

Bridging academic and everyday language:

Multilingual students' meaning-making in a lesson about Buddhism

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This article presents findings from a Grade 7 religion lesson with 12–13 year-old multilingual Finnish-Swedish students in Finland. Here, focus is on the development of academic language and disciplinary literacy in multilingual environments, as they are crucial to students' success and an area in need of both attention and support. A total of 117 minutes of six video-recorded group discussions, collected in a classroom study in a Swedish-medium school in Finland, were analyzed. The aim was to explore how students used everyday language and academic language to co-construct meaning of academic text and to investigate resources that were used by multilingual students and teachers to facilitate access to content for students instructed through Swedish. Our findings focus mainly on discussions in one group of four students as they were answering text questions. This group bridged academic and everyday language by creating linguistic chains that linked the two and used multiple resources, such as previous knowledge, the textbook, asking the teacher, and using Finnish in order to ensure each participant's full understanding of the subject.

Swedish abstract at end.

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1. Introduction

Child language development begins with everyday language and continues with the development of academic language, which takes place primarily at school. Academic language development can be seen as an umbrella term used for the particular ways language is used in and out of school (Achugar & Carpenter, 2014; Hyland, 2002; Schleppegrell, 2004). As a definition of academic language, Zwiers (2013, p. 20) suggests: “academic language is the set of words, grammar, and organizational strategies used to describe complex ideas, higher-order thinking, processes, and abstract concepts.” Furthermore, academic language tends to become more subject-specific as different subject matters vary in knowledge construction. This varied knowledge construction results in language variation between academic disciplines and has been referred to as disciplinary literacy (Achugar & Carpenter, 2014; Hyland, 2004; Lee, 2004; McConachie, 2010; Moje, 2007). Moreover, as a discipline develops so does its ways of using language (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010; Schleppegrell, 2004). In order for students to “be able to communicate with proficiency for multiple audiences and take information from multiple types of texts” (Moje, 2007, p. 4), they need to take part in activities aimed at developing disciplinary literacy. Instruction with a focus on disciplinary literacy attempts to access disciplinary knowledge through language (Moje, 2007) and is considered to be “a bridge from everyday language and practice to conventional content learning” (Moje & Hinchman, 2004, p. 323).

Students go through a type of socialization when learning the disciplinary literacy of various subjects at school. This learning is typically new to all students, and the uniqueness of each individual school subject calls for explicit instruction and discussion on the role language has in developing disciplinary literacy. Explicit language teaching involves a focus on lexical, grammatical, and syntactic features in all subjects in such a way that both language and content develop in parallel (Gibbons, 2009). Furthermore, students’ own contribution to

subject matter knowledge building through interaction plays an important part in students' construction of shared understandings (Christie, 2000; Cummins, 2014).

2. Theoretical Framework, Study Purpose and Research Questions

2.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework underlying this study is sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1986; Wertsch 1998), as it views learners as active and full participants in a developmental process that is mediated through interaction. Learning is viewed as situated activity and to be engaged in practice is considered central for the learning outcome (Lave & Wenger 1991). A sociocultural theory sees all human activity as aspects of learning with a focus on what individuals or collectives can derive from social situations (Säljö, 2000). From a sociocultural perspective on learning, the focus for the analyses in the present study is the interaction between learners and between learners and the culturally situated and co-constructed social practice.

2.1.1 Learning through interaction in multilingual settings

The central role of interaction in connection to learning is strongly emphasised in socioculturally based studies; interaction is even considered as constitutive of learning (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003). In the last 20 years, there has been a growing interest in studying language learning in interaction, beginning with the seminal article by Firth and Wagner (1997). With an approach where social interaction is seen as the foundation for the learning of both language and other concepts, and where language learning and language are understood as closely intertwined, these interactional practices need to be carefully scrutinized.

The significance of interaction in relation to learning concerns learning of both content and language, as well as the connection between the two. Moreover, in multilingual settings, the classroom needs to be an inclusive environment where all students are able to actively use the language of instruction in different modalities, at the same time as their other languages are recognized and used as resources (Axelsson & Danielsson, 2012; Cummins, 2014; Gibbons, 2009; Moje, 2007).

In the present study, two main ideas about subject learning and school achievement are fundamental: students' possibilities for being actively engaged in interaction during instruction, and students' development of academic language. The importance of academic language has often been discussed in relation to multilingual student groups; for example, the academic language literature in the U.S. tends to focus on second language (L2) English learners in English-medium classrooms with first language (L1) English speakers. Yet, it can be argued that *all* students can benefit from instruction focusing on academic language development, including L1 students (Cummins, 2000; Gibbons, 2006; Haneda, 2014b; Schleppegrell, 2012). As Haneda (2014a) has pointed out, all students need opportunities to “voice their responses to ongoing activities by asking questions, expressing their own ideas and making what they consider to be relevant connections to their own personal experiences” (p. 133) in order to participate in the “co-construction of curricular knowledge” (p. 133). Haneda (2014a) also uses the notion of “academic communication,” expanding on the definition of academic language to include other semiotic resources that can be used in support of learning a school subject: physical action, material artefacts, speech and writing, and other semiotic tools, such as graphs, diagrams, and images.

Academic language development can happen when students, via both oral and written communication, move between everyday language and academic language, such as using different registers (e.g. Gogolin et al., 2011; Hammond 2006). The importance of student-

student interaction, for example through group work, and the need of teacher scaffolding is often stressed, but the number of studies empirically analysing classroom interaction in the perspective of academic language development is somewhat limited.

Molle and Lee (2015) argue that group work provides efficient opportunities for pupils to learn both language and content. In discussions, the students can critically examine and build upon the ideas of others and negotiate meaning. Molle and Lee (2015) focus on how emergent bilinguals in group work develop academic language. According to the authors, the collaborative learning mediated through group work, should be a goal also in mainstream classrooms. Hammond (2006) analyses how a teacher during English as a second language (ESL) lessons encounter the students' challenges in producing more academic language in relationship to the curriculum. When working with *Romeo and Juliet*, one of the goals for the teacher was to provide support for the students to move between different language registers. Hammond described students moving between an informal everyday register and a more formal specialist oral register as "playing with language across different registers" (p. 282). Furthermore, Hammond sees group work as an important organizing model in the creation of learning spaces for the students. In a micro-analysis of classroom interaction, Lengyel (2010) stresses the importance of the teacher's work to plan lessons for students' development of academic language, but also to scaffold the utterances of the (L2) students. Lengyel demonstrates how L2 students in Grade 4, after practical experiments, in teacher–student interaction build bridges between everyday and academic language and by that way jointly construct meaning. In a quantitative study by Brooks (2006), the use of academic language in relation to different kinds of instructional grouping was studied. According to Brook, the participants were most likely to produce academic language during small group and one-on-one instruction.

These studies raise the importance of high demands and high support for language and content in the classroom (see also Cummins 2000, Gibbons 2009). However, an ethnographic longitudinal study conducted by Wedin (2010) shows that classrooms do not always reach this balance. Wedin's results indicate that the language use in the studied classrooms rather was on a basic everyday level and that high teacher control resulted in low-demanding tasks and low engagement among students.

Relatively few studies based on empirical classroom data have studied what happens in student-student interaction, when students use both everyday language and academic language to co-construct knowledge. In an attempt to address this gap in the literature, the present study focused on self-directed small-group interaction in a Swedish-medium classroom in Finland. Through close video-recordings, micro-examination of the movements between the two registers and the resources used when students were confronted with academic language this was made possible.

2.1.2 Developing disciplinary literacy in a class on the history of religion

Learning history entails learning a way of knowing and seeing the world. To have a historical perspective or gaze (Bernstein, 2000) implies having a sense of what happened as well as the values to assess its significance (Achugar & Carpenter, 2012). History is a school subject based on documents and language, making reading and disciplinary literacy an essential part of learning history. Students have to work with texts having unfamiliar language and rely on textual information when their background knowledge is limited. They have to use a deep reading approach, make inferences and connections with relevant knowledge, and see the world from a particular epistemological position (Achugar & Carpenter, 2012; Martin, 2002). Developing disciplinary literacy in the classroom involves paying equal attention to the epistemological and cultural resources as well as "assisting in the development of the

linguistic resources that enable students to talk, read, and write about that knowledge” (Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 1999, p. 221). An additional aspect is students’ access to the necessary tools for the move between registers, such as forms of language, to carry out the task, which has been attended to by Dutro and Moran (2003). Vocabulary is described as comprising “content-specific words” and “general-utility” words for constructing sentences, with an architectural metaphor referred to as “bricks” and “mortar”. “Brick” words like *privilege*, *enlightenment* and *the golden mean*, are always taught in each content area, while students often are expected to supply “mortar” words and phrases like connecting words, prepositional phrases and basic verbs on their own (Dutro & Moran (2003).

The instructional sequence examined in this article focused on the life of Siddhartha Gautama, the nucleus and different varieties of Buddhism as well as the Buddhist lifestyle. Based on six pages of textbook text, the teacher had formulated four questions directed towards historical knowledge as well as central norms and values in Buddhism.

2.2 Study purpose and research questions

The overall purpose of this study was to explore how students bridge everyday and academic language in group discussions when confronted with a written academic text and tasked with ensuring meaning-making for all group participants. Any form of support used to enhance students’ meaning-making and assist them in answering the questions was considered a “resource.” Furthermore, the operational definition of everyday language and academic language used for the analyses of the group interaction was the following: oral phrases comprising abstract concepts and utilizing technical vocabulary that described complex ideas originating from the teacher’s questions or from the text about Buddhism were labelled academic language, and other phrases were labelled everyday language. Our guiding research questions were:

1. How do students use academic language and everyday language to co-construct meaning of academic text?
2. What resources do students use when solving a school task involving the learning of both content and subject-specific (academic) language?

3. Study Context and Methodology

3.1 Context

In Finland, there is a parallel school system with Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking schools on all education levels (National Board of Education, 2017). Approximately 5.3% of the population is registered as Swedish-speaking (Statistics Finland, 2014). In Swedish-medium schools about 40% of the students come from bilingual Finnish-Swedish homes, but regional differences are considerable (Hyvönen & Westerholm, 2016). In Swedish-medium schools situated in Finnish-dominant areas, the majority of the students come from bilingual homes, and Finnish is used to a large extent in student-student extramural interactions (Hyvönen & Westerholm, 2016; Tandefelt, 2015). Thus, classroom situations in which students actively participate and interact in Swedish, with each other as well as with the teacher, are central (Slotte & Forsman, 2016). Subsequently, the teaching approach aligns with language sensitive teaching and other principles similar to those used in language immersion teaching (Björklund, Mård-Miettinen & Turpeinen, 2007).

The empirical data in this study were collected in a Swedish-medium school in Finland, and the role of the school as a rich and supportive Swedish language environment was of great importance. The school, comprising Grades 1–12, is situated in a medium size city in Finland. Seventy percent of the students in the school come from Swedish-Finnish bilingual homes and 20% from Finnish-speaking homes (Kovero, 2011). The area in which the school is located is predominantly monolingual Finnish, with only approximately 5% of

the inhabitants being Swedish-speaking. However, at the school, Swedish is the language of instruction, and Finnish is introduced formally as a subject in the curriculum starting in Grade 5.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

In this article student interaction during one lesson on Buddhism in Grade 7 (students 12–13 years old) was analysed. The primary data consisted of three 39-minute video and audio recordings, in total 117 minutes, recorded by two teachers, a Swedish as L1 teacher and a religion teacher. Cameras on tripods and external microphones were positioned on each of three tables, surrounded by four student desks.

The recorded lesson was the second of two and was co-planned by the two teachers, with the aim of integrating language instruction in the context of subject matter learning. For the group tasks that were recorded, the teachers had developed four questions based on six textbook pages about Buddhism. The purpose was for students to learn how Buddhists understand and see the world. Prior to the recorded lesson, the students had read the text and answered the questions at home. The questions were designed to lead students to develop a historical perspective or gaze (Bernstein, 2000) and to assess the significance of this understanding (Achugar & Carpenter, 2012). Because the lesson involved the history of religion, there was also a moral perspective embedded in the historical perspective.

The recorded lesson involved a jigsaw-type cooperative group activity. Students were first grouped in four expert groups (1–4), with four students in each group. Students in each expert group were instructed to compare the answers they had prepared at home in response to one assigned question. They had to explain their answers and perspectives in their own words and then work together to come to consensus on the answer to the question. Then, after about eight minutes, the expert groups were regrouped into home groups (5–8), which were

comprised of one student from each of the expert groups. Each student in the home group, therefore, had a major role to present the answer to his or her expert group's assigned question. Three expert groups (1–3) and three home groups (5–7) were recorded in parallel, altogether six groups. Due to shortage of video recorders expert group 4 and home group 8 were not recorded.

An initial analysis revealed that two of the recorded home groups (5 and 7) did not engage in any extended discussion when sharing answers to their assigned questions with the group. The interaction in these groups solely consisted of one student reading aloud the answer he or she was responsible for, almost literally following the formulation in the textbook, and the other students writing down the answer. Consequently, there was limited interaction and no joint processing of either academic language or content. However, the interaction in home group 6 (comprised of three boys and one girl) involved intensive academic discussion among the students. In addition, some academic language that originated in expert group 3's interaction was analysed. Specifically, the excerpt analysed illustrated an interaction Kalle (a member of home group 6) had with the teacher while in expert group 3. He had been made aware by the teacher that the word *privilege* had to be explained, and that interaction influenced his explanation later in the home group. Thus, we selected for analysis all interactions in which academic language was observed, with the majority of such interactions having been recorded in group 6.

Verbatim transcriptions (based on high quality recordings from the external microphones) of groups 3 and 6 were made and checked by both authors. The student discourse was transcribed using a standard set of conventions for oral communication (see Appendix). Verbatim translations were first made independently by each of the authors, then compared, and finally checked by a bilingual proof-reader. The translations aim at representing student talk as faithfully as possible, including non-normative inflexions and

word order. The analyses of audio and video data were conducted based on each group member's presentation of the answer to the question his or her expert group was responsible for. As a first step, the discussion in group 6 was examined, and each expression connected to the question was noted down in sequential order. With this first step, a chain linking academic and everyday phrases and expressions became visible, and as a second analytic step, the resources students used to create these meaning-making chains were noted down.

Furthermore, two examples of students' written worksheets and the textbook text on Buddhism were used to corroborate students' choice of resources when building the linguistic chains. The analyses of data from expert group 3 were solely focused on Kalle's explanations of *privilege* and *privilege letters* since they played such an important role in home group 6. However, the analyses and constructions of linguistic chains were exclusively confined to the discussions in home group 6.

4. Results

In the first subsection (4.1) we analyse and give an overview of how students use both academic and everyday language to make meaning. In the following subsections, the different resources used by the students when making meaning about the content are scrutinized. The discussions on each content question in groups 3 and 6 are interpreted as students' efforts to create a bridge between their present knowledge and the new content on Buddhism. In doing so, the students in group 6 move between academic language comprising expressions from the textbook and the teacher's questions and everyday language, constructing a pattern which we label 'linguistic chains'. Bridging is thus considered at an overarching meaning-making level while we point to the notion of linguistic chaining for students' actual use of academic and everyday phrases and words.

4.1 Moving between academic and everyday language in group interaction

In home group 6 the four students used an elaborated form of talk while completing the task. Verbal interaction in group 6 started with the expert on each question reading the question and the answer, which had been formulated in the expert group, aloud. However, in group 6 each presented answer led to discussions on lexicon and meanings, resulting in intense verbal interactions characterized by a constant exchange of questions and answers. The presenter had an initial leading role to give his or her explanation, but other group members took the floor adding their point of view on the topic.

Each question on the worksheet contained an academic expression or technical vocabulary, and the answer often included some additional words taken from the textbook. Excerpts from interactions around each of the four questions are presented and analysed in the following subsections.

4.1.1 Question 1

The first question concerned the Buddhist faith. Mikael started by reading the question aloud: *Vad är den gyllene medelvägen?* [What is the golden mean?] and continued by explaining the answer. From the discussion in the expert group earlier, he had written the answer: *Enligt den gyllene vägen ska man leva ett liv i (.) <nyytningss>lystnad och i sträng avsomhet att de of (.) där avs-avhållsamhet betyder de där att ingen alkohol å inget sexuellt liv* [According to the golden mean you should live a life in (.) indulgence and in strict temperance that it (.) where tem-temperance means that no alcohol and no sexual life]. Mikael thus presents both indulgence and temperance as ways to live according to the golden mean, but without explaining the relationship between them. Furthermore, he gives no explanation of ‘indulgence’, but explains the abstract concept ‘temperance’ as ‘no alcohol and no sexual

life'. The interaction with his group members appears in Excerpt 1. Phrases comprising academic expressions are in boldface font.

Excerpt 1: Home Group 6

1.Mikael: enligt den gyllene vägen ska man leva ett liv i (.) <nyytnings>lystnad och i sträng avsomhet att de (.) där av- avhållsamhet betyder de där att ingen alkohol å inget sexuellt liv (0.5) eller-	Mikael: according to the golden mean you should live a life in <iindulgence> and in strict terance (.) that they where ter-temperance means that no alcohol and no sexual life (0.5) or-
2.David: alltså-	David: that is-
3.Kalle: man får int ha sex	Kalle: you must not have sex
4.David: alltså man ska leva ett-	David: that is you should live a-
5.Mikael: man ska leva ett avhållsamhet eh- <nyytningslystnad>	Mikael: you should live a temperance eh- <iindulgence>
6.Sara: alltså å ett liv utan alkohol	Sara: that is and a life without alcohol
7.Mikael: ja å - de där (1.0) de var första den där frågan (.) utan alkohol å	Mikael: yes and – that (1.0) that was first that question (.) without alcohol and

Kalle (turn 3) and Sara (turn 6) connect to Mikael's explanation by repeating the everyday 'no sex' and 'no alcohol'. In the meantime, David (turns 2 and 4) tries to take his turn, but is preceded by Kalle and Mikael. In turn 5 Mikael seems to either equate temperance and indulgence or at least leave indulgence unexplained. Sara focuses on connecting temperance with 'no alcohol' also leaving 'indulgence' behind and this is further confirmed by Mikael (turn 7). This interaction between the four students leaves Mikael's explanation of the golden mean incomplete, and it is obvious that the group was not capturing the full essence of the golden mean. Although his written answer on the worksheet was more detailed, Mikael was not able to explain to his group members the key point of the golden mean as living a life between the extremes and avoiding both indulgence as well as strict temperance.

Thus, at the end of the group discussion the students remained with a sole explanation of temperance, repeating *man får inte alls ha de där vin alkohol å sex (.) nå lite de e kakka om man int få ha sex* [You must not at all have that wine, alcohol, sex, and it is shit if you can't have sex]. This excerpt demonstrates how the students contributed to the understanding of 'temperance,' but also how they left out the explanation of 'indulgence' and thus did not get the meaning of the golden mean. However, during group interaction all four students contributed by moving between academic and everyday language. This movement enhanced their understanding of the academic expression 'temperance', constructing a kind of linguistic chain of phrases that served to bridge academic (bold) and everyday language, as illustrated below:

avhållsamhet > ingen alkohol å inget sexuellt liv > man får int ha sex > **man ska leva**

ett avhållsamhet > ett liv utan alkohol > inte alls de där vin alkohol > man får inte ha
sex

temperance > no alcohol and no sexual life > you mustn't have sex > **you should live a**

temperance > a life without alcohol > not at all have that wine alcohol > you can't have
sex

Later on when the group involved the teacher in the discussion the full meaning of the golden mean was made clear.

4.1.2. Question 2

The second question focused on varieties of Buddhism: *Vilken är skillnaden mellan de olika buddistiska lärorerna?* [What is the difference between the various Buddhist faiths?] Sara read the question aloud and presented her answer to the group. The written answer she had on her worksheet was:¹ *i Theravada kan bara munkarna (å) upplysning och i Mahajna lamaismen*

¹ Note that students' misspellings and grammatical errors are not corrected.

och zen buddhismen kan också lekmännen nå upplysning [In theravada only monks can reach enlightenment and in mahayana lamaism and zen buddhism also lay people may reach enlightenment]. After a pause she added an explanation: *alltså (4.0) alltså de betyder att i theravada kan va de bara munkar som kan lära och (.) lära sig saker och i eh- mahajana lamaismen och zenbuddhismen så kan alla lära sig* [well (4.0) well this means that in theravada can (1.0) was it only monks who can (1.5) learn and (.) learn things and in eh- (1.5) <mahayana> <the lamaism> and the <zen> buddhism so can everyone learn].

The names of the different Buddhist faiths led to discussions on spelling. While writing, Kalle and David asked Sara to repeat some sentences from her explanation, resulting in everyday language (*lära sig* [learn]) instead of the academic language (*upplysning*, [enlightenment]) on their worksheets. Nonetheless, David continued to talk about *enlightenment*. When the religion teacher joined the group she checked the group's understanding of the word. All four students were active during the conversation, and Sara had an evident function as expert, visible in Kalle's closing summary, which was addressed to Sara (Excerpt 2):

Excerpt 2: Home Group 6

8. Kalle: går de- går de går den här *juttun* (Fi.) så här / **i theravada är det** bara munkar som får lära sig (.) **mayan - laimen och zenbuddhismen kan också lekmän bli öh- upplysta /**

Kalle: does it work- does it work this *thing* (Fi.) like this / **in theravada it is** only monks who may learn (.) **mayan laimen and the zen buddhism can also laymen get eh- enlightened/**

9. Sara: **kan också lekmännen bli upplysta** (.) ja

Sara: **can also the laymen get enlightened** (.) yes

The discussion about the second question consisted of movement between academic (bold) and everyday language resulting in a linguistic chain as follows:

bara munkar som får lära sig > **kan också lekmän bli upplysta** > **kan också lekmännen bli upplysta**

only monks who may learn > **can also laymen get eh- enlightened > can also the laymen get enlightened**

4.1.3. Question 3

The third question concerned the role of the monasteries: *Varför kan klosterlivet räknas som ett privilegium?* [Why can life in the monastery be considered a privilege?] Kalle read the question aloud and before giving the answer he explained the word privilege with *fördel* [advantage] followed by concrete examples (Excerpt 3):

Excerpt 3: Home Group 6

10. Kalle: nå en e (.) nå de e ganska många vet- **privilegie e liksom fördel i livet** liksom de där i historia fast de där- att man beh- att **dom där privilegiebrev** att du behöver int betala skatt kommer ni ihåg

11. Mikael: ja

12. Kalle: så **de e liksom en fördel** att du får liksom- fast nu här att (.) man fick int studera att om man e i kloster fick man studera (.) fritt (.) eh- om man va i kloster fick man studera (.) liksom eh- utan- att de var gratis (.) att man fick studera gratis (.)man fick gratis <kläder> man fick gratis <mat> (.) sen-

13. David: (1.0) så man fick allt gratis

14. Kalle: man fick nu int allting men-

15. David: men det mesta gratis?

16. Kalle: ja å sen- de va ganska enkelt å noggrant liv så där (.) mm (.) ni kan skriva att- eh

Kalle: well one is (.) well there are quite many knows- **privilege is like advantage in life** like those in history even though those- that you nee- that those **privilege letters** that you need not pay tax do you remember

Mikael: yes

Kalle: so it is **like an advantage** that you get like- but now here that (.) you didn't get to study that if you are in monastery you could study (.) for free (.) eh- if you were in monastery you could study (.) like eh- without that it was free (.) that you got to study for free (.) you got free <clothes> you got free <food> (.) then-

David: (1.0) so you got everything free

Kalle: you didn't now get everything but-

David: but most things free?

Kalle: yes and then- it was a simple and thorough life there like that (.) mm (.) you can write that- eh

We can see that Kalle, before giving the answer to the question, chose to explain the academic word (turn 10). To understand more about Kalle's knowledge and intention behind the presentation of *privilege* we return to the video recordings from expert group 3, the group Kalle participated in earlier in the lesson. During group 3 interaction, the teacher joined the group and initiated a discussion about the word *privilege* after having understood that the students' comprehension of the word was unclear. When full comprehension was finally reached, through the discussion all students actively took part in, it was apparent that at least Bea and Kalle had knowledge about the monks' privileges. Note Kalle's explicit claim, which he said with satisfaction in his voice in turn 30 (Excerpt 4).

Excerpt 4: Expert Group 3

17. Kalle: man behöver inte eh (.) betala skatt	Kalle: you don't need eh (.) to pay tax
18. Teacher: ((skrattar))	Teacher: ((laughs))
19. Bea: ja de e just så där som Kalle sa	Bea: yes it is just like that as Kalle said
20. Kevin: privilegie - [vad heter det	Kevin: privilege - [what is the name of that
21. Lärare: [nu var det inte skatt det handla om [<u>här</u> men vad] hade man för privilegier genom att	Teacher: [now it was not about tax [<u>here</u> but what] did they have as privileges by
22. Kalle: [privilegie]	Kalle: [privilege]
23. Lärare: gå i kloster nå-	Teacher: enter a monastery well-
24. Bea: att dom fick studera gratis	Bea: that they got to study for free
25. Lärare: nå exakt man fick studera gratis	Teacher: well exactly you got to study for free
26. Kalle: det e här (.) vi har de här olika (x)	Kalle: it is here (.) we have this different (x)
27. Lärare: va fick man <u>annat</u> från klostret	Teacher: what <u>else</u> did you get from the monastery
28. Kalle: (.) mat	Kalle: (.) food
29. Lärare: mat	Teacher: food
30. Kalle: (2.0) ja visste de (.) å kläder	Kalle: (2.0) I knew it (.) and clothes

31. Lärare: m-hm (2.0) så varför e det ett privilegium då?

Teacher: m-hm (2.0) and why is it a privilege then?

32. Kalle: alltså dom får de gratis

Kalle: well they get it for free

At the end of the discussion with group 3 the teacher stressed the importance of explaining the word *privilege* when students had responsibility for the question in the home group.

Excerpt 5: Expert Group 3 and the teacher

33.Lärare: de e just det vad det handlar om då (1.0) så det här e det viktiga då att när ni presenterar i er grupp så att förklara de här-berätt- ni kommer att berätta vad ni hade för en fråga (1.0) att vad sen va svare på den (.) å så- ni ska förklara va de här **privilegium är (.) de e vissa fördelar som man kan ha** (.) så att de e lättare i live (2.0) de gör ju det- att om man får saker å ting gratis visst e de klart att om man inte annars kanske sku ha råd me det

Teacher: That is just what it is about then (1.0) so this is the important thing when you present then further on so that explain this- tell- you will tell what question you had (1.0) that what else what else was the answer to this (.) and then- you should explain what this **privilege is (.) it is certain advantages which you can have** (.) which makes it easier in life (2.0) it does that- that if you get things and things free of course you know that if you not otherwise could perhaps afford it.

Kalle followed the teacher's advice, when he explained the question later on in his home group, as illustrated above in Excerpt 3. He both took advantage of the discussion in expert group 3 (Excerpt 4), and the teacher's recommendation. He topicalized *privilege* and related it to the privilege letters that students had learned about in history. In his explanation, he referred to the same examples of privileges as had been shared in group 3's discussion, namely free study, free food and free clothes. He also added in his home group discussion: *om man inte kunde sköta ditt eget barn när du va- så man satt dom i kloster för där visste man att dom får dom där kläderna å dom där maten å vad dom behöver* [if you couldn't take care of your own child when you we- so you put them in monastery because there you knew that they get those clothes and those food and what they need]. This information was also derived from his former expert group discussion. Furthermore, Kalle added an example of 'privilege': *enkelt å noggrant liv* [simple and thorough life]. David did as well during the interaction in

group 6; at the very end of the discussion about the third question, he completed his perspective with *gratis kläder och mat och boplats* [free clothes and room and board] (not included in the excerpt). The discussion that started with the teacher asking for the meaning of *privilege* resulted in a linguistic chain, formed by the students' movements between academic (bold) and everyday language:

privilegie > fördel i livet > fördel > **dom där privilegiebrev** att du behöver **int betala skatt** > studera fritt > studera gratis > gratis kläder > gratis mat > man fick allt gratis > dom får kläderna å maten å vad dom behöver > enkelt å noggrant liv > ha ett enkelt noggrant liv

privilege > advantage in life > advantage > *the letters of privilege that you don't have to pay tax* > study for free > study for nothing > free clothes > free food > you got all for free > free clothes and food and what they need > simple and careful life > have a simple careful life

4.1.4 Question 4

Let us return to the discussion in group 6. The fourth question was: *Vilka regler för ett gott liv gäller för buddister i sydöstra Asien? Varför skall man följa reglerna?* [What are the rules for a good life, valid for Buddhists in Southeast Asia? Why are you supposed to follow the rules?] The content was processed in group 6 by an intense linking of academic and everyday language. David was responsible for sharing his expert group's answer, but Kalle, as an active listener, frequently interjected comments in an attempt to clarify (or not to clarify) the academic language. These interjections are evident in turns 38, 40, and 44 in Excerpt 6.

Excerpt 6: Home Group 6

34. Kalle: okej (.) första är- **avstå**

| Kalle: okay (.) the first is- to **refrain**

[från	[from
35. David: [att (.) [döda	David: [to (.) [kill
36. Kalle: [att döda	Kalle: [to kill
37. David: man får int alltså döda eh-	David: you must not well kill eh-
38. Kalle: ett (.) döda (0.5) två?	Kalle: one (.) kill (0.5) two?
39. David: sen ska man avstå från att stjäla (1.0) också (.) man får inte stjäla	David: then you should refrain from stealing (1.0) also (.) you must not steal
40. Kalle: de e samma sak (1.0) sen?	Kalle: it is the same thing (1.0) then?
41. David: sen får man int missbruka sexualiteten	David: then you must not abuse sexuality
42. Kalle: (.) hur menas me det?	Kalle: (.) what is meant by that?
43. David: heller (.) den tredje saken	David: either (.) the third thing
44. Kalle: hur ska- hur ska menas man med missbruka sexualiteten?	Kalle: what should- what should mean with abuse sexuality?
45. David: nå liksom just (.) våldtäkt å sånt här (4.0) (x) mot sin vilja å så vidare (.) får man int göra (1.5) å sen <u>fjärde</u> att man får int <u>ljuga</u> (1.0) inga lögner	David: well like this (.) rape and such (4.0) (x) against his/her will and so on (.) you must not do (1.5) and then the fourth that you must not <u>lie</u> (1.0) no lies

The parallel formulations *refrain from killing – you must not kill* were accepted by Kalle without further comments, but when David said *man får inte stjäla* [you must not steal] in turn 39 as an explanation for *avstå från att stjäla* [refrain from stealing], Kalle said *de e samma sak* [it's the same thing], with intonation indicating the paraphrase being unnecessary. In presenting the third rule, *får man int missbruka sexualiteten* [you must not abuse sexuality] (turn 41), David did not directly link the expression to everyday language, even though the formulation and the meaning of the rule could be considered as the most demanding of those that had been shared. The absence of an explanation from David led Kalle to ask for one in turn 44. David's way of initiating, *nå* [well], his use of expressions *å så vidare* [and so on] and *å sånt här* [and such] and the many pauses (turns 43, 45) marked his hesitation and uncertainty regarding the meaning of the rule.

The fifth and last rule (not in the excerpt) was about not using intoxicants, followed by the examples *alltså* (.) *droger alkohol eh- nå- tobak också räknas till det- snus* (.) *allt sånt där* [well (.) drugs alcohol eh- well- tobacco does also count to that – snuff (.) everything like that] and about “living right”, commented with the formulation “having the right moral”. Taken together, these statements were characterized by movement between academic (bold) and everyday language, constructing the following linguistic chain:

regler för ett bra liv > **handlingarna i det här livet** påverkar nästa liv > **avstå från att döda** > man får inte alltså döda > **avstå från att stjäla** > man får inte stjäla > sen **får man int missbruka sexualiteten** > **våldtäkt** å sånt här > mot sin vilja > man får int ljuga > inga lögner > att **använda berusningsmedel** de e också förbjudet > droger alkohol tobak tobak också räknas till det- snus allt sånt där > därför ska man leva rätt > man ska ha **rätt moral** > man ska leva rätt alltså > att leva rätt eller bra eller whatever

rules for a good life > **the acts in this life** affects the next life > **refrain from killing** > you must not kill you know > **refrain from stealing** > you must not steal > **then you must not abuse sexuality** > **rape** and such > against his/her will > you must not lie > no lies > **to use intoxicants** that is also forbidden > drugs alcohol tobacco also counts (.) snuff > because you should live right > you should have the **right moral** > you should live right you know > to live right or good or whatever

4.1.5 Summary

The above subsections of the results have presented the movements between academic and everyday language appearing in student-student interaction, and these movements have been characterized in the form of linguistic chains. Students clearly moved between academic and

everyday language, and their interaction mediated their co-construction of meaning in relationship to the four assigned questions.

4.2 Resources students used to make meaning

In our analysis of the transcripts, we identified four resources that students used to co-construct their understandings of the text in order to answer the questions in expert group interaction and then share their answers in home groups. They were (1) previous knowledge, (2) the textbook, (3) the teacher, and (4) the Finnish language. Each is described and exemplified in turn below, and examples will illustrate how each served to mediate student understanding of the text and academic terminology.

4.2.1 Previous knowledge as resource

On three occasions students referred to previous knowledge gained from other school subjects or previously treated subject matter in religion. One of the strategies used by the students when trying to understand the word *privilege* was Kalle's suggestion to look for *privilege* in the history notebook (which was not acknowledged). However, some turns later on in the discussion, comments from Kalle, Bea, and the teacher helped us to understand what Kalle referred to when talking about the history subject:

Excerpt 7: Expert Group 3

- | | |
|--|---|
| 46. Kalle: att man behöver inte eh- betala skatt | Kalle: that you don't have to eh- pay tax |
| 47. Bea: ja de e just så där som Kalle sa | Bea: yes it is just like that what Kalle said |
| 48. Kalle: privilegie - vad heter det | Kalle: privilege – what is that called |
| 49. Lärare: nu var det inte skatt det handla om här (.) men vad hade man för privilegier genom att gå i kloster | Teacher: now it was not tax it was about here (.) but what kind of privileges did you have by entering a monastery |

Bea's comment (turn 47) showed that the students had shared knowledge about the connection between paying taxes and *privileges*, and the teacher's formulation in turn 49, supports our understanding of the students' referring to *privilege* as something previously treated in the subject of history. Even though group 3 students did not deepen the discussion about history any further, Kalle picked it up in his home group, group 6 (Excerpt 3, turn 10), now in a more developed way, using the collected knowledge he had about the word *privilege*. After having read the question "monastery task, why can the monastery life count as a privilege?" he picked up the word *privilege* and explained it to his group.

While using everyday language in a paraphrase, in Excerpt 3 Kalle related the meaning of the word to the historic privilege letters, explaining them briefly and finally checking if his classmates remembered those letters. The shared knowledge was thus explicitly concerned with the academic and subject-specific language, and the resource was prior knowledge gained in another school subject.

In another example the references were directed towards a broader field of common understanding, to an earlier discussed subject matter in religion, the Hindus, not mentioned in the text about Buddhism. When explaining the reasons behind the Buddhist rules David inferred and used the group's prior knowledge about the Hindus as a resource:

Excerpt 8: Home Group 6

50. David: för som tror också i det där som hinduisterna att man - eh **pånyttföds** (.) att **handlingarna i de här livet så påverkar** nästa liv å därför ska man leva rätt- man ska ha **rätt moral** man ska leva rätt alltså

David: cause they also believe in those like the Hindus that you – eh are **reborn** (.) that the **acts in this life so affects next life** and therefore you should live right- you should have the **right moral** you should live right that is

Instead of just following the textbook, David expanded his answer by referring to what he perceived his classmates knew about Hindus, as he mentioned the relation between actions

in this life and the next life. Therefore, the epistemic stance about Hindu perspectives on rebirth was used as a resource to mediate group meaning-making.

4.2.2 The textbook as resource

Group 6 also used the textbook as a resource, which afforded them the ability to come to a collective understanding of the text. As part of the initial instructions, the teacher said: *man får ha boken (.) dee helt tillåtet* [you can use the book (.) it is totally allowed]. In group 6 one textbook was lying on the desk, not having been used previously. In the following excerpt Sara shared the answer to the second question, concerning differences among various Buddhist faiths. The names of the different faiths were demanding to write, and Kalle's strategy was to spell the word out loud when writing, but David found it necessary to consult the textbook:

Excerpt 9: Home Group 6

51. Sara: och sen e de (.) <mahayana>	Sara: and then it is (.) <mahayana
52. Kalle: /<ma (.) ha (.) ja->/	Kalle: /<ma (.) ha (.) ja->/
53. David: får ja kolla boken	David: may I check the book
54. Kalle: va ska du titta från boken	Kalle: why are you going to look from the book
55. David: (1.5) helt för säkerhets skull	David: (1.5) just to be sure
56. Kalle: (0.5) dom namnena e-	Kalle: (0.5) those names are
57. David: dom namnena e till exempel ganska svåra	David: those names are for example rather difficult

When David opened the textbook, he briefly looked in it and then commented that *där e bara munkar som kan nå upplysning* [only monks can reach enlightenment]. To answer question 2 students both had to grasp the foreign names and to make meaning of the short and

dense text about the various Buddhist faiths. David's glance in the textbook could be understood as a way of checking Sara's answer and deepening his understanding of her answer. This is the only example identified in the data where students turned to the textbook as a resource.

4.2.3 The teacher as resource

On two occasions group 6 asked the teacher for the meaning of the words; *njutningslystnad* [indulgence] and *nirvana* [nirvana]. Regarding *njutningslystnad*, the problems began with the pronunciation, *nyytningslystnad*. Some repetitions of the word, by two students, *nyttning* (.) *nyytning- öh ystnad*, revealed that the word was demanding, and finally Mikael's strategy was to ask the teacher for help. With the help of the teacher, and later on by making use of Finnish as a resource (see Excerpt 9) they agreed that the verb *njuta* [enjoy²] meant something *bra* [good], resulting in a meaning that was connected to *njutningslystnad* [indulgence].

The problem that the students faced here was both to understand the word per se and the answer. The teacher noticed Mikael's misunderstanding (represented in Excerpt 1 above), and after checking the formulation in the textbook, she stated that the point was to avoid *njutningslystnad* [indulgence]. Finally, the group was able to add explanations about living and acting morally as well as meditating by creating the following linguistic chain of academic (bold) and everyday phrases and expressions:

njutningslystnad > njuta > bra > leva på rätt sätt > **alltså kunna handla moraliskt å meditera** > **alltså kunna handla moraliskt** (.) **kunna handla moralist** > **undvika njutningslystnad**

² The Swedish equivalent of enjoy [Swe.] *njuta* is a part of the word for *njutningslystnad* [indulgence].

indulgence > enjoy > good > live in a right manner > **that is to be able to act morally and meditate** > **that is to be able to act morally** > **avoid indulgence.**

Later, Mikael asked the teacher about *nirvana* [nirvana], (Excerpt 10, turn 58). His question was not initiated by any indication of misunderstanding on the part of the other students, but because he was responsible for the answer, it is reasonable to interpret his question as perhaps seeking a guarantee that he had understood the concept correctly. The teacher did not answer immediately, instead, pointing to the textbook (turn 59), she asked the group if they had looked it up.

Excerpt 10: Home Group 6

<p>58. Mikael: att uppnå buddhismens mål (.) å sen skriv dit ännu nirvana (1.0) eh fröken (.) va e nirvana</p>	<p>Mikael: to reach the Buddhism goal (.) and then write also nirvana (1.0) eh miss (.) what is nirvana</p>
<p>59. Lärare: (0.5) ha du inte slagi upp</p>	<p>Teacher: (0.5) didn't you look it up</p>
<p>60. Mikael: (1.0) ja - ja men (1.0) ja e int riktigt säker</p>	<p>Mikael: (1.0) yes – yes but (1.0) I am not really sure</p>
<p>61. David: e de lite som lite som <upplysning></p>	<p>David: it is somewhat like <enlightenment></p>
<p>62. Mikael: upplysning (.) just de</p>	<p>Mikael: enlightenment (.) exactly</p>
<p>63. Lärare: de e alltså buddhistens mål de e [de-</p>	<p>Teacher: well that is the buddhist goal it is [it</p>
<p>64. Mikael: [ja skrev uppnå buddhismens mål</p>	<p>Mikael: [I wrote reach the Buddhism goal</p>
<p>65. Lärare: ja</p>	<p>Teacher: yes</p>
<p>66. Mikael: å se ja satt de där-</p>	<p>Mikael: and see I put those-</p>
<p>67. David: alla buddhister [(e i mål)</p>	<p>David: all Buddhists [(are in goal)</p>
<p>68. Lärare: [ja (.) å då e man upplyst alltså (.) om man har nått</p>	<p>Teacher: [yes (.) and then you are enlightened (.) if you have</p>

nirvana

reached nirvana

In this discussion students and the teacher circled around three related concepts: *buddhismens mål, nirvana och upplysning* [the Buddhist goal, nirvana and enlightenment]. Mikael indicated that he was not quite sure of the meaning of nirvana (58), and David was eager to contribute with an explanation in turn 61. Mikael agreed, and this interpretation was confirmed by the teacher as being the Buddhist goal. The teacher closed the interaction in turn 68. Subsequently, the teacher in this example served as a resource for mediating and ensuring their understanding. Towards the end of the lesson David returned to the issue of *upplysning* [enlightenment] stating that *där e bara munkar som kan nå upplysning* [only monks can reach enlightenment]. The teacher made a connection and asked what another word for *upplysning* [enlightenment] was, and after a couple of short student turns, the word *nirvana* was mentioned.

4.2.4 The Finnish language as resource

Most students in the class came from Swedish-Finnish bilingual homes, and during recess the students often used Finnish in peer interaction. However, in the data students use of Finnish was limited to single words, occurring when the teacher would ask for an explanation of a word expressed in academic language. In group 6 the words *njutningslystnad* [indulgence] and *upplysning* [enlightenment] were explained in Finnish (Excerpt 11 & 12). The same

procedure occurred in group 3 when the meaning of *privilegium* [privilege] was discussed (Excerpt 13).

Excerpt 11: Home Group 6

69. Mikael: va betyder njutningslystnad	Mikael: what does indulgence mean
70. Lärare: va e njutning	Teacher: what is indulgence
71. David: e de sån där - att man e att man (Fi.) <i>nauttii</i>	David: is it like this – that you are that you (Fi.) <i>enjoy</i>
72. Lärare: men va betyder de på svenska	Teacher: but what does it mean in Swedish
73. Mikael: att man	Mikael: that you-
74. Lärare: hur sku man förklara de	Teacher: how could you explain it
75. Mikael: att man att- ööh-	Mikael: that you- eh-

The Swedish word *njutningslystnad* [indulgence] is a compound of two nouns (*njutning* and *lystnad*, from *lust*). When Mikael asked what it meant, the teacher unpacked the word by asking for the meaning of the first component, *njutning* [enjoyment]. David searched for the meaning and suggested the Finnish verb *nauttii* (3rd person sing.) [enjoy]. He reframed the word according to Swedish morphology, *man nauttar* [you enjoy], and continued by saying that it is like enjoying (turn 71). Thus, he inflected the Finnish verb *nauttia* according to Finnish morphology, but also identified the Finnish stem (*nautt-*) and inflected it according to Swedish morphology (*-ar*).

The teacher accepted the Finnish contribution but asked for an appropriate explanation in Swedish (turn 72). When students failed to give one, she returned to the first part of the word *njutningslystnad*, *njutning* [enjoyment], and rephrased the question; “How is something if you enjoy it?”. Kalle answered *gott* [good] and David said *så man ska int njuta* [so you shouldn’t enjoy], which was the clue to the meaning of *man ska leva ett liv i - i sträng*

avhållsamhet [you should live a life in – in strict abstinence; (that is living according to the golden mean)]. Subsequently, David used the shared peer language, Finnish, as a way to open up the academic language. But by trying out inflections and adaptations to Swedish, he showed an awareness of the limitation of using a Finnish explanation (turn 71).

Shortly after, in another discussion with the teacher, David used Finnish again to clarify the meaning of another academic word, as illustrated in Excerpt 12:

Excerpt 12: Home Group 6

76. David: /där e bara munkar som kan nå upplysning/	David: /there only monks can reach enlightenment/
77. Lärare: just å va va upplysning?	Teacher: exactly and what was enlightenment?
78. David: va?	David: what?
79. Lärare: va va upplysning (.) me de där andra orde?	Teacher: what what was enlightenment (.) with another word?
80. David: alltså de e valaistus de de där att man slipper-	David: well it is enlightenment (Fi.) that that you avoid-
81. Lärare: men va va det med ett annat ord?	Teacher: but what was it with another word?

In turn 80 David used the Finnish word *valaistus* [enlightenment]. He made an effort to continue, but the teacher interrupted him, encouraging him to produce the word in Swedish. It was obvious that *valaistus*, a Finnish word, was not the accurate “another word” that she was looking for.

In the third example when Cia, in expert group 3, similarly used Finnish, she did it with the addendum *på finska* [in Finnish] (Excerpt 13, turn 84), thereby demonstrating both her knowledge about the word and that the teacher understood it, but also demonstrating her knowledge that an explanation in Finnish was not adequate. By both confirming and demanding more, the teacher pushed the students to continue developing their understanding of the word. The Finnish equivalent, in this case, filled an additional function as a clue,

leading Kalle further in his meaning-making process. First, he repeated the word in Finnish (turn 88), then he suggested the Swedish *försprång* [advantage]. The example presented in Excerpt 13 differs from the previous two by the way the Finnish *etuoikeus* [privilege] served to scaffold the following, quite extended, discussion about the word *privilege*. It should be noted that the initial part of *etuoikeus* [*etu*] means *för* in Swedish [for in English].

Excerpt 13: Expert Group 3

82. Lärare: va betyder ordet privilegium?	Teacher: what does the word privilege mean?
83. Kalle: °aj man skulle svara på de°	David: °oh one should answer that°
84. Cia: ° <i>etuoikeus</i> (.) på finska°	Cia: ° <i>privilege</i> (.) in Finnish°
85. Lärare: på finska men va e de på svenska då då?	Teacher: in Finnish but what is it in Swedish then then?
86. Cia: < rättighet >	Cia: <right>
87. Lärare: nä	Teacher: no
88. Kalle: <i>etuoikeus</i> vänta va e de (1.0) eh-	Kalle: <i>etuoikeus</i> (Fi) wait what is it (1.0) eh-
89. Lärare: ja just det de är ett privi[legium	Teacher: yes exactly it is a privi[lege
90. Kalle: [för(språng)]	Kalle: [advant(age)]
91. Lärare: men va betyder de på- kan man förklara de där?	Teacher: but what does it mean in- could you explain that?

5.2.5 Summary

The multiple resources used by students were varied and served to mediate, particularly in group 6, students' meaning-making. During reading or sharing each pre-formulated answer and in this process creating linguistic chains linking academic and everyday language, students used the following resources: making connections to previous knowledge (mainly knowledge acquired in school), reading in the textbook, asking the teacher for help with interpretations or explanations, and using Finnish.

6. Discussion and pedagogical implications

Informed by sociocultural theory, the aim of the present study was to explore how students bridged academic and everyday language to mediate their understandings of academic text and language and to examine how resources served as affordances to aid them in co-constructing meaning. The results showed how the four students in home group 6, when involved in a content based task on Buddhism, benefitted from the given social organization of the setting in expert – home groups. Furthermore, how each participant's affordance of expertise, gained in his/her expert group, led students to take full responsibility for "their question" in the home group interaction. In addition, all members of group 6 had a strong urge to fully understand both questions and answers, which led to intense interactions on the subject. While focusing on the academic concepts, a co-construction of meaning in both academic and everyday registers formed patterns of linguistic chains. During interaction students also used resources as previous knowledge, the textbook, the teacher, and the Finnish language to mediate their understanding of the text and academic terminology.

Academic language retrieved from the textbook and the teachers' questions constituted the basis for the students' discussions. The questions were *What* and *Why* questions and avoided typical historical *When* questions. This is understandable given that the topic was the religion Buddhism. The questions mainly focused on abstractions expressed by lexical items like *den gyllene medelvägen* [the golden mean] and *privilegie* [privilege], which the students in expert group 3 and home group 6 unpacked and explained in everyday language. When answering the third question, *Varför kan klosterlivet räknas som ett privilegium?* [Why could life in the monastery be considered a privilege?], students foregrounded the *causal connections*, for example *så de e liksom fördel* [so it is like

advantage], and *om man e i kloster fick man studera fritt* [if you are in monastery you could study (.) for free]. This question also triggered an expression of *value* when students concluded that the monasteries were especially good for *stora familjer man kanske int- man fick många barn man hade kanske inte råd* [big families you maybe not – you had many children you had perhaps not the means].

Clearly, students considered the text on Buddhism, with its academic and subject-specific vocabulary and syntax, difficult. In general, the students stayed close to the formulations in the textbook when writing down their answers. However, in group 6 interactions were elaborated through explanations, interruptions, questions, and continuous discussions concerning vocabulary and content. The main meaning-making strategy when solving the questions was to use everyday language to mediate their use and understandings of the academic language, evidenced by the linguistic chains that linked academic expressions with their own everyday language. Group 6 performed recurrent movements alternating between the everyday and academic language ends of the continuum. It is obvious that the students would have benefitted from explicit preteaching on suitable general-utility phrases (“mortar”) to go with the given content-specific words (“bricks”) (c.f. Dutro & Moran, 2003). As it is now members of group 6 simply use everyday connecting words, prepositional phrases and verbs when they construct sentences with the technical concepts. Their use of Finnish and their interactions with the teacher afforded them a way towards answers and understandings in Swedish. The oral interactions that occurred among the students and with the teacher helped build understanding and support meaning-making.

By being alert, active, and engaged, the students, all through the task, were oriented towards full understanding for all group members. This was also underscored by the fact that each group member was acknowledged as an expert and knowing participant on one question and thus responsible for meaning-making. Students often chose to write their answers using

academic language, but presented the everyday version orally to group members to ensure mutual agreement and understanding. Altogether, the present study has managed to incorporate a multifaceted focus including content, setting, and participants.

Due to the setting for the group work the role of the teacher in the classroom was relatively withdrawn, leaving the various student groups a lot of freedom to organize the work. The teacher was present, walking around the classroom, discussing and answering questions from the students, but apart from initial instructions, the students were left to organize the group work. This teacher style benefitted the independent meaning-seeking group 6, but at the same time allowed other groups to remain close to the textbook without discussing content and language. In contrast, the whole class activity presented in Hammond's study (2006) showed a teacher who explicitly identified and talked about the academic language and within the systematic teaching even made room for play with language across different registers.

In our study only group 6 and to some extent group 3 were capable of creating a favourable context for meaning-making. The other small-groups in the classroom might have needed more instruction and practice to fully benefit from the organization. Molle and Lee (2015) provide an example of collaborative learning for improving and expanding students' repertoires of practice and thus learn both language and content.

The important knowledge gained from the study of the work in home group 6 and expert group 3 is how the students continually processed the academic expressions related to each question through discussions on meaning. They acknowledged each group member as an expert and knowing participant by virtue of the pre-work in the expert groups 1–3 and exhibited a deep need to understand each subject-specific expression concerning Buddhism and they continued the process of explanation until each group member appeared to achieve understanding. To unpack the academic expressions and achieve a reliable and “beyond-the-

situation” understanding of the concept, they tried different everyday explanations, repeated the subject-specific word while testing different pronunciations and used various resources. If anyone in the group showed uncertainty the group continued the discussion, creating the linguistic chains that bridged everyday and academic language.

Being bilinguals, the students also used Finnish as a resource, but, interestingly, only when the teacher was present. On these occasions students tested their understanding of a central concept by giving a Finnish equivalent, which the bilingual teacher always confirmed. However, when students worked alone in the group they abided by the school’s monolingual norm: Swedish was the language students were expected to use during classroom activities (cf., Slotte-Lüttge, 2007).

The organization in expert and home groups favoured joint activities and offered additional linguistic scaffolding (cf., Haneda, 2014a). It gave all students not only a possibility, but even presupposed oral activity from each student during group work. This result strengthens and expands the importance of group work given in previous studies (Brooks 2006; Lengyel 2010; Molle & Lee 2015). The lesson studied offered many affordances for the students “to acquire, practice actively and to develop their abilities in everyday language and academic language,” essential parts of inclusive academic language teaching (Gogolin et al., 2011, p. 36). The group organization created an interactional classroom ecology, which promoted the use of academic language, but also promoted explicit explanations in everyday language (c.f. Haneda, 2014a).

Nevertheless, these affordances were only used to their full potential in home group 6, which implies a necessity for teachers to model the expected type of interactional communication in expert and home groups. Even if the teacher at the beginning of the lesson had explained the expected way of interacting during group work, stressing explanations, narrations, and reminding students to avoid copying, this type of interaction was only

observed in home group 6. In addition, the students in this group also seemed to be driven by motivation and a desire for complete understanding, which made it impossible for them to leave a question without fully co-constructing the meaning of the academic expressions. The nature of their interaction indicates that, apart from modelling group interaction, teachers should strive to formulate questions in such a way that answers cannot be copied from the textbook and should encourage answers expressed in both academic and everyday language, perhaps pointing out to students that using everyday language can serve as a bridge to initial understanding of more challenging academic language and concepts.

In line with previous research about supporting students' development of academic language in the classroom, the results of this study emphasize the idea of high challenge and high support (Gibbons, 2009; Hammond, 2006; Lengyel, 2010; Slotte & Forsman, 2016). In the analysed classroom practice these were visible in the teachers' choice of or organizing the group work, in the use of academic language in the tasks, in the students urge to discuss, and in the teacher's active scaffolding when discussing with the group. A strong pedagogical implication of the study is the necessity of making the aim of the assignment clear to the students. The teacher may encourage the students to structure group talk in such a way that they together read and discuss the written text, the worksheet, and the textbook, and thereby become promoted and supported to move between academic language and everyday language. Further, the importance of group interaction, and the students' roles as speakers and listeners need to be emphasized, to increase the quality of the discussion (c.f. Molle & Lee, 2015). Students have to become aware of the need for real understanding of an answer rather than simply accepting a formulation from the textbook. Initiating a discussion on text meaning indicates an opening up for creating linguistic chains to bridge everyday language and academic language, while simultaneously achieving a deeper understanding of subject matter. However, besides focusing on the content-specific words, teachers need to teach the

general-utility phrases (“mortar”) to go with the specific concepts to support students’ general development of their overall academic register.

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Sammanfattning

Denna artikel presenterar resultat från en religionslektion i årskurs 7 med svensk-finskspråkiga elever i Finland. Fokus i studien är på utvecklingen av skolspråk och ämneslitteracitet i flerspråkiga miljöer, eftersom dessa är avgörande för elevernas skolframgång och ett område i behov av uppmärksamhet och stöttning. Totalt 117 minuter från sex video-inspelade gruppdiskussioner, insamlade under en klassrumsstudie i en svenskspråkig skola i Finland, analyserades. Syftet var att utforska hur elever använde vardagsspråk och ämnesspråk för att tillsammans skapa mening av ämnestext samt att undersöka vilka resurser som användes av elever och lärare för att underlätta åtkomsten till ämnesinnehållet för elever som undervisades på svenska. Resultaten fokuserar framförallt på diskussionerna i en grupp bestående av fyra elever när de besvarar frågor på texten. Dessa elever kopplade samman ämnesspråk och vardagsspråk genom att skapa språkliga kedjor mellan de två och genom att använda flera olika resurser som: tidigare kunskap, textboken, fråga läraren och använda finska för att säkra varje gruppdeltagares fulla förståelse av ämnet.

Appendix

Transcription key

(.)	Pause shorter than 0.2 seconds
(0.5)	Pause measured by tenths of a second
[Indicates where an overlap occurs
]	Indicates where an overlap ends
:	Prolonged sound
>text<	Faster speech than surrounding talk

<text>	Slower speech than surrounding talk
(text)	Likely interpretation of talk
(x)	Speech unclear
<i>text</i>	Word in Finnish
/text/	Text read aloud
<u>text</u>	Word read aloud

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