COMMUNICATING METAKNOWLEDGE TO L2 LEARNERS

A fragile scaffold for participation in subject-related discourse?

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Abstract

In this article, I highlight how two teachers seek to scaffold second language learners' use of language and engagement with texts in Grade 1 and 6. The aim is to explore the communication of metaknowledge in classroom discourse, more specifically, the communication of knowledge about language and metacognitive reading strategies. Two teachers participated in the study, and data were gathered through observations, voice recordings, and the collection of teaching materials. Bernstein's sociology of education is operationalized to reveal different aspects of framing during teaching activities in second language teaching and geography. Drawing upon systemic-functional linguistics, I show how metaknowledge was foregrounded by the teacher in ways that sometimes de-emphasized the subject-related texts and concepts expected to be at the center of the teaching. An important empirical finding is that the foregrounding of metaknowledge such as features of the language and cognitive reading strategies in teaching can result in a *pseudo-visible* modality of pedagogy that provides insufficient scaffolding for dealing with subject-related texts and participating substantially in classroom discourse. Implications for teaching are discussed.

Keywords: classroom discourse, framing, metalinguistic knowledge, reading strategies, second language instruction, social studies teaching

1. INTRODUCTION

The overall educational concern this article addresses is how opportunities are shaped in second language instruction for learners' participating in subject-related discourse. Teachers of second language (L2) learners often have to combine a high degree of challenge with a high degree of scaffolding (e.g., Gibbons 2006; Mariani, 1997) while also being expected to make implicit linguistics demands explicit (e.g., Flowerdew, 2002; Schleppegrell, 2013). The complex considerations in employing such a pedagogy are at the core of the present article, which explores how two teachers in Grades 1 and 6 sought to support L2 learners by directing their attention to reading strategies and features of texts. Such knowledge about ways to deal with texts will subsequently be termed *metaknowledge*.

The aim of this article is to explore the communication of metaknowledge to L2 learners in Grade 1 and 6 (7 and 12-year-old students). The specific questions I answer in this study are:
1) How did the participant teachers direct students' attention to subject content and metaknowledge in classroom discourse?
2) How can the relationship between the communication of metaknowledge and the L2 learners' participation in subject-related discourse be understood in the on-going teaching practice?

The teaching observed in the present study was partly organized according to principles of genre-based instruction (cf. Painter, 1996; Rose & Martin, 2012). The teaching in Grade 1 comprised preparation for reading homework, instances of sharing time and work with narrative texts, whereas the teaching observed in Grade 6 integrated the subjects Geography (as a part of Social studies) and Swedish as a second language in a content area about maps and population. All of the students in these grades followed the course syllabus of Swedish as a second language—a decision formally made by the head of the school—generally targeting the same goals as the syllabus for Swedish but giving more emphasis to strategies for dealing with language and development of vocabulary (Skolverket, 2019). Although teachers in Sweden have a high degree of freedom in selecting materials and modes of instruction, teaching from an L2 perspective is generally associated with scaffolding strategies to promote the students' engagement with challenging subject content (cf. Nygård Larsson, 2018; Rubin, 2019; Walldén, 2019c).

Having seen a large influx of migrant L2 learners in the last decade, Swedish classrooms provide an interesting context for exploring how influential methods and perspectives in the teaching of L2 learners are enacted. Furthermore, the school where this study took place was considered to have a developed pedagogy for meeting the need of L2 learners, constituting the great majority (94%) of the students. The study responds to the need for knowledge about how teachers seek to promote the learning of L2 learners and contributes theoretical tools for exploring the alignment between scaffolding strategies used by teachers and the content learning they seek to promote.

2.   SUPPORTING L2 LEARNERS BY SHARING METAKNOWLEDGE

As previously stated, knowledge about reading strategies and linguistic features of texts will be termed *metaknowledge* in this study. Although the concepts are very different in nature, they both involve explicit knowledge about how to produce and understand texts in instruction. As the following review will show, both awareness of reading strategies and knowledge about language are associated with the *scaffolding* of L2 learners, understood as providing support for the L2 learners to reach goals they could not have attained through individual efforts (cf. Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; Wood et al., 1976). Metaknowledge also involves aspects not focused on in the present study, such as knowledge about listening, multimodal features of texts, rhetorical devices, or knowledge of traditional grammar.

In previous research, knowledge about language has often been highlighted in analyses of successful interventions and scaffolding strategies used in the teaching of L2 learners (e.g. Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; Morais & Neves, 2001). It has also been the central concern in genre-based interventions, which has foregrounded knowledge about genre structures and other linguistic resources for participating in subject-related discourse (Rose & Martin, 2012; Rothery 1996). Early studies of subject-related language, such as that of geography, showed that students must master taxonomies and abstract language to acquire and communicate knowledge (e.g. Halliday, 1989/1993; Wignell, Martin, & Eggins, 1989/1993). In primary education, classroom discourse analyses by Christie (2000, 2002) have shown that students lacking access to required linguistic resources are unable to participate in seemingly inclusive and open-ended activities, such as morning news.

In more recent research, studies reporting on teaching interventions have stressed how students should be scaffolded to move between everyday and concrete wordings to technical and abstract ones (Macnaught et al., 2013; Maton. 2013). The sharing of metalinguistic knowledge of genre structures and other features of the language is maintained as central (see also Martin, 2013; Nygård Larsson, 2018). Similarly, in Sweden, studies have identified a text and language conscious mode of teaching as conducive to support L2 learners' engagement in disciplinary literacy practices (Bergh Nestlog, 2017; Nygård Larsson, 2011; Olvegård, 2014; Sellgren, 2011; Walldén, 2020).

Regarding metacognitive reading strategies, studies have linked L2 reading ability to employment and awareness of reading strategies (e.g. Huang & Newbern, 2012; Lindholm & Tengberg, 2019; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001). Therefore, teachers are asked to create opportunities for learning these strategies (Lindberg, 2019; Olin-Scheller & Tengberg, 2017; Roberts, 2013). However, there is also a concern for instrumental approaches to reading strategies, which may limit opportunities for meaningful engagements with texts (Thavenius, 2017; Walldén, 2019b). Similarly, studies have highlighted misalignments between the modelling of metalinguistic knowledge and engagement with subject content (Moore, Schleppegrell & Palincsar, 2018; Walldén, 2019c).

The present study elaborates conceptually and analytically on data gathered in my doctoral study (Walldén, 2019a). It is partly based on the same material as Walldén (2019c), which showed conflicting priorities in a genre-based content area about maps and population in Grade 6. The present study elaborates on the findings by incorporating additional material and using a different theoretical lens, explained below.

3.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: UNDERSTANDING FRAMING

To answer the research question, I draw upon Bernstein's sociological theory of education. Current implementations in educational research of Bernstein's theory tend to foreground the ideational side of classroom discourse, more specifically the negotiation of specific field knowledge, which is viewed in terms of technicality and abstraction (cf. Martin 2013; Maton, 2013; Nygård Larsson, 2018; Walldén, 2019c). In this study, I will instead draw attention to how communication is shaped by the teachers through *interpersonal* choices, with attention to the knowledge and criteria foregrounded by the teachers. In relation to Bernstein, the concepts of *classification* and, in particular, *framing* inform the analysis.

The concept of *framing* describes the control of the pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 2000, pp. 12–14). If the communication is strongly framed, the teacher is in control and makes explicit how the students are expected to participate in the discourse. If it is weakly framed, the students, at least seemingly, have a greater degree of control. On the other hand, *classification* concerns the strength of boundaries between categories (Bernstein, 2000, pp. 6–7). In teaching, these categories can consist of school subjects or knowledge fields within school subjects. Strong framing is, together with strong classification, connected to *visible pedagogy*, whereas weak classification and framing are associated with *invisible pedagogy*. According to Bernstein, invisible pedagogy results in students from underprivileged backgrounds being less likely to recognize and realize context-adequate texts or meanings (Bernstein, 2000, p. 18). This argument has been central to the development of genre-based literacy programs, which have sought to provide a visible and subversive pedagogy by giving disadvantaged students access to powerful forms of discourse (Rose & Martin, 2012). Other research drawing on Bernstein's theory has taken a similar position (e.g., Morais & Neves, 2001). As the present study explores the interactions between teachers and students, framing is foregrounded in the analysis (see Sections 4.1 and 4.2).

4.   METHOD AND MATERIAL

The study took place in a school where the great majority of students were L2 learners. The school employed genre-based pedagogy and gave priority to the explicit teaching of reading strategies to scaffold the students' engagement with different kinds of texts. This pedagogy was an important factor in choosing participants for

the study, along with the school's location in a socioeconomically disadvantaged area. The teachers who consented to participate in the study conducted teaching in Grade 1 and 6 respectively and had important roles in implementing genre-based pedagogy. These teachers were involved in the study due to their roles and ambitions to scaffold L2 learners rather than with respect to the particular grade or content taught.

The students were not tracked individually during the research but regarded as a collective. Because of ethical considerations, I did not collect data on their length of stay in Sweden. However, the L2 learners in Grade 6 generally received instruction in preparatory class before entering the mainstream class in which the study was conducted. In Grade 1, the students entered the mainstream class irrespective of their language proficiency level or length of stay. Therefore, some of those students likely had limited experience in using the target language. There were 13 students in Grade 1 and 26 in Grade 6.

The total material collected consists of approximately 44 hours of observations and voice recordings taking place over six months in 2015-2016. In the present study, I draw on parts of the material, 20 hours of observations and voice recordings, during which I closely followed the content areas about narrative texts (Grade 1) and maps and populations (Grade 6) as they progressed through different phases of instruction. I also studied sharing time and preparation for reading homework in Grade 1, constituting weekly activities, on multiple occasions. The primary material is transcribed voice recordings of whole-class interaction, which were read through repeatedly by the author and analyzed using the discursive and sociological constructs detailed below.

Drawing on linguistic classroom discourse analysis (see Section 4.1), the trustworthiness of the analysis relies on the convergence of results and the displayed relationship between linguistic features and communicative functions (Gee, 2014, pp. 141–143). More specifically, I will show recurring patterns in the communication of metaknowledge relating to the L2 learners' participation in subject-related discourse. According to this aim, the excerpts shown and analyzed in the present article are ones in which the participating teachers call attention to different kinds of metaknowledge. Therefore, parts of the instruction not focusing on metaknowledge will not be highlighted except for necessary reference. However, it is worth mentioning that the interaction relating to reading strategies in Grade 1 and genre knowledge in Grade 6 constituted the lion's share of text-related discussions in these instructional processes. For example, the genre knowledge modelled by the Grade 6 teacher was not applied to other texts in the content area.

Field notes and photos of teaching materials were used to provide additional context to the transcripts. The study followed the ethical guidelines stated by the Swedish Research Council (Swedish Research Council, 2017). Further, I have translated the analyzed interaction from Swedish to English. In the excerpts, clear emphasis is italicized while the omitted text is marked by […].

4.1 Analyzing framing in classroom discourse

To analyze how the participant teachers directed students' attention to subject content and metaknowledge in the transcribed recordings, I draw on discursive concepts relating to the tenor of the pedagogic discourse, that is, how the teachers construct and maintain their roles as teachers and their relationships with the students (cf. Halliday & Mathiessen, 2014, p. 77). For Bernstein, this involves the establishment of hierarchical rules that mutually define the roles of teachers and students (Bernstein, 1990/2003, p. 57). An important aspect of framing is how the participating teachers engage students in dialogue, what Lemke (1990) has called *activity structures*. If the pedagogic discourse follows the iconic classroom pattern of initiation, response, and evaluation (Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), it is strongly framed as the teacher asks and evaluates known-answer questions. I will hereafter label this pattern *triadic dialogue* (see Lemke, 1990; Nassaji & Wells, 2000). Further, teachers may occasionally take a non-interactive stance (Mortimer & Scott, 2003) and give longer explanations of what is expected of the students, which can also establish a strong framing. Alternatively, the teacher can involve the students in more open-ended exchanges and let them make more substantial contributions to the discourse (e.g., Alexander, 2008; Dysthe, 1993; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991; Nystrand, 1997). This constitutes a sign of weaker framing. In this article, I do not seek to contribute to the extensive discussion about the relative merits of these structures (e.g., Macbeth, 2003; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; O'Connor & Michaels, 1996; Wells, 1993). However, I explore the role of activity structures as part of the framing of the pedagogic discourse.

In addition, the tenor of pedagogic discourse includes how teachers place different demands on students: what they should/must do (or not do) and what they can/may do. This relates to what Fairclough (2015, p. 142) has described as *relational modality*. Such directions can be purely regulative, for example, regarding activities the students should do next or non-preferred activities they should stop doing. They can also relate to instructional content, for example, what kind of meanings they should construe and how they should go about it, which Bernstein has termed *discursive rules* (Bernstein, 1990/2003, pp. 57–58). *Epistemic* modality, on the other hand, construes the state of affairs in a disciplinary knowledge domain as more or less certain (cf. Fairclough, 2015, p. 142). Broadly speaking, an analysis of modality can show what is construed as certain and important in pedagogic discourse and thus give an indication of which meanings are privileged at a given point. Finally, the analysis also explores how the teachers use other linguistic resources of *attitude* to correct undesired behavior, show solidarity, and promote certain kinds of language use (cf. Martin & White, 2005; Walldén, 2019c). To clarify the concepts and how they are operationalized in the analysis of classroom discourse, brief examples are given in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1: Discursive concepts used in the analysis.

Concept	Example
Activity structure	
Initiation of triadic dialogue	Do we find out who the orientation … tells us about?
Open-ended question	What did you want to say about this?
Modality	
High relational modality	you **must** also give consequences
Low relational modality	you **could** say that
High epistemic modality	it is **always** good
Low epistemic modality	**if we pretend** that many don't get food
Attitude	
Affect	very **exciting**
Judgement	you are **really disruptive**
Appreciation	a **perfect** text

The analysis of classroom discourse in the present study is partly inspired by Christie's (2000, 2002) operationalization of Bernstein's theory. Drawing upon Bernstein's concepts of *regulative discourse* and *instructional discourse*, which describe the social order of the pedagogic discourse and the knowledge and skills to be learned, respectively (Bernstein, 1990/2003, 2000), Christie has advocated a classroom discourse in which the regulative register actively scaffolds students' engagement with the instructional register. Consequently, Christie has criticized one-off activities such as "morning news" or "sharing time" for not providing sufficient support to less advantaged learners and advocated sequenced and cumulative content areas as more likely to promote knowledge building through scaffolding (2000, 2002). The focus on the register is well suited to Christie's linguistic rigor, but the analysis has made limited use of other concepts offered by Bernstein's theory, such as framing. In the present study, I operationalize aspects of framing that are useful for exploring the communication of metaknowledge in the teaching of L2 learners.

4.2 Aspects of framing

To analyze the relationship between the communication of metaknowledge and participation in subject-related discourse, I build upon previous endeavors to operationalize Bernstein's concept of framing. In a synthesis of teaching interventions in pedagogic contexts with disadvantaged students, Morais and Neves (2001) have advocated strongly framed discursive rules for *content selection* and *evaluation criteria.* The former concerns the selection of meanings in teaching, while the latter relates to the production of legitimate texts. The present study maintains these categories of framing. Morais and Neves (2001) have also put a high value on weakly framed hierarchical rules, as the status of disadvantaged students is elevated through open personal relationships between students and teachers. The result is a "mixed pedagogy," drawing on the advantages of both invisible and visible pedagogies. In the

present study, I view hierarchical rules in terms of weakly or strongly framed activity structures.

Martin and Rose (2005; see also Martin, 1999, pp. 144–145) have discussed framing and classification in relation to the genre-based teaching/learning cycle. The teaching/learning cycle has undergone various transformations, but the phases typically employed in Sweden (and also by the participant teachers) are building field knowledge, deconstruction of texts, joint construction of texts, and individual construction of texts (cf. Callaghan & Rothery, 1988; Rothery, 1996). Martin and Rose (2005) have described the framing as strong when the teacher leads the deconstruction of model text. During joint construction, the framing is described as both strong and weak as ideas are gathered by the students and then formulated by the teacher in writing. Phases of deconstruction and joint construction in the teaching/learning cycle emphasize metalinguistic knowledge about language and texts. Knowledge of this kind may serve as criteria of evaluation (cf. Morais & Neves, 2001), but it may also play an important part in the building of knowledge through the negotiation of disciplinary content (cf. Gibbons, 2006; Martin, 2009; Martin, 2013; Rose & Martin, 2012). In the present study, when the participant teachers direct the students' attention to metalinguistic knowledge as well as metacognitive reading strategies, I regard it as a strong framing of metaknowledge use. By separating the framing of content selection from the framing of metaknowledge use, I can determine whether the attention to metaknowledge in the classroom interaction is aligned with the negotiation of the subject-related discourse of the disciplinary content studied..

Based on these perspectives on framing, the study employs the following concepts to explore the communication of metaknowledge to L2 learners (Table 2). As should be evident, the concepts were partly informed by previous research but also developed in dialogue with the material of the present study.

Table 2: Aspects of framing.

Aspect of framing	Explanation
Activity structure	Whether the teacher engages students in triadic dialogue or more open-ended dialogue
Turn allocation	Whether the teacher selects the students who reply or if the students self-select
Content selection	Whether the teacher controls the fields/experiential content of texts and spoken interaction or if this content is selected by the students
Using metaknowledge	Whether the teacher endeavors to control how the students make use of metaknowledge or if such knowledge is not focused on in the discourse
Criteria of evaluation	Whether the teacher states criteria for producing discourse in the classroom or if these criteria are left implicit

5. RESULTS

The results are divided into four subsections according to the sort of subject content and metaknowledge focused on in instruction: the first three dealing primarily with Grade 1—specifically, features of narrative texts, reading strategies for negotiating a chapter book, and linking words to participate in morning news—and the fourth subsection focusing on a content area about maps and population in Grade. 6. In each subsection, I will first present how the participating teachers directed the students' attention to subject knowledge and metaknowledge such as genre knowledge and metacognitive reading strategies (Research Question 1). In doing so, I will employ the discursive constructs described in the previous section, relating to establishing different aspects of framing. Secondly, I will discuss the relationship between the communication of metaknowledge and the L2 learners' participation in subject-related discourse (Research Question 2).

5.1 Engaging with narrative texts through metalinguistic knowledge

In this first section, I explore interaction during a content area about narrative texts in Grade 1. I also use this section to introduce general patterns of how the participant teachers directed the students' attention to subject knowledge and metaknowledge.

5.1.1 Establishing strong framing of metaknowledge use and content selection

Triadic activity structure was frequently used to point out metalinguistic knowledge. This is exemplified below, when the Grade 1 teacher deconstructed a narrative text, a simplified version of Cinderella, along with her students.

> T: Ok, it is big enough [text is projected on the whiteboard] that I think [student name] can read up to this point?
>
> S: "There was a girl named Cinderella. She had two sisters. They were not nice. Cinderella had to work …"
>
> T: It's enough, thanks. Do we find out who the orientation talks, tells us about *who*, *when*, …?
>
> S: And where.
>
> T: Now you're starting to get the hang of this. Do we find out? […] Who, if we start with the first question. Who is this about? [The teacher names a student]
>
> S: Cinderella.
>
> T: Good. Then you color "Cinderella" with a bit of orange. Alright.

The teacher asked a student to read the beginning of the text. After interrupting the student, she used the term "orientation," which had been introduced previously. She seemed to be on the verge of asking about the content of the text, but instead, she

slowly started listing the elements that should be included in an orientation. A student, quite correctly, interpreted this as a triadic exchange and filled in "and where." The teacher affirmed the answer and made a more explicit initiation of a triadic exchange by asking if they found information about the "who" of the story. A student supplied the desired answer. In this case, the triadic dialogue was used to elicit, unpack, and apply the metalinguistic concept of "orientation" in the deconstruction of a text (cf. Martin & Rose, 2008, p. 67). As the genre structure promoted close attention to meanings in the text, there was a strong framing of content selection along with a strong framing of metaknowledge use.

In addition to triadic dialogue, strong framing was also established through longer explanations and other interpersonal resources. This is illustrated below, as the Grade 1 teacher proceeded with the deconstruction of Cinderella.

> T: We have something left, don't we? Something you need to find out? You can't write a story [this way]. You can tell a story of the little boy who lived in a treehouse a thousand years ago. Yes, then here is a problem. The treehouse falls apart; he must fix it. Then, the story can't just end. No, that won't do. No one wants to read this. What, then, do you need in the story? What do we need?

Relational modality expressing obligation ("need to find out," "can't just end," "won't") and (lack of) willingness ("no one wants to") served to underline the necessity of using the genre structure of narrative texts. The teacher also used an inclusive "we," making the deconstruction seem more like a joint endeavor. The excerpt below is a similar example of pedagogic discourse, where the teacher had just exemplified a story without complication, namely, the second stage of narrative texts:

> T: It gets too boring, right? Something exciting must happen; there must be a problem.

In this short excerpt, relational modality ("must") co-occurred with contrasting resources of appreciation: "boring" and "exciting" (cf. Martin & White, 2005). Together with triadic dialogue, such resources contributed to a strong framing regarding the application of metalinguistic knowledge.

5.1.2   Inviting student's voices and maintaining focus by mixing aspects of framing

The mixed nature of framing, where some aspects are strong while others remain weak, is evident below when the teacher led a joint construction of a narrative text. The narrative centered on an anthropomorphic fish, playfully named "Fiskelifisk" by a student (approximately, "Fishy Fish"), who was guarding a stash of gold.

> T: What does your group say?
>
> S: There was a big bad fish that took the gold from Fiskelifisk. […]
>
> T: A big bad fish took the gold, yes, that would be a problem, too. Do we have more problems coming? More suggestions? […]
>
> S: A witch could destroy everything.
>
> T: Ok, could we write that here?

The teacher asked the students to report their suggestions and noted them down on the whiteboard. Letting the students discuss the issue in groups is an example of a weakly framed activity structure that was maintained in the whole-class follow-up: the students were free to contribute to the discourse and to the development of the narrative. Both the activity structure and the content selection were weakly framed while keeping the narrative somewhat congruent with what had been established earlier in the text. However, the students were still required to follow the structural conventions of the narrative genre. Thus, the framing of metaknowledge use was strong.

In general, the strong framing of metaknowledge use during the instructional process about a narrative text in Grade 1 seemed to promote both close attention to meanings in texts and the joint construction of subject-relevant texts in early L2 instruction. In other words, it appeared to be conducive to the L2 learners' participation in subject-related discourse. However, in other instances, a strong framing of using metaknowledge was employed in ways that seemed less beneficial. This is explored in the coming sections.

5.2 Side-lining reading by foregrounding reading strategies

To teach metacognitive reading strategies in preparation for reading homework, the Grade 1 teacher used a popular and freely available reading project called "A Class of Readers" (*En läsande klass)*. The project claims to be based on the principles of reciprocal teaching, focusing on strategies such as predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing (cf. Palincsar & Brown, 1984). However, the most salient characteristic of the project is how reading strategies are embodied by different "helpers": a detective (clarifying), a fortune teller (predicting), a cowboy (summarizing), a reporter (asking questions), and an artist (imagining/picturing) (En läsande klass, 2018).

During the observed interactions, the teacher drew most heavily upon "the detective" to point out words from a chapter book presumed to be unfamiliar. The students were then expected to read the chapter as homework. The excerpt below shows how "the detective" and the relevant words from the chapter book were introduced.

> T: We have eight words here, right? Eight words which we'll recognize when we read the text. And we get help from *the detective*. You see that she has a magnifying glass […]. She looks at the words, not to make them bigger, but because you must look carefully at a word to understand it. You might have to divide the word into two parts to understand what it means, right? […] Sometimes you must read the word *before*, and sometimes you might have to read the word right after. Then you get it. […] Sometimes you must even read the whole sentence to understand what it's about and what it means. And the detective helps us remember how we can think about the words; do you get me?

The teacher took a non-interactive stance and described various ways in which the students were expected to engage with the chapter book. She used relational modality to communicate these expectations: The student "*might have to* divide the word," "*must* read the word after," and "*must* read the whole sentence." Moreover, low epistemic modality, "*sometimes* you might have to," served to mark that not all the strategies are feasible at all times. The framing of metaknowledge use, more specifically the metacognitive reading strategies, was strong. However, the expectations seem quite abstract, especially since they were directed towards young L2 learners who may have found it difficult to read independently.

The interaction in this activity mostly centered on presumably unknown words the teacher had chosen from the chapter book. The excerpt below shows an explanation from a student:

> S: Tactics [are] when you play football, for example, at half-time. Then everyone in that team gathers in a circle and talk like [inaudible word]. Then the one who is team captain, they say where you should go and who should make the shot.

> T: Ok, who should stand on this side and who should stand on that side. The positions you take.

As the teacher had asked a known-answer question about the meaning of the word, the activity structure was triadic. However, the student was free to choose a field of experience for explaining "tactics." In the positively evaluated explanation above, the student used personal knowledge about the field of football, exemplifying "tactics" by using specialized expressions such as "half-time" and "team captain." This field had in no way been indicated by the teacher, which shows that the students, at this point, had considerable control over the discourse. In other words, the framing of content selection was weak while the framing of activity structure was strong.

On another occasion, both the framing of activity structure and the content selection were weak, giving the students even greater control of the interaction. The following excerpt exemplifies a weakly framed exchange of that kind, the topic being the meaning of "spare parts."

> T: What did you want to say about this [spare parts]? […]

> S: My friend, the car of my friend's father. […] He drove with us in the car, and when we were driving in [the country], so what are they called, those things? [gesturing]

> T: Oh, an elk.

> S: Yes, an elk was running on the road. So, we went into the elk.

> T: Did you crash into the elk? […] Oh, what an adventure! […] I know that this must have been very exciting. Dramatic. You must have been scared.

Instead of using a triadic structure, the teacher asked an open question about what the student wanted to say. The student then talked about a trip, a feat which was scaffolded by the teacher supplying necessary vocabulary ("an elk" and "crash") and showing solidarity through resources of affect ("such an adventure," "very exciting," etc.). Here, the framing of both activity structure and content selection were weak,

as the student was the primary knower of what she wished to convey and free to contribute personal experiences. Moreover, the framing of turn allocation was decidedly weak, as anyone showing visible interest in speaking was able to do so. While this may seem sympathetic, not all students were able or inclined to make use of this weak framing. Some of them chose to direct their attention elsewhere, causing the teacher to find it necessary to admonish a group of students—making use of resources of negative judgement ("really disruptive") and modality ("must show respect", "can make an effort") to convey her expectations of improved behavior.

To summarize, the analysis shows that the discussions deviated quite drastically from using reading strategies to make sense of a text in preparation for reading homework. As the discussions about the words did not draw on the text, the metacognitive reading strategies the teacher sought to promote remained abstractions by not being meaningfully employed in relation to the chapter book. Thus, the aim of strengthening the framing of metaknowledge use was undermined by a weak framing of rules for content selection. As a result, the practice of reading and making meaning of the book was side-lined. Furthermore, the weak framing of activity structures and turn-taking created unequal prospects for participation in the discourse, something which could likely have been avoided if the joint experience of reading the chapter book had formed the basis of using the strategies.

5.3 A fragile scaffold: using linking words in personal recounts

The next activity explored in this study is instances of "sharing time" or "morning news," also in Grade 1. As noted by Cazden (2001), this is a common activity in early schooling with the non-typical property of inviting sustained oral discourse from non-school experiences (pp. 10–11). As the children are free to choose content that does not draw on a particular school discipline and communicate the content in forms that are not explicitly regulated, the activity is characterized by weak classification and framing. Christie (2002) has described it as a one-off activity because it is not typically prepared and followed up. In her study, she found that some students lacked the linguistic resources to participate successfully, while the teacher could do little to support the interaction. What makes the activity interesting for the present study is that the teacher, at one point, intervened in the otherwise weakly framed discourse by asking the students to use temporal logical connections to order their recounts. This constituted a strengthened framing of metaknowledge use and evaluation criteria. The excerpt below shows how the "time words" were introduced.

> T: "After," when you tell us about your weekend this word should be in it. All these words are about time. Chronology, something happened which happened first, later, afterwards, and at last. I think you recognize this even if it was a little while ago. Then I want you to use this word. Let's take this one, why not. "Then." They are about time. Ok? You may choose something else here as well; that's why I brought the whole poster. But these words should be included. "After" and "then."

The temporal logical connections were called "time words" by the teacher and presumed to be known from earlier instances of instruction. The overall framing was strong at this point, as the teacher took a non-interactive approach while introducing abstract knowledge about chronology in texts. The exchange below shows how the "time words" were used in interaction.

> S: The weekend I played on the phone.
>
> T: Ok. After?
>
> S: After my father and my mother [inaudible words] I played again on the phone and […] and after we [inaudible word] home and then I sleeped. [*sic*]
>
> T: And then you *slept*. I get that it was a whole day with the phone, a whole weekend even. You like to play games, I understand. Thank you.

The student did indeed use several instances of "then" and "after" as resources for sequencing his recount. As expected, the student used personal, non-school, experience. In that sense, the framing of rules for content selection was weak. The following exchange shows that the instruction on using temporal conjunctions was insufficient for some students to produce the required meanings.

> T: You were at your cousin's this weekend. What happened after you had been at your cousin's? Or what happened? Then you say so: "Then we went home." Can you say that? And what happened after? When you were at home, what happened? What did you do at home? Did you cook? Were you watching TV? Then you say "after that I watched TV." Now you fit those words in, ok?

The multiple closed questions asked by the teacher as she tried to guess what the student wanted to say, and her modelling of complete phrases, indicate that the student found it difficult to construct the relevant experiential meanings. Thus, the strengthened framing achieved by introducing temporal logical connections was trumped by the weak framing of content selection. Similar to her teaching of metacognitive reading strategies, the teacher had directed attention to metaknowledge for dealing with texts, which provided a fragile scaffold for successful participation in the discourse.

5.4 Tensions between using genre knowledge and expressing content knowledge

This part of the analysis focuses on the content area about maps and populations in Grade 6, where the teacher directed attention to metalinguistic knowledge about genre structures and logical connections.

5.4.1   Building initial knowledge about key subject-related terms

In the initial phase of the genre-based teaching, the teacher often used triadic dialogue to point out technical terms. The excerpt below shows how she introduced a

concept crucial to the content area. The word "population" had been put on a laminated card on the whiteboard together with other key concepts, such as "climate zones" and "the equator."

> T: The population. What could it mean, this word? Population?
>
> S: How many [people] are living in the country.
>
> T: Yes, well, you could say that. If you were to say another word instead of population, what would you say, then?
>
> S: People.
>
> T: People. Yes, the number of people living there, perhaps, or maybe how things are with people. People.

The teacher asked a known-answer question, placing herself as the primary knower. "Population" is an abstract word, and its meaning was unpacked by the answer the student gave and by the one the teacher, albeit vaguely, formulated: "maybe how things are with people." The framing was strong, and the triadic dialogue served to introduce subject-related terms.

During the initial phases of the same content area, the triadic structure also organized larger parts of the interaction. The teacher let the students engage with the key concepts in different ways—such as pairing words with pictures, explaining terms orally, writing the correct term on a mini whiteboard, or (being divided into teams) putting their hand on the correct laminated card on the big whiteboard after the teacher has read a definition. The last activity is exemplified below:

> T: Now listen. On both sides of the tropical zone, this zone is situated.

As the answer was evaluated, the structure was triadic even if the students supplied the answers in writing or non-verbally. Nevertheless, the structure was used to present and repeat key terms of the content area. Therefore, the framing of content selection was strong, positioning the L2 learners to co-construct meanings in subject-related discourse. However, as the coming sections will show, this framing was challenged in subsequent phases of instruction.

5.4.2   Shifting focus to genre knowledge and linking words

As the instruction moved towards phases of deconstruction and joint construction (cf. Callaghan & Rothery, 1988; Rothery, 1996), the students were tasked with writing a discussion—a form of argumentative text where different perspectives are contrasted (cf. Martin & Rose, 2008, pp. 136–137)—in which they weighed up advantages and disadvantages of moving to a certain country. This meant applying content knowledge about maps and living conditions, as well as using knowledge about the linguistic features of texts. In the deconstruction phase, the teacher introduced the genre structure of discussions through the terms "introduction," "perspectives," and "position statement" (cf. Christie & Derewianka, 2010; Martin & Rose, 2008). As

expected in a phase of deconstruction, knowledge about language was used to analyze model texts. In the exchange below, one of the model texts was evaluated based on how well it utilized the structure of discussions. Norrköping is a city in eastern Sweden.

> T: Does the text have an introduction? Is there an introduction? Is there a question in the introduction? Can someone say it aloud?
>
> S: Is Norrköping a good or bad town.
>
> T: Yes, is Norrköping a good or bad town to live in. There is an introduction and there is a question, so the answer is yes.

The teacher used triadic dialogue to draw attention to linguistic features of the text. The framing of evaluation criteria and metaknowledge use was strong. Next, a student asked a question about the genre structure.

> S: When we write, should we always begin with the positive things?
>
> T: Yes, it is always good to begin with the positive. And you see, on one hand and on the other hand, it is clear that it is two different ways.

Here, the teacher used high epistemic modality, "always," to confirm the proper structuring of perspectives. While providing a strong framing of structuring texts rhetorically, these exchanges also marked a weaker framing of content selection. Even though the model text in some measure dealt with living conditions, it did not contain technical and abstract concepts previously introduced. Part of the text is shown below.

> On the other hand, it is difficult to get along and spend time with the people in Norrköping. The people are not very social. There are not many jobs in Norrköping. Many are unemployed. There are not a great deal of flats in Norrköping.

This excerpt was part of the second stage of the text introducing a contrasting perspective. Rather than developing on content knowledge about living conditions, it was based on everyday experience (containing an unfortunate negative judgement of people in Norrköping). It was not an accident that the information flow of this model text left much to be desired: the teacher used the text to direct attention to the significance of using logical connections.

> T: Can you find a place when you could remove a dot and use a linking word instead?

The teacher used triadic dialogue to identify and remedy a lack of what she calls "linking words." Along with the stages of the discussion genre, such use of logical connections was part of the metalinguistic knowledge the students were supposed to apply. While creating awareness of the role of conjunctions to manage information flow in texts can be useful, the interaction was exclusively dedicated to specific linguistic features of a text which had little to contribute regarding knowledge of geography, a characteristic shared by the other model texts deconstructed, evaluated, and constructed together in these phases. In other words, content selection, and negotiating the discourse of school geography, had become secondary.

Weak framing of content selection was also apparent when the teacher created other examples for using logical connections. One telling example is shown below.

> T: So, if you read the sentence I have written there, "Dogs should not be allowed to poop outdoors," can you choose which linking word fits best with it?
>
> S: Because.
>
> T: Because.

Other examples drew on the field of school activities, for instance, when the students were asked to elaborate on why mobile phones should be forbidden during class. For these activities, the interaction often concerned selected linguistic features rather than the experiential content of the discourse. While there was a strong framing of metaknowledge use, the overall framing of content selection was weak.

Before the joint construction of a discussion, the teacher used resources of positive appreciation to direct attention to metalinguistic knowledge.

> T: So now we are going to make a perfect text which we can look to when you write your own texts.
>
> S: A-plus!
>
> T: We'll make an A-plus text. Might not have time for A-plus, but we'll at least make one with the correct structure and some linking words.

The teacher asserted that they were to write a "perfect" text, and a student chimed in with "A-plus." The teacher expressed more reservedly that they were going to ensure "correct structure" and include "linking words." Once again, there was a strong framing of metaknowledge use, which in this case also constituted a strong framing of evaluation criteria. However, the subject of the text chosen by the teacher was whether it should be allowed to use mobile phones during breaks. As this did not relate to the subject content about maps and populations previously negotiated, the overall framing of content selection still appeared weak, giving further evidence to the tension between applying knowledge about language and participating in subject-related discourse.

5.4.3   A missing link between content knowledge and metalinguistic knowledge

When the teacher gave pieces of instruction preceding the students' individual construction of texts, it became necessary to relate the aforementioned linguistic features to the field of geography. This is shown below, where the teacher elicited different levels of elaboration on statements about one of the countries the students could choose to write about.

> T: If I ask you like this, the access to food in Ethiopia. How is the access to food if we pretend that many don't get food, many are starving? If we would write simply, what would we write then?
>
> S: There isn't a lot.

> T: There isn't a lot of food in Ethiopia.

The teacher used wordings that indicated a low epistemic modality regarding the state of affairs in Ethiopia: "if we *pretend* that many don't get food." Then, the teacher used triadic dialogue to elicit different levels of elaborations on the statement. These interactions did not draw on disciplinary texts, or on content knowledge gleaned earlier in instruction, but on common-sense understandings of life in that country. The criteria for "well-developed reasoning," which was co-constructed by the teacher and the students, was as follows:

> There is not a lot of food in Ethiopia *because* it is a poor country. *This causes* many to die *because* there are not any medicines. [Italics mirror markings made by the teacher]

While this modelled elaboration used several logical connections both between clauses ("because") and within clauses ("This causes"), the complex linking promoted neither coherence nor developed reasoning in a disciplinary sense. Since the teacher accepted students' suggestions as long as they made use of "linking words," the framing was weak regarding activity structure as well as content selection. However, the framing of evaluation criteria, along with using previously negotiated metaknowledge, was strong but not used productively to negotiate disciplinary content.

Before the students began their individual construction of discussions, the teacher exemplified elaboration in a similar way, this time in relation to Afghanistan.

> T: Don't write like this: It is hot in Afghanistan. What's good is that it's hot in Afghanistan. You must also give *consequences*. That is, what's good? Explain why. What's good about the heat. Well, because I might feel better in my body for example. I could, like, if you for example are sick and have something called rheumatic pains, then it's good to be in the sun because then it's like good for the joints.

The teacher used high relational modality to communicate the obligation to elaborate on statements: "You must also give consequences." The elaborations the teacher exemplified were characterized by low epistemic modality ("might feel … for example") and concerned physical reactions to hot weather rather than societal issues facing the population in Afghanistan. Once again, the application of metalinguistic knowledge to make elaborations on statements seemed more important than substantial engagement with subject content.

However, the classification of the content area was ambiguous from the outset, as the teaching integrated two different subjects. Thus, the interaction and evaluation criteria would naturally draw on the syllabus of both Geography and Swedish as a Second Language. Nevertheless, the focus on metalinguistic knowledge had trumped the initial focus on geography. Throughout the phases focusing on language, the discursive rules for using metalinguistic knowledge were made very clear, whereas the framing of discursive rules for content selection was weak. As disciplinary knowledge about maps and population was not the focus of the discourse, what counted as knowledge about geography became unclear - something unlikely to promote the L2 learners' participation in subject-related discourse.

6.   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results have shown tensions between the teacher's ambition to support the students by conveying metaknowledge and the learners' opportunities for participation in subject-related discourse. These results will now be discussed, with reference to aspects of framing.

In Grade 1, it certainly seems laudable to teach reading strategies in preparation for homework (cf. Roberts, 2013; Lindholm & Tengberg, 2019), and to teach "time words" to enable participation in sharing time. However, there was little evidence that a focus on such areas of metaknowledge supported the students' ability to engage with texts or participate successfully in the discourse. During these activities, it was also evident that weak framing of turn allocation and activity structure created unequal opportunities for participation. As there were no common experiences on which to base the communication, the teacher had limited opportunities to scaffold students who were less able or inclined to recontextualize their individual experiences according to implicit requirements. This echoes Christie's (2000, 2002) critique of how weakly framed one-off activities risk perpetuating and reinforcing differences in achievement between students. In the content area about the narrative genre in Grade 1, however, the joint negotiation and application of metalinguistic knowledge promoted close attention to meanings in texts relevant to the subject studied. Metalinguistic knowledge of genre structures also provided a common basis for employing weakly framed activity structures, when the students were engaged in suggesting what should happen next.

Regarding communication of metaknowledge, there are clear parallels between the more problematic activities in Grade 1 and the teaching of "linking words" and genre structures to facilitate expressing knowledge about maps and population in Grade 6. As the Grade 6 teacher emphasized this metalinguistic knowledge, the discourse of geography became side-lined. Especially apparent in the joint negotiation of "developed reasoning" in Grade 6, the results suggest that it might be problematic if teachers do not recontextualize student responses in a register appropriate to the negotiated content area. The students' suggestions were quickly adopted as long as they made use of logical connections, which does not seem conducive to substantial participation in the discourse of geography and social studies (cf. Wignell et al., 1989/1993).

To synthesize the findings, the analysis has shown that on several occasions, strong framing of discursive rules for metaknowledge did not lead to a deeper engagement with disciplinary texts or content. Rather than figuring as an important element in a subversive pedagogy, the attention to metaknowledge promoted a *pseudo-visible* pedagogy where the instruction highlighted some criteria or strategies for dealing with texts while leaving students to their own devices in negotiating the substantial content of the discourse (cf. Bernstein, 1990/2003, 2000). If metaknowledge is used in such a way, it can impede rather than empower L2 learners' participation in subject-related discourse. To counter the risk of pseudo-visibility, it

seems necessary to base a strong framing of metaknowledge use on a strong framing of content selection. Furthermore, the results indicate that a strong framing of content selection needs to be established for employing dialogic stances and letting the students contribute substantially to the discourse—something often advocated in previous research.

In contrast to studies emphasizing ideational aspects of interaction, the present study shows the importance of considering aspects of framing and the use of interpersonal linguistic resources in classroom discourse. Two analysis categories developed in the present study, discursive rules for content selection and discursive rules for metaknowledge use, have proved particularly useful for exploring the tensions and misalignments discussed above. Finally, this study has modelled how framing can be studied in greater detail by giving attention to linguistic features of modality and evaluation. While these linguistic features do not govern interaction on the same level as activity structures, they give important clues as to how meanings and ways of using language are privileged in instruction.

Both educators and researchers need to be aware of how discursive practices are shaped in ways that enable or obstruct students' abilities to participate successfully in classroom discourse and develop important literacies in schooling. My hope is that this article will contribute to such awareness, by highlighting possible risks of focusing on metaknowledge in instruction. In discussing the merits of visible and invisible pedagogies, it seems of utmost importance to consider the following question: In teaching various aspects of literacy to L2 learners, what is made visible in classroom discourse and what is rendered ambiguous? In addition, the insight into how different aspects of framing are established in classroom discourse provided by the study contributes theoretical tools increasing the possibilities to re-frame teaching in ways that are more conducive to promote L2-learners language development and participation in subject-related discourse.

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