



Brief

When Language sets Limits

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Despite an ever-growing pedagogical focus on the child's right to co-determination, co-responsibility, and opportunity to experience democracy, some language-minority children are limited in terms of equal participation in day care communities. Focusing on children's linguistic and bodily expression, the meaning-making interactions in a Danish kindergarten are examined.

The empirical material consists of video footage from everyday situations in a Danish kindergarten. The footage was filmed by the pedagogical staff and by the children themselves.

The material is analysed within the theoretical framework of the child's right to participation, translanguaging theory, and conversation analysis. The interaction is considered a meaning-making action between people. The child's communication is viewed from a fluid view of the child's languaging, in which corporeal, aesthetic, and emotional forms of expression are also included as semiotic resources. With a focus on the child's right to equal participation in the day care community, the study examines how educational staff support the child's use of different semiotic resources in meaning-making processes.

In the analysis, a distinction is made between adult-led and free interactions. The adult-led interactions are characterised by the adult speaking most of the time, while the child is made the object of the adult's learning measures and is given only limited speaking time. In these interactions, language is considered something that can be passed on from the adult to the child and not a means of knowledge construction. In contrast, there is only limited adult involvement in the free interactions, where children play and interact with peers on their own. Both types of interaction are dominated by the majority language, Danish, which potentially becomes a limiting element for language-minority children if they are not allowed to draw on their other semiotic resources.

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