX  T: What flower did you buy?  S1: Um, this, what's it called, it's 25  T: Tulips maybe?  S1: No, not tulips, what's it called, Valentine's Day  T: Roses?  S1: Yes, yes roses  T: Roses for Valentine's Day. Do you celebrate Valentine's Day?  S1: Yes  T: You celebrate it? So you bought flowers, bought (writes &lt;bought&gt; on the whiteboard)</p>
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What this shows is that topics in various ways related to students' life outside school and that negotiation of meaning thus meant shuttling within and between the continua. It was common that one topic was associated with another – that is to say, that everyday topics led to the discussion of linguistic phenomena and vice versa, or that talk about one language topic had an association with another. For example, a group in course C talked about the conjugation of the verb *gå* – *gick* (go – went) and the different pronunciations of <g> (as /g/ and /j/ respectively) and the fact its pronunciation depended on the following vowel.

In summary, in these observed lessons, space for multiliteracies was created in the negotiation of meaning where teachers and students shuttled between various parts of the sets of continua included in content. In this shuttling, content related to schooling intersected with content from students' everyday life and content from more formal contexts with more informal contexts. This demonstrates that there was space for students to associate and link the content that related to Swedish and explicit preparation for a final test in the course to their everyday life and earlier experiences, and that thus content from both the minority and majority ends as well as vernacular and more literary.

## 5.2 Context

In SFI, the set of continua that constitute *context* (micro – macro, oral – written, and multilingual – monolingual) is represented on the right-hand ends, which are commonly ascribed high status, by school content related to Sweden and school, and on the left side



ends, linked to everyday, oral and multilingual contexts by talk about family life and life in Swedish society.

In one aspect, the base context in SFI is the Swedish school context and preparation for the final test, and particularly on literacy skills. Above, it became clear that literacy was in focus but frequently parallel to oracy, and included shuttling between micro and macro as well as multilingual and monolingual contexts. All observations showed a clear link to school, everyday life, life experiences, the outside world and the future.

The context of school was central to what happened in the classroom, which is not surprising since the main goal of SFI is to prepare students for life and work in Sweden. As mentioned above, teachers and students made a clear link between classroom activities and everyday life. A parallel use of oracy and literacy was apparent when one teacher used a textbook text in class about a Kurdish girl who married a Swedish Kurd and then got the opportunity to study in Sweden. The teacher began the lesson by reading the text aloud. She then asked if students had understood, and they responded that they had. However, they wanted to know whether the man was Kurdish or Swedish. The next time she read the text, she asked them to write down key words. She then asked students to write their own text in pairs using their key words. They were then asked to practise reading their written texts. To finish, each student was asked to stand at the front of the class to read their text aloud.

Teachers frequently initiated talk about students' everyday life. For example, one teacher, Tanya, in course B used an appointment notification from the dentist to talk about how to understand the call, date and time, and about how to cancel the appointment or rebook. She asked students about the notifications, and one student said that she recognised the logotype with the horse for the dentist and that she knew how to read the time and date. Other teachers initiated talk about how to call in sick and about going to the library. In course C, the teacher Karin introduced the topic *Berätta om dig själv* (Tell us about yourself) where students were given topics to write about, such as names, appearance, personality, family and future aspirations. The teacher explained how they were to read their texts aloud to the whole group as a way to introduce themselves. When the teacher Jessica introduced colours in a vocabulary lesson, she related the topic to what she and the students were wearing, which extended to words such as "striped", "plaid", "spotted", "floral" and "leopard print". Another teacher-initiated topic that related to students' lives was recycling, which the teacher Tanya brought up. In course A, Jessica introduced vocabulary for parts of the body and went on to talk about pain and expressions that are useful during appointments with a doctor: for example, *Jag har ont i foten* (My foot hurts). Since the lessons were observed during the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers also frequently brought up subjects such as vaccination: this one specifically students discussed with specific mention of the vaccination programme, the times and places vaccinations were offered, and the experiences of relatives in other countries.

In the A-course, Jessica taught single letters, such as <f t e>. These letters were first presented individually and then linked to words such as *kaffe, fot, fredag* (coffee, foot, Friday). This demonstrates that the letters were first decontextualised and then to some extent contextualised. In another lesson, she had students practise expressions such as *Kan du öppna dörren?* and *Kan du stänga dörren?* (Can you open the door? and Can you close the door?). This was presented in context as students were asked to do so and her focus was on pronunciation on phrase level, a phonological skill that is important in Swedish.

Students frequently related teacher-initiated topics to their everyday life, such as in the case in course B and the topic that was initiated by Cecilia about the mobile phone use and screentime. Students talked about rules they had in their homes and whether their children respected these rules. One student said that in her family, mobile phones were not to be used after 7 p.m. Another said that in her family, children did not use their mobile phones on Saturdays; instead, Saturday was a day for sweets, TV and football. This led to talk about rules in the home in general and child-rearing. In the class-

room of teachers Eva and Lena, students had been working on a written text for two weeks and Eva asked questions about the text. One student linked talk to what he called *kanelkött* (cinnamon meat), which he had produced when working in a sausage factory. He explained that this involved putting cinnamon on ham, which was rolled together and then put into what he called *en bastu* (a sauna) for 24-26 hours. He continued to talk about how he had worked four jobs simultaneously while living in Gothenburg and how it had been difficult since he was so far from his family in northern Sweden. This, he explained, was why he had returned to his family. The class continued to read the textbook, which led to the teacher talking about coffee and asking about the price of a cup of coffee in different countries. In this way, the school context was frequently linked to everyday life and earlier experiences.

Students initiated talk about their life outside school, without explicitly linking to school knowledge or the content that was the topic in focus. At the start of the lesson, when the focus was on the date and day of the week, it was common for students to talk about their life outside school: for example, one student spoke about a planned visit to see her sister in another town. The sister, a taxi driver, had recently qualified as a bus driver and they were going to celebrate. Another student explained how his son was going to play football for a local team. Students discussed plans for the upcoming Eid and how the mosque would not be open and how parties would be small because of the pandemic.

Both teachers and students related schoolwork to their earlier life. In course C, for example, the teacher, Karin, asked students about the traditions of weddings and engagement while they were reading a text on these subjects. This led to an exchange of experiences about emotions, economy, financial pressure on men, and comparisons with Swedish laws and traditions. One female student said that as a Yazidi, she was supposed to marry a Yazidi; however, there were very few Yazidi men available, which presented a problem. In talk about the legal age of marriage in another class, one student said that she had been married but was now divorced.

There was little time spent talking about the future and life outside the classroom, that is outside the closer environment and the family circle, and seldom became developed. Once, during a discussion about rules for mobile phone use, the teacher mentioned Donald Trump. At the end of one lesson, a student mentioned how there was to be a football match between Sweden and Spain that day in the European Championship. In another lesson, a Somali woman talked about a group for Muslim children that took trips together. There was little discussion about any of these subjects.

We found only two examples of practices that related explicitly to the future: both were initiated by teachers. One teacher brought up the subject of recycling and the other the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Otherwise, links were mainly made to participants' daily life and earlier experiences.

In summary, the context of multiliteracies consisted of an intersection between the everyday sides of the continua and the opposite sides, more explicitly linked to school knowledge, represented by the final test which was clearly apparent for the participants. This means that both micro and macro contexts were present. The negotiation of meaning that took place in these classrooms meant an ongoing shuttling between the ends of the continua.

### 5.3 Media

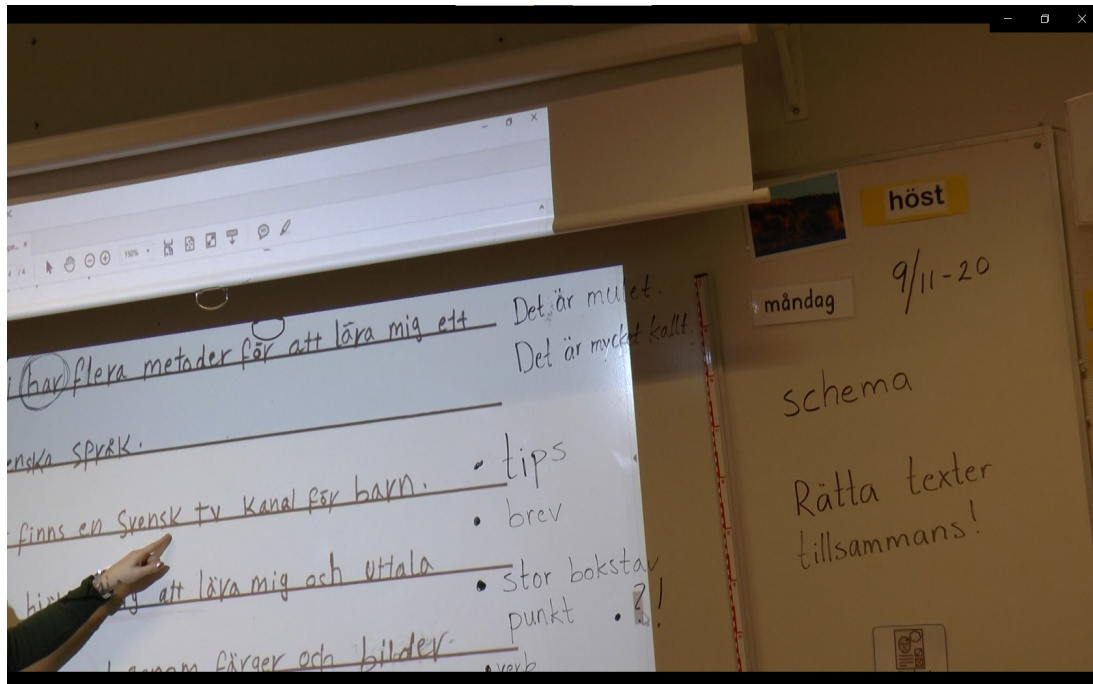
Through the set of continua included in *media*, the analysis turns to linguistic diversity in textual and orthographic form used in parallel or separately. The three continua in *media* are as follows: simultaneous exposure – successive exposure; dissimilar structures – similar structures; and divergent scripts – convergent scripts. Diversity was frequent and simultaneous in the observed classrooms in the use of *media* in relation to literacy

and language. Regarding structures and scripts, the school norms with written standard Swedish naturally have a central place. Since students have limited literacy skills in other languages and scripts, only a few use other scripts in class (most frequently Arabic). As mentioned above, teachers tend to start a lesson with an oral discussion and end it with a writing exercise. For example, the teacher Jessica in A-course talked about illness. She drew pictures on the whiteboard depicting, for example, a runny nose or a headache. She gave examples of expressions and invited students to use them in sentences. To finish, she wrote the expressions on the whiteboard.

In an observed class, three students wrote in Thai; however, the Tigré- and Panjabi-speaking students were observed using only Latin script. One of the Thai-speaking students sometimes used earphones to listen to translations on the Internet. Teachers also used body language as a resource to help students to understand. This was naturally most frequent in the A-courses where students had limited Swedish. Gestures and acting were used in addition to verbal language, and one common gesture among teachers was to point over their shoulder to indicate the past tense or time in the past. One teacher in an A-course used expressions that she reinforced with body language such as when she explained what she wanted students to do when writing: (*låt*) *tanken gå ut i armen ner i boken* ([let] the thought go out into your arm down into the book).

One example of the difference between spoken and written Swedish that several teachers highlighted was the written *det är* (it is) and *det är en* (it is a) compared with the spoken /de/ and /den/ respectively, such as in *det är en lek* (it's a game) and the spoken /den le:k/. As this is a feature of Swedish that students meet early on and that may be confusing, teachers tend to point it out.

As well as paper and pencil, and talk, digital media was frequently used by teachers and students. Teachers used their laptops to project material onto the screen, and they used the whiteboard and pull-down projector screen to show written texts, some of them written by the students themselves (Picture 3). They also used Google and other such tools to find material that related to what they were teaching. Some groups used textbooks that they accessed on the Internet, such as in Microsoft Teams.



PICTURE 3. The teacher projects a student's written text onto a whiteboard.

Teachers explicitly instructed students on how to use such tools as blogs. These teachers used during the pandemic to post exercises, texts and information for students. They asked students about the applications they used, such as Bank ID, and about social media, such as Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram and Teams, and planned explicit lessons to teach how to turn on a laptop and to log in and out; how to create an e-mail address; and how to use e-mail. While using the digital forms of teaching in place because of pandemic-related restrictions, teachers instructed students on how to upload the necessary applications onto their mobile phones. This actualised students' own use of applications, with some teachers showing interest in these. In turn, teachers were taught about, for example, tools for communication and applications linked to certain shops that students went to. In one lesson, Tanya had written the following on her whiteboard before students arrived: *I denna klass kan alla elever använda Teams* (In this class all students know how to use Teams). She told them how proud she was of them for being able to.

What the above demonstrate is that the use of media included space for multiliteracies by the participants' intersection of dissimilar and similar use of literacy and language regarding exposure, structures and scripts. The pandemic further meant an increase in the use of digital media and tools, and while teachers saw a need to teach students digital skills, students were, in turn, able to demonstrate their skills.

## 5.4 Development

The continua of *development* turn the interest towards the types of development that are recognised and taught. The three continua in development are: reception – production, oral – written and L1-L2, which enables the analysis of power aspects of the teaching. Development may be addressed both implicitly and explicitly. Some of the teachers in this study addressed students' strategies for language development explicitly with the theme they called *att bli en lärande elev* (becoming a learning student). Here, they wanted students to develop an awareness of both their learning and learning strategies. They initiated discussions about the importance of enough sleep, healthy food and a healthy lifestyle for study results and about the need to set aside time for studies. Cecilia put her students into pairs so that they could discuss their study strategies and then asked them what was said. Teachers highlighted the importance of students planning their studies and of practising in the pursuit of fluency. One somewhat implicit practice that several teachers used was to let students know what was going on in class by writing the plan for each lesson on the whiteboard at the start of the session and then referring to this when moving between activities. Another was to close each lesson by asking *Vad har du lärt dig?* (What have you learnt?).

Teachers invited students to use their whole linguistic repertoire by, for example, explicitly asking students to write the translations of a Swedish word beside it in their exercise books. Students also used digital tools by themselves to translate and explained these to each other using their common language or languages. For example, students who knew Kurdish, Arabic and Somali helped each other using Arabic. Example 4 shows a teacher inviting students to develop their other languages in parallel to Swedish and talking explicitly about the language development of the individual student:

## EXAMPLE 4.

L: Två år i skolan? Jag tycker att du E1 du pratar väldigt bra svenska.	T: Two years in school? I think that you S1 you speak Swedish very well.
E1: Jag inte förstår mitt språk dari, inte skriva	F: I not understand my language Dari, not write
L: Nej, nej	T: No, no
E2: Skriv inte bra? Skriv inte bra?	S2: Do not write well? Do not write well?
E1: Nej, lite bra men inte	S1: No, a little but not
E2: Inte skriva bra	S2: Not write well
L: E1 menar att på Dari på modersmål kan hon inte läsa och skriva	T: S1 means that in Dari in her mother tongue she cannot read and write
E1: Men lite	S1: But a bit
L: Men på svenska kan du	T: But you can read and write Swedish
E1: Ja i Sverige när jag blir översätt då blir det lite	S2: Yes
E2: Man ska också översätta eget språk dari	S1 In Sweden when I get translate it becomes a little
L: Menar du har du lärt dig läsa och skriva lite på dari? I Sverige?	S2: You should also translate own language Dari
E1: Ja, lite min son säger: "Mamma du bra du förstår" dari också lite förstår	T: Do you mean that you have learnt to read and write a bit of Dari? In Sweden?
L: För att bli bättre på svenska, att studera svenska, så måste du också bli bättre på dari	S1: Yes, a little my son says: "Mum you good you understand" also Dari a bit understand
E1: Ja ja läsa dari, också lär lite	T: To become better at Swedish, to study Swedish, you also need to become better in Dari
L: Ja, jag förstår, man måste kunna översätta	S1: Yes, yes to read Dari, also learn a bit
E1: Ja, översätt, översätt	T: Yes, I understand, you have to be able to translate
L: Bra, det är jättebra det du berättar.	S1: Yes, translate translate
	T: Good, it is very good what you are telling us.

Teachers also explained linguistic features of Swedish, as might be expected. For example, when asking students to compose sentences or texts, teachers would remind them to indicate sentences by using a capital letter and a full stop, and to make sure that the sentence had a subject and finite verb in what in Swedish syntax can be called place two (an important feature of Swedish). As word order is important in Swedish, teachers used specific strategies to explain and practise this. Anna, for example, had a sign with "verb" written on it that she used to indicate the verb place in sentences on the whiteboard. She used this sign during the lesson to show the placement of the finite verb. Some of the teachers used a table for syntactic positions in Swedish sentences on the board to show word order.

Teachers taught writing by explicitly pointing out writing strategies: for example, Tanya told students to first figure something out and then to write down what they had figured out and then to make sure that the sentences connected to each other. Some teachers gave students a dictation exercise as homework so that they could learn specific vocabulary, and then had them write the words during the lesson. Two of the teachers were observed explicitly asking students what they did to learn these words at home, thus making them discuss word learning. Karin told her students: *Om ni vill (...) lära er nya ord så är det bra att skriva* (If you want (...) to learn new words, it's good to write [them down]).

In summary, in practices related to development, there was space for multiliteracies in the ways that teachers explicitly and implicitly invited students to draw on all points of the continua in their learning. Most writing was in Swedish, and only on a few occasions were other languages in written form observed.

## 6 Conclusions and discussion

Our findings show that there is space for multiliteracies in these classrooms, but as most students in these classes have limited literacy skills in earlier languages, written texts are mainly in Swedish. Ideally, many of these students would have benefitted from a situation where they could have developed their basic literacy skills in a language that they had already mastered, as highlighted by Rivera and Huerta-Macías (2008). This was the case in an earlier study in Malmö (Tvingstedt et al., 2009; Wigerfelt, 2011), where students' literacy skills in Arabic developed in parallel to their learning of Swedish. However, this was not the case here and since many of these students had little prior schooling because of their backgrounds (such as those from Somali- and Kurdish-speaking settings), there were limitations, not least due to a lack of teachers. Nevertheless, written language did feature in various languages and scripts in these classrooms.

Findings also show that teaching includes practices from all points on the continua, which Hornberger (1989) highlights as important for biliterate development, in this case to a lesser extent for written language. The shuttling between the ends of all continua is particularly important for students in SFI, Study Path One, who tend to have low status in, for example, the workforce and society. Content related more to students' everyday life in course A and more to life in society in course B (for example, job interviews and dental appointments). Content that may seem more abstract (for example, recycling and the Convention on the Rights of the Child) also featured in course B, but only in observations of two teachers, who explicitly said that they wanted to have a more critical approach and as such introduced such topics.

The relationship between on the one hand students' self-esteem and their opportunity to have a voice and on the other hand multilingual language practices and support of the development of students' linguistic resources became clear here, which is evident in the research by Auerbach (1993), King and Bigelow (2020), and Simpson (2020). It is probably the case that for these students to develop literacy skills in other languages than Swedish, they need more support in their other languages. Still, we find that the shuttling between skills that relate on the one hand to Swedish and on the other to students' everyday life and earlier experiences is important for student empowerment. This is particularly important for students in SFI, Study Path One, who because they are LESLA students tend to be given low status in many situations such as in the workforce and society as a whole. In SFI, the expectation may well be that knowledge related to Swedish and formal literacy is the priority in education, the aim being to equip students with knowledge for everyday life in Swedish society and employment, and also for further education.

This study showed that instruction often started with images then progressed to written text. This was particularly the case in A-course where students were taught emergent literacy skills. This may imply that multimodality has a low status since images are used only as tools for learning verbal language. However, students need also to develop new strategies to use when interpreting images: this we did not observe the teachers incorporating into their teaching, which corresponds with the findings of Franker (2011).

The SGMT assistants who were present in some of the observed classes created a dynamic that changed traditional student-teacher interaction. In this study, this was apparent when teachers paused to give assistants room to have discussions with those students who shared the same language. This suggests that an element of the teacher's role was transferred to the assistants and that negotiation sometimes took place in other languages. While this increased the space for these languages, other languages represented by only a few students who did not have an assistant possibly became even less visible. Our conclusion is that space for multiliteracies varies depending on the earlier literacy skills of students, the number of students in a group who understood a particular language and the availability of study guidance assistants in the students' mother tongues.

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## Disclosure statements

The research used in this project is stored safely and may for ethical reasons not be disclosed.

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