Language and Learning in Classroom Tandem

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Background and context

• Finland is officially a bilingual country with two official national languages, Finnish and Swedish.

• According to existing legislation, the education is organized separately for both language groups, i.e. in parallel monolingual schools.

• Both language groups study the other national language as an obligatory school subject, Finnish as a second national language for Swedish speakers or Swedish as a second national language for Finnish speakers.

• Communicative language teaching and cooperation between the language groups are stressed in the new Finnish national core curricula for basic education and upper secondary school (2014, 2015).
1. Planning

- Researchers, teachers and ICT facilitator discuss the results, which then work as the basis for further development of tasks.

2. Acting

- Swedish and Finnish teachers plan tandem lessons together.
- Brainstorming with researchers on working methods based on tandem pedagogy.
- Discussion of technical solutions and tools with ICT facilitator.
- During the lessons teachers coach their students in tandem learning as well as are in contact with teachers of the other school.

3. Observing

- Teachers observe students’ work.
- Researchers collect data during the lessons.

4. Reflecting and evaluating

- Teachers reflect on the lesson and document their observations.
- Researchers analyze the data and identify the strengths and weaknesses.

Action Research Cycle
Orientation towards language

• Oral activities
  • Mostly focus on vocabulary
  • L2-students initiate metalinguistic discussions

• Text-based activities
  • Focus on vocabulary, but also on grammar, morphology, word order etc.
  • L1-students correct, teach and explain
  • Focus on typical problems in Finnish and Swedish as a second national language

(Karjalainen et al. 2013, Karjalainen & Pörn 2015)
Collaborative writing process

(Åkattraaktion)

Hej.

The Teacher’s Role

Facilitator
• Common for all teachers

Language expert and educator
• Language teacher
• Helps the students to compare and contrast the target language and the language of instruction
• Skills in target language, language learning process and strategies

Coach
• Specific for classroom tandem
• Support the students (L2 and L1) in their reciprocal cooperation.

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Coaching situation
(Miltä hän putosi?)

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Roles of L2, L1 and teacher

• The students mostly tend to focus on task completion
• The task type influences the roles the students orient to
• Even in the same task different tandem dyads can orient to different patterns of interaction and cooperation
• The teacher’s task is to coach dyads towards collaborative, learning-oriented cooperation.
Questions and discussion

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References


• Pörn & Hansell (under review) The Teacher’s Role in Classroom Tandem.