

Institutionen för pedagogik och specialpedagogik

Sexualitet i klassrummet
Språkundervisning, elevsubjektivitet och
heteronormativitet

av

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Abstract

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In this thesis, the production of sexuality in secondary language education is examined. More specifically, the aim is to explore how sexuality, pupil subjectivity and heteronormativity are produced within, and as constituent parts of, teaching practices of Swedish and English in secondary school. 31 classroom observations were conducted in two different groups of 8th graders in two different schools during a selection of their classes in Swedish and English. Field notes and teaching material from these observations are analysed in the articles. The theoretical starting-point is taken in queer theoretical perspectives on sexuality and language. I specifically draw on Butler's (1993/2011, 2004) notions of performativity and normativity in exploring how different sexualities are produced as present or absent within language classroom practices. The compilation thesis consists of four articles. Article I, *Default sexualitet i arbetet med noveller i språkundervisning på högstadiet*, explores the unmarked repetition of heterosexuality within the teaching of short stories during lessons in Swedish. Article II, *Smooth conversations: Sexuality as linguistic resource in a secondary language classroom*, examines the function of unmarked repetition of heterosexuality within English language classroom conversations. Article III, *Girls' sexual subjectivity in a secondary language classroom*, elaborates on how practices of intimacy in the classroom produce social or sexual subjectivity differently for girls and boys. Article IV, *Gay as classroom practice: a study on sexuality in a secondary language classroom*, investigates the function of pointed out male homosexuality as represented by a couple of pupils in a classroom rehearsed skit during an English class. The analyses show how heterosexuality is made normative; heterosexuality is employed and produced as an assumed common denominator in the execution of various classroom assignments and is simultaneously being reproduced as normalizing. Moreover, the analyses demonstrate how male homosexuality, as produced in the classroom within the realms of humor and drama, is kept under control and simultaneously made deviant and repudiated. The analyses show how heterosexuality is taken for granted, how male homosexuality is pointed out as well as rejected, and how female homosexuality is made invisible. This reproduces heteronormativity and serves as a pedagogical resource in the classroom. Producing pupil subjectivity through materializing the norm is thus facilitated by heteronormativity.