

SUMMARY

Joining the group – learning the language. Correlations between group identity and second language acquisition.

The study explores correlations between the second language learning of bilingual pupils and their status and identity in the group of fellow pupils. The research covers two parts: a study of the ten Turkish pupils' language acquisition from first through eighth grade, and a study of social groupings and friendships in eighth grade. Differences in the speed of language acquisition are described according to Anne Holmen's 5 step model of second language development, and according to a fluency test in eighth grade. The second study analyses the social relations in the class based on qualitative interviews with the Danish as well as the Turkish pupils. The patterns in the two studies are compared and found to coincide: The pupils who were the fastest in reaching the fifth level of the five step model and those who scored highest in the fluency test, also have the highest number of friends and enjoy the highest status in the class. The thesis discusses how these developments - the identity formation process and the SLA-process - are susceptible to influence one another.

Data: The study is based on data from the 'Køge project'. This project covers a group of Danish and Turkish pupils attending the same class in a primary school in the town of Køge south of Copenhagen. The pupils have been interviewed every year of their school attendance. My study draws on the following interviews:

- 48 single person interviews with 10 Turkish pupils – 6 girls and 4 boys. The interviews covers first, second, fourth, sixth and eighth grade and were conducted in the years 1990 through 1997.
- 5 group interviews with Danish and Turkish pupils in eighth grade. These interviews were conducted in April 1997.
- 9 single person interviews with Danish pupils in eighth grade, 5 girls and 4 boys – also conducted in April 1997.