

# Interacting with newly arrived migrant pupils: a sociocultural perspective

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## Abstract

The main contribution of this paper is to highlight the pedagogical orientations of reception teachers in Norwegian schools. We explore reception teachers' approaches and their understanding of their own approaches when interacting with newly arrived minority language pupils (NAMLP's). The theoretical basis of the paper is L.S. Vygotsky's work, emphasizing that human learning and development occur in socially and culturally shaped contexts. The key research questions were: (a) What instructional approaches do reception teachers use when interacting with NAMLP's and (2) How do reception teachers make sense of their own approaches when reflecting on this?

## Introduction

Immigration has been a key reason for the transformation of Norwegian society from a relatively ethnically homogenous (until the 1970s) into a multicultural society. According to statistics Norway (SSB 2017), those with an immigrant background now represent 16.8% of Norway's population. This transformation has affected an educational system that is based on the principle of 'school for all', where everyone is included regardless of cultural background, religious belief or political conviction (Horst and Pihl 2010; Nilsen 2010). In order to cater to the academic and integration needs of newly arrived minority language pupils, reception classes have been set up for pupils who are new in the country and cannot speak Norwegian (Hilt 2016; Norozi 2019). Newly arrived minority language pupils in Norway are called "nyankomne minoritetspræklige elever" in official documents, translated as 'newly arrived minority language pupils' and abbreviated as NAMLPs for this paper.

Earlier research (Solbue, Helleve, and Smith 2017; Cummins 2014; Short 2002, 2012; Engen 2010; Øzerk 2007, Hilt 2016, Adams and Kirova 2006, Tarhart and Dewitz 2018; Nilsson and Bunar 2016; Dewilde and Kulbrandstad 2016) has focused on a range of educational responses to NAMLP's, e.g. educational policy and reform, bilingualism, native language teaching, multiculturalism, inter-culturalism, school leadership, hiring additional aids, resources (human and physical resources) and particularly language learning for

NAMLP's. However, challenges and/or failures of programmes and policies aiming to support minority pupils emerge as a common theme in all this research. Also, factors other than language related issues tend to be under researched both nationally and internationally. Most of the research relating to NAMLP's in Norway focuses on inclusion and exclusion processes, based on linguistic concerns in the education system (Hilt 2016; Chinga-Ramirez 2017; Dewilde and Skrefsrud 2016; Phil 2002, Øzerk 2007). There is limited research on the pedagogies used in elementary reception classes, which is the starting point for the present study. This paper's contribution is to highlight the pedagogical orientations of reception teachers. We also identify two kinds of gaps in Norwegian research: the first is connecting NAMLP's to the broader category of second language learners or minority pupils. The second is the recognition that NAMLP's are not a homogenous 'whole'. There is significant diversity in terms of educational needs and strengths, including ethnic, social, language, cultural background and pre-migration experiences. This can challenge schools' pedagogical mission. The work of reception teachers with NAMLP's is worth mentioning. As teachers, they work closely with NAMLP's, and their interventions impact the success of minority pupils. The aim of this paper to explore reception teachers' approaches and their understanding of their own approaches when interacting with NAMLP's.

### **Sociocultural theory and reception teacher's approaches regarding newly arrived migrant pupils**

Sociocultural theory stems from the theories of Russian psychologist L.S. Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky emphasized that human learning and development occur in socially and culturally shaped contexts. Sociocultural theory can also help us gain deeper insight into teachers' work with NAMLP's, since Vygotsky's (1978) theories help explain and understand social processes, as well as individual learning and development. Since historical conditions constantly change, this results in changed contexts and novel opportunities for learning. Sociocultural theory focuses not only on relationships between human beings but also human beings and the context. Later researchers have built on these Vygotskian theories (Lave and Wenger 1991; Matusov 2015; Rogoff 2003, 1991; Wertch 1998; Wood, Bruner and Ross 1976). The most relevant aspects of sociocultural theory for the present paper are the zone of proximal development (ZPD), scaffolding and internalization. I present them briefly below.

## The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Taking biological factors as constituting necessary pre-requisites, sociocultural factors are indispensable for one's internal course of development (Vygotsky 1978). Unique sociocultural settings and milieus determine the development of higher psychological functions. A key reason why the concept of the ZPD was introduced was Vygotsky's dissatisfaction with established testing techniques, which only identified a person's actual level of development, but failed to predict a child's potential ability (Wertsch, 1998). Educational psychology should predict a child's future growth, and the prediction of a child's future capacities refers to the ZPD. Vygotsky defines this as "the distance between a child's actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

Elaborating the ZPD, Lave and Wenger (1991) view learning as increased participation in a community of practice. The learner is often seen as an *apprentice*, learns through participating in activities that are important to the community, first through easy tasks—in the periphery, but still legitimate – before moving to central aspects of participation. The ZPD defines functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation. Vygotsky termed these functions 'buds' or 'flowers' of development rather than 'fruits' of development. He further explained that one's actual developmental level characterizes mental development retrospectively, while the ZPD characterizes mental development prospectively. Building on Vygotsky's ZPD, Rogoff (1991) refers to guided participation, which draws attention to how bridges can be built from a child's present understanding to new understanding through communication with a more-skilled companion. Guided participation is a lens that explains key aspects of participation, in terms of interactions between young people and their more-skilled companions (Rogoff 2003, 283-284). This includes how more skilled participants encourage and restrict an apprentice's behaviour, for example, through direct instructions that will benefit the apprentice (Rogoff 1991). The apprentice, in turn, contributes to the activity, both by observing more-skilled companions and adjusting his or her own participation in accordance. By adjusting and increasing participation, the apprentice goes through a process of development. Accordingly, Vygotsky states that: "what is the zone of proximal development today will be the actual developmental level tomorrow" (p. 87).

## **Scaffolding**

Scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976) is a concept that derives from cognitive psychology. In its simplest form, it refers to an adult or “expert” helping/supporting somebody less experienced or less “expert”. Scaffolding is, as such, not Vygotsky’s term but was introduced by Wood, Bruner and Ross. This concept has clear parallels to ZPD. In social contexts, a knowledgeable participant helps a less knowledgeable (novice) participant in a way that the novice can extend current skills and knowledge. In classrooms, it implies an instructional structure in which reception teachers’ (as more-skilled companions) instructional approach to model a desired learning strategy or task gradually shifts responsibility to the apprentice (in this case NAMLP’s) to participate in classroom activities. Therefore, the teacher’s role and interaction with pupils are crucial within the framework of *scaffolding*. In the present study, the teacher’s instructional approach was to help NAMLP’s better participate in class activities. Through scaffolding, there are various ways that teachers can assist their pupils. According to Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976), scaffolding consists essentially of the teacher controlling those elements of the task that are initially beyond the pupil’s capacity. The teacher permits the pupil to concentrate on and complete only those elements that are within her or his range of competence. In this way, activity may proceed to a successful end. The teacher cannot always know if a pupil is ignoring a suggestion or whether s/he has misunderstood it, therefore teachers has to continually interpret pupils’ actions and responses. There is no specification of the communicative processes involved in the adult-child (in this case teacher-pupil) interaction that constitute the scaffolding.

### **Internalization**

Explaining Vygotsky’s concept of internalization, Wertsch (1998) notes that at the very outset, children acquire knowledge through contacts and interactions with people. The child subsequently assimilates and internalizes this knowledge, adding her/his personal value to it. The first step is called as ‘interpsychological’, as it transpires between a child and others. According to Vygotsky, the more knowledgeable other (MKO) can be an adult or a more capable peer. The second step is ‘intrapsychological’, when higher mental functions kick in. This represents a transition from social to personal and, according to Vygotsky, it is not a mere copy. An understanding of the ZPD provides an explanation of the dynamic region of sensitivity in which the transition takes place. “Every function in child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological)” (Vygotsky 1978, 57). In sum, it can be presented as MKO + child = Learning

Within this sociocultural perspective, we can examine the relationship between the pupil and the teacher. This leads to internalization within the pupil. This also explains how similar instructions or teaching by the same teacher is understood (internalized) differently by pupils depending on their backgrounds and meaning construction. The issue of internalisation is critical in teaching and learning processes. It reinforces the observation that teachers should concentrate less on teaching concrete facts and instead promote abstract thinking and helping pupils find their own voices. In reception classes, this can be done by affirming NAMLP's' experiences, identities and backgrounds.

### **Research Questions**

This paper articulates a reception teacher's instructional approach and her reflections on this approach when interacting with NAMLP who couldn't speak the language. The key research questions were: (a) What instructional approaches do reception teachers use when interacting with NAMLPs; and (2) How do reception teachers make sense of their own approaches when reflecting on this?

### **The informant**

Two criteria were used to select the informant: grade level taught and teaching experience. We sought a person who taught second through fifth grade pupils, with at least three years of experience working with NAMLP's. Anne (pseudonym) was selected since she had five years of experience working with NAMLP's, and because she taught a reception class that included pupils from the second to fourth grades. Anne was ethnic Norwegian and was born and raised in Trondheim, Norway. She spoke Norwegian and English. Anne agreed to sharing her potential plan for the entire school year, since the study aimed to engage her for this period of time. Anne also readily accepted being video and audio recorded during her teaching. Furthermore, she watched the video vignettes together with the researcher and reflected on them after each phase of data collection. Her five years of teaching experience allowed her to effectively interpret her practices through reflection. Finally, yet importantly, all parents of pupils in Anne's class gave consent for their children to be observed and videotaped during school hours.

### **Methodology and analysis**

Several data collection methods were used in this qualitative study. Video recordings provided data for Anne's instructional approach, while semi-structured interviews and

audiotaped conversations about the video vignettes provided data relating to her perceptions and reflections on her practices.

Throughout the data collection, Anne was invited to ask questions about the nature of the research. Data was collected in two waves. In the first wave, Anne was interviewed for 90 minutes to explain her teaching philosophy, her perceptions about teaching the reception class and her instructional approach with NAMLP's. This was followed by thirty-two video observations of lessons. The first analysis step involved viewing and listening to video observations to identify and extract vignettes that were focused on critical moments, to gain insight into the interactions between the teacher and the NAMLP in the natural setting of a reception class (Jordan and Henderson 1995). Subsequently, Anne and the main researcher watched the vignettes together. This gave Anne the opportunity to see herself in action and reflect on her practices. Her conversations and reflections were audiotaped and transcribed. The second wave of data collection was scheduled five months after the first wave. Anne had suggested this five-month gap. Anne had also mentioned that NAMLP's usually take three to four months to start participating in class. Again, thirty lessons were video recorded and the whole process from the first wave was repeated. The last step was a semi-structured interview with Anne. The intention was to affirm her reflections regarding the choices she made in class interactions, as well as summarize her explanations and thoughts regarding what she had said before the video observations (in first interview) and during the video observations (conversations while watching videos).

### **First wave data**

Amara (pseudonym), an eight-year-old girl, had just joined the reception class and could not speak Norwegian. She spoke Somali and a little bit of English. Amara was quiet in all thirty-two observed lessons. Video observations showed that Anne didn't talk to Amara or make eye contact with her. Amara observed other pupils to see what they did, and then tried to copy them. For example, if other pupils were asked to sit in a circle for circle time, she looked at them and followed their lead. Amara's place during circle time was to the right of Anne. If other pupils opened their math books, Amara followed suit. Anne and Amara repeated their interaction patterns in all thirty-two observed lessons. Below we summarize the forty-minute video fragment.

### **A first wave excerpt (video observation)**

Anne tells pupils about Friendship Week and friendship bracelets, which they will make. She then explains how to make these friendship bracelets. Throughout the explanation, Amara remains silent. At one point during the instruction, everyone, including Amara, crowds around their teacher. Amara stands next to the teacher, silently observing what Anne is doing. Anne pays no attention to Amara. Anne does monitor all the pupils and moves from table to table, except Amara's table, and helps pupils with braiding and other steps of making the friendship bracelet. It appears that Anne ignores Amara. When the class ends, Anne announces that pupils should put away their unfinished friendship bracelets and tidy up. The other pupils do as they are told and pack up their things. Amara, however, puts her yarn bracelet in the pocket of her pants, and gets ready to leave.

### **Summary of data from second wave**

The second phase occurred after five months, when the main researcher was in the classroom for thirty more lessons. In all thirty lessons, Anne not only interacted with Amara but also made eye contact before and during interactions. Anne asked Amara to help her by, for example, fetching her book or tidying up. Amara's place, in circle time, changed from the right side of Anne to a spot in front of her. Amara actively participated in class interactions and activities, helped her classmates and sometimes translated instructions for another newly arrived Somalian pupil, who had recently joined the reception class. Amara answered questions during the class, which shows she understood both the language (Norwegian) and the content. The following represents a typical interaction between Anne and Amara during a unit on "animals that live in the forest". Here we omit the interactions with other pupils to summarize Anne and Amara's interaction. We have translated the interactions from Norwegian to English.

### **An excerpt from second wave**

It is circle time and the theme is "animals that live in the forest". Pupils are seated in a U shape around Anne. Amara is positioned directly in front of Anne. Anne holds an opaque white box with a top. The box carries different toy animals that live in the forest.

(1) Anne: What is written on my box?

(2) Pupil 1: Animals ::

(3) Pupil 2: Animals ::

- (4) Several [ANIMALS]  
pupils:
- (5) Anne: What kinds of animals do you think are in here? (*looking into the toy animal box*)
- (6) Amara: A A A animals live in the forest ↑ (*raising her hand*).
- (7) Anne: Yes indeed (.) Can you name an animal that lives in forest? (*looking at Amara*)
- (8) Amara: A :: deer ↓ (*Anne approves the answer by nodding and continuously keeping eye contact with Amara*)  
Anne shifts her gaze to the box, which she then opens. She tries to find the toy deer, hiding her actions from the pupils, so they cannot see what's in the box.
- (9) Anne: What does a deer look like Amara = can you tell me?
- (10) Amara: It has big °things° (*waving one hand back and forth on her head*)
- (11) Anne: Yes, antlers (*looking at Amara*)
- (12) Amara: Antlers ↓
- (13) Anne: U: m (2) (*affirming the answer*)
- (14) Anne: What else can you tell me about a deer? (*looking in the box*)  
Anne shows the toy deer, taking out only the antlers, while the body of the toy deer remains in the box.
- (15) Anne: Here are the antlers -
- (16) Anne: What else can you tell me about a deer? (*looking at the other pupils*)  
(*omission of other pupils' interactions*)
- (17) Amara: I I = ↑ I know it (*raising her hand as high as she can*)  
Anne looks at Amara and nods towards her for the answer.
- (18) Amara: > Deer live in the forest <
- (19) Anne: Deer live in the forest (1) (*repeats the answer as a sign of approval*)  
(*omission of other pupils' interactions*)
- (20) Anne: ... Do deer eat meat?  
Anne nods towards Amara
- (21) Amara: No they are herbivors

(22) Anne: They are herbivores ! Very good Amara ↑ ((*flicking her index finger towards Amara, in appreciation*))

This fragment exhibits some fundamental features in pupil-teacher classroom interactions that are discussed in the following analysis of data.

### **Making sense of the data through theoretical concepts**

In the following, I use ZPD, internalisation (Vygotsky 1978), and scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross 1976) within a sociocultural perspective to analyse the data.

#### ***“Empowerment”***

Anne had created a very specific way of structuring her teaching for newly arrived pupils. While reconfiguring learning spaces, Anne adjusted her instructional approach to provide her pupils with space. In order to understand how Anne interacted with NAMLP’s, we developed the following overview regarding how the trajectory of the instructional approach teachers employ when they use silence as form of interaction with NAMLP’s in reception classes.

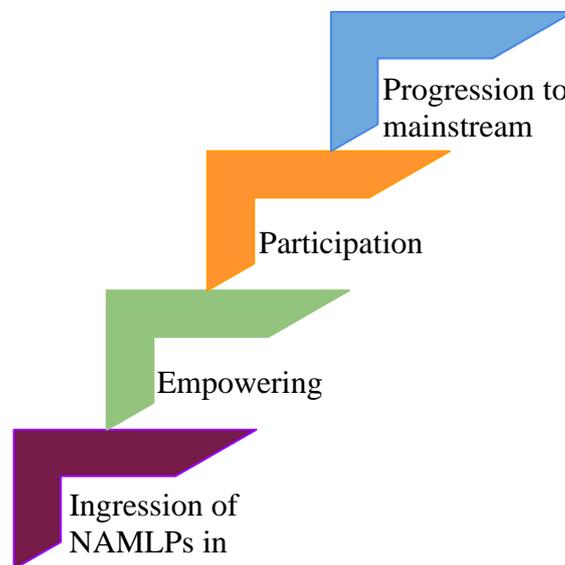


Figure 1. Trajectory of the teacher’s instructional approach towards NAMLP’s in the Reception Class

The trajectory of NAMLP’s includes four steps. The first relates to the entry of NAMLP’s in the reception class. It is followed by *empowerment time*, the phase in which

Anne leaves NAMLP's to be on their own for a period of time until they themselves decide to start participating in class activities and interactions. The data from first phase indicates that a key change in Anne's practice was this empowerment time, during which she created space for her pupils so that NAMLP's could be on their own in the new environment. According to Anne, this freedom allowed pupils to reflect on their school experiences, connecting their home and transit countries to their present experiences in Norway. This points to the 'role of expert' as referred to by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976), in supporting newcomers in the community and allowing the newcomer to decide what s/he can do with and without scaffolding. The third step refers to "participation time", when NAMLP's can speak Norwegian and they participate in classroom interactions. This echoes Rogoff's (1991) 'guided participation'. During "participation time", Amara was in the ZPD for language learning and participation in classroom activities and interactions. Amara learned language both inside and outside the classroom. However, Amara received support/scaffolding from Anne in formal language learning, for example by reading Norwegian texts, grammar and correct pronunciation etc. In (10) and (11), Amara knew the answer but needed some support/scaffolding from Anne (the more knowledgeable other) to succeed in saying "gevir (antlers)" in Norwegian. The fourth and the final step represents progression of NAMLPs to mainstream classes as the goal and expected outcome of the whole set up of the reception class as an activity (Author forthcoming).

#### *Main constituents of empowerment time*

In the reception class, Anne created her own interactional approach with NAMLP's, and empowerment time emerged as a key part of Anne's instructional approach. When NAMLP's joined the reception class, Anne left the NAMLP alone for quite some time and meanwhile carefully observed the child's responses. During this time, Anne neither expected NAMLP's to actively participate in activities, nor did she give direct instructions and feedback in a regular manner. So it appeared as if Anne ignored the NAMLP. However, Anne carefully monitored NAMLP's during tasks and different activities. Anne also used NAMLP's written work, artwork and drawings to get better acquainted with the NAMLP. Anne mentioned that the native language teacher was also used as a source of information regarding an NAMLP could achieve alone and where help was needed. When asked about her practice of ignoring Amara during the first wave, Anne noted;

I didn't ignore her. Rather, I gave her this time to find her own space and level of comfort. I learned through years of experience that this time is helpful for NAMLP's to

get settled in their new environment without any pressure. So, I leave them alone during this time.

Based on Anne's practices and her own interpretation of those practices, the following can be concluded.

1. During empowerment time, Amara had the freedom to decide whether to participate in classroom interactions and activities or not. Observation appeared to be a key way of learning for her. The video data from first wave showed that most of the time Amara observed to see what and how other pupils were doing. According to Rogoff (2003), the apprentice contributes to the activity, both by observing more skilled peers and/or adults, while adjusting his or her own participation in accordance. Also, children's participation with more-skilled companions "itself changes their understanding" (363). This change of understanding relates to ZPD, scaffolding and internalisation.
2. During the empowerment stage, Amara could interact with other pupils and Anne if she wanted. Since she was new and couldn't speak Norwegian, she was allowed to speak English (with those who could speak English) or Somali (with Somalian pupils) or use body language. According to Vygotsky (1978), human learning and development occur in socially and culturally shaped contexts. When Amara interacted with other pupils and Anne, these activities referred to a child's cultural development on the social level (*interpsychological*). Amara could even choose to be completely quiet in class. The video data from first wave indicated that Amara preferred to remain silent. It seemed that Anne might want Amara to know what she could do with and without *scaffolding*.
3. According to Anne, a key feature of empowerment time was Amara's decision making about her participation in classroom activities and interactions. Amara decided herself when and how often to participate in classroom activities and interactions. Amara observed the other children and interpreted Anne's instructions sometimes independently and sometimes by asking for help. Anne explained in her interview that when Amara joined the reception class, Amara was told that the teacher was not going to evaluate her work during this period.
4. Anne mentioned in her interviews that she would always help if Amara needed it. Anne expected Amara to take initiative and ask for help. However, Anne helped Amara at critical moments as well.

5. Anne noted that she helped Amara create her own space and comfort zone in the class. To do this, Anne even avoided eye contact with Amara so that she could be herself in her own space and comfort zone. This aligns with the notion of *intrapsychological*, where a child's cultural development develops within the child.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of data**

The notion of empowerment time stems from the idea that the teacher is one of the greatest source of learning for NAMLP's, as she/he works closely with them and interacts with them on daily basis. "Scaffolding" (Wood, Bruner and Ross 1976) allowed Amara to develop her cognitive space, referring to Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD. On the other hand, if learning and development processes happen in this way, then the inclination might be to ignore learners' engagement in the realization of higher psychological functions, which sociocultural scholars tend to ascribe to learners as an intra-psychological construction. Despite the interactions between Anne and Amara, after Amara learned the language interactions remain restricted to what Vygotsky (1978) called 'fossilisation'. Such approaches lead pupils to develop convergent types of thinking, that hinder pupils' abilities to deal with tasks that require complex thinking. In most preset school curricula, the expected 'correct' answer to standard questions does not require complex thinking. The ability to give the 'correct' answer does not involve pupils' thinking and meaning construction in the learning process. Amara interacted with children inside and outside classroom so that Anne was not the only "more-knowledgeable other" for Amara. As mentioned earlier, Rogoff's (1991) guided participation is most often used to study how children learn from participation in communities with adults, as well as peers. According to Anne, she tried to empower NAMLP's in the classroom by providing them with the space and freedom to decide about their participation in classroom activities and interactions. According to Anne, her instructional approach was successful because after only five months Amara spoke Norwegian to such an extent that she participated in classroom interactions. However, there was no evidence to back up the claim that Anne was not the only "more-knowledgeable other" and there was no way to assess to what extent Amara had learned Norwegian inside the classroom and outside the classroom with other peers. Interviews showed that the interaction remained crucial for Anne in the context of classroom. In her video conversations, Anne accepted that every child had different needs and different ways of interacting and learning. However, in practice, she used the same strategy during empowerment time for all pupils. I would argue that Anne's concept of empowerment time did not allow input from

others and reflected a traditional approach in which the teacher holds the superior position of “all knower”, “assessor” and “authority” in the classroom.

The sociocultural perspective encourages teachers to function as a facilitator instead of the ‘sage on the stage’. It emphasizes the development of high-level cognition through meaningful activities and interactions. By considering a pupil’s experiences, identity and background teachers can gain insight into what an NAMLP has already achieved developmentally and how to build on this. Hence, classroom activities and interactions become a source of intrinsic motivation to learn in a safe environment.

Wertsch (1998) has claimed that scaffolding is dialogic and an interpsychological mechanism (between NAMLP and the teacher) in which knowledge is co-constructed and provides a basis for NAMLP’s to internalise knowledge. Scaffolding acknowledges the contributions that pupils bring to the learning context. Meaning construction by the pupil, in the act of learning, is an important aspect of Scaffolding. NAMLP’s need to be empowered by affirming their experiences, identities and backgrounds. When Anne was asked whether Amara had wanted to be treated a certain way in class, Anne seemed surprised and stated: “it’s my strategy based on years of experience. I never thought to ask pupils about it”.

I shall now present how Amara’s empowerment took place during empowerment time and also in the second wave, after Amara could speak Norwegian. The second wave showed that Anne’s interaction with Amara was limited to a very specific type of discourse. The video conversations associated with the second phase indicated that interactions with NAMLP’s were in accordance with Anne’s intention of maintaining her position of authority. Understanding a child’s ZPD presents a challenge for any reception teacher, since the teacher needs to know the limits of a pupil’s ZPD. Meaningful interaction between the pupil and the teacher is needed for this. Anne faced a special challenge since NAMLP’s could not speak the language and verbal interaction was difficult. Despite its apparent simplicity, working with a child’s ZPD’s is quite challenging in practice. What means are available to teachers to assist NAMLP’s in their progression in a novel context? A key issue here is for teachers to interact with NAMLP’s beyond content teaching. Working with a child’s ZPD implies making connections between pedagogy and NAMLP’s’ lives, and also affirming their identities, experiences and backgrounds. Pedagogical approaches based on a child’s ZPD can be a source of positive pupil-teacher relationships. Though biological factors do play a role in a child’s development, Vygotsky argues that the teacher’s approach, considering the child’s

ZPD, plays a crucial role in a child's development. The focus also needs to be on developing functions rather than already developed ones.

During the second wave, the dominant mode of interaction between Anne and Amara was triadic (Mehan 1979). Anne would ask a question, Amara would reply and then Anne would respond in an evaluative way. Given the way Anne talked to Amara, Amara was left with no option but to provide the expected preset answer. The first part of triadic dialogue was initiated by the authority (teacher). The second part was a response by a pupil, while the third was an evaluative affirmation by the authority. This triadic mode of discourse gave the teacher full control. Although the preset curriculum shaped the interaction between Anne and Amara in such a way that it became triadic, Anne's continual revision helped her to provide timely support to Amara. Rogoff (1991) has mentioned that continual revision is an important part of scaffolding. The teacher keeps on modifying the support/scaffolding given according to the emerging capabilities (needs) of the pupil during the process of scaffolding. The teacher's approach is not only based on the pupil's needs but rather on the pupil's mistakes (emerging capabilities). Therefore, pupil responses become inevitable and the teacher vigilantly observes the pupil's responses and considers them to be an important element in modifying the teaching approach. Such timely and need-based feedback is a key factor in developing a positive relationship with pupils (Moen 2016; Noddings 2012).

## **Conclusion**

Each teacher has a unique teaching approach, allowing researchers and/or educators to extract important educational philosophies and notions from it. Anne created her own specific instructional approach when interacting with NAMLP's, focused on providing them their own spaces during empowerment time. The key factor in Anne's practice was to create space for her pupils, so they could develop their 'own way' in a new environment. Such freedom allowed pupils to reflect on their school experiences and connect these to their home and transit countries, relating these to their present experiences in Norway. In her view, Anne was attempting to support NAMLP's in the classroom. Anne's instructional approach, including the notion of empowerment time, appears to have been rooted in a sociocultural perspective. However, her approach changed to a more traditional approach based on institutionalized power relations between teacher and pupil during "participation time". It should be noted that such contextual and individual, yet innovative measures, cannot guarantee a fixed pattern in the future, for others or even for the same teacher (Gay 2010; Nilsen 2010; Matusov 2011a).

Anne's experiences and her interpretations of those experiences, through reflection, can serve as the basis for further academic development regarding the present research topic. Our study also indicates that reception teachers need professional support and training, and that such support needs to include reception teachers reflecting on their practices. This allows them to modify their approaches, based on their pupils' needs, backgrounds and experiences.

An important limitation of the present study was that the research focused on one teacher's approach with one NAMLP. It seems obvious that there is much more to understand about reception classes, reception teachers and NAMLP's. Given the lack of research on this topic, this study calls for future studies to further develop this area of inquiry. The aim of the present study has not been to provide answers or solutions about how to interact with NAMLP's who do not speak the school language. Instead, it was meant to identify some key processes that take place in educational contexts and should hopefully lead to further reflection among both the academic community and teachers themselves.

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## Appendix 1

### List of Transcription Notational Symbols modified from Jefferson (2004)

Transcription notational symbols	Definitions
<u>Text</u>	Emphasizing or stressing the words
: or :: or :::	Stretched sounds or syllables
CAPS	Talk that is louder than surrounding talk
[ ]	Overlapping talk
((italic text))	Transcriber's description
(.)	Brief untimed intervals of silence
↑	Rising pitch
↓	Falling pitch
?	Rising inflection towards the end of a sentence, not necessarily a question
=	Latched. When there is no interval between adjacent utterances, the second one being latched immediately to the first without overlapping it
° °	Quieter than the surrounding talk
(1) (2)	The duration of a pause by a number of seconds
> <	Speeded up delivery relative to usual for the speaker
...	ellipsis
!	An animated tone
-	Abrupt halt