

EXPECTATIONS AND DISCOURSES IN MULTILINGUAL PRESCHOOL MATHEMATICS: CASE STUDY OF A TEACHER OF IMMIGRANT BACKGROUND

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Abstract

Preschool teachers have the important task of stimulating children in their development and preparing them for future schooling and lifelong learning. Many Swedish preschools today are characterized by great linguistic diversity among children and teachers. Many studies highlight the great benefits that multilingual children can gain from being able to use their native languages as resources when they learn other subjects, such as mathematics. This makes multilingual preschool teachers key players in today's education policy. For this research, I interviewed and followed a multilingual preschool teacher of immigrant background, anonymised as "Kajal". I analysed Kajal's talk about and work with mathematics to understand what she was able to do and how she shaped her subjectivity as she navigated the expectations of various actors and prevailing norms in society.

Keywords: discourse, expectation, mathematics, preschool teacher, subjectivity

Expectations from multilingual teachers

Preschool teachers with an immigrant background are considered important in supporting children in their development as the use of different languages is considered a resource. Supporting children in receiving knowledge in their first language(s) is considered valuable and absolutely crucial for their development and subsequent success in school (Axelsson & Magnusson in the Swedish Research Council 2012, García 2011). Unfortunately, there is too little research on multilingual preschool teachers with immigrant backgrounds, especially in Sweden and consequently little knowledge about how these preschool teachers shape their subjectivity. There are many factors that affect a teacher's work at preschool. For example, Kajal must relate to the school's directives, the curriculum's goals, as well as the expectations of various actors as she moves within the preschool walls. It is important to pay attention to multilingual preschool teachers as they contribute to educational and social change, says Palviainen and Mård-Miettinen (2015).

In a German study, Bressler and Rotter (2017) interviewed fifteen teachers from an immigrant background with the aim of examining the relevance of their background when shaping their professional identity. Teachers often faced the fact that colleagues and superiors had high expectations of them when it comes to dealing with cultural and multilingual diversity among children. Bressler and Rotter found three different types of professional identities and focused on two of them because the third type was an intermediate of the other two. The first type of professional identity was defined by the great importance the teachers attributed to their immigrant background. They saw their life experience as more important than their educational skills. In fact, their experiences tended to replace the educational skills they acquired in teacher education. According to the same study, this meant that their professionalism was compromised. The second type was defined

by the teachers' denial of the importance of their background. These teachers emphasized that "they graduated from the same teacher education and had the same educational skills as their colleagues". They expressed difficulties in realizing their professional identities when they are perceived by colleagues and students as "the other." In other words, different problems follow from different identities. Bressler and Rotter (2017) argue that we know too little about how other people's high expectations affect teachers' professional identity. However, other studies (Carr & Klassen 1997, Pole 1999, Karakasoglu 2000, Goodwin, 2006, Selimovic 2008, Maylor 2009) show that most teachers with an immigrant background experience frustration when colleagues and superiors see them as experts on intercultural issues and tend to assign knowledge to them based only on their background. Colleagues and superiors tend to see their cultural backgrounds as similar. After all, some of them feel a special responsibility to support and be a role model for students with an immigrant background, with a concern and desire to reduce the difficulties students may experience. However, the majority wants to be a role model for all students and not just for students with an immigrant background (Carr & Klassen 1997, Pole 1999, Karakasoglu 2000, Goodwin 2006, Selimovic 2008, Maylor 2009).

Discourses shape our subjectivity

In addition to others' expectations, preschool teachers are influenced in their actions by other factors. Palviainen and Mård-Miettinen (2015) interviewed a bilingual preschool teacher in Finland during the first year she implemented a new way of working with bilingual children. Palviainen and Mård-Miettinen investigated how preschool teachers' reflection on their work was associated with concepts, places, people and discourses that represented different perspectives and voices. The preschool teacher's beliefs could be complex and contradictory, and their actions were related to larger sociocultural discourses. Michel Foucault (1926–1984), a French philosopher, studied discourses and he believed that discourses are what set the boundaries of what is possible to think, do and say at a particular time and in a particular context. "Everyone knows that you can't say everything, that you can't talk about anything at any time, and finally that not everyone can talk about anything" (Foucault 1993, p. 7 in Axelsson & Qvorsebo 2017). It would have been almost impossible for a preschool teacher today to explicitly say that they do not think preschoolers should do mathematics while it was acceptable in 1990, when I myself started working at a preschool, that children were not expected to show any interest in what was considered a school subject.

Discourse is also found in gestures, attitudes and ways of acting. What is possible to say and do by someone in some contexts is questioned in other contexts. At certain times, some voices are heard, others are silenced, and among these voices there is an ongoing struggle for what a good preschool teacher should be. Some discourses dominate others, but there may be different discourses going on at the same time. The discursive construction of a good preschool teacher appears in a certain period of time in different texts as the curriculum and preschool teacher are formed in the children's group, in the relation between colleagues, in the parents' conversations, etc. In these texts (in a broader sense) different discourses about, for example, the multilingual preschool teacher with immigrant background are formed.

In Foucault's (1974), a discourse organizes the knowledge that is valid in a particular group. This limits what can be done but also allows one to act (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983). A strong discourse makes it possible to think, act and control without being questioned. This knowledge, linked to an institution, is linked to power because it will define what is normal and what is abnormal within that institution. You could say that power is productive. Kajal, the central case study of this paper for example, is very interested in mathematics and in today's society there is a strong discourse about the importance of starting mathematics early (Esping-Andersen 2004, Björklund 2007) which gives her the opportunity to act. Each discourse offers subject positions and shapes our subjectivity, that is, "a particular

discourse, from which we view the world and ourselves, challenges us, and as we enter into that discourse, our subjectivity is shaped accordingly" (Johansson 2007). There is thus no subjectivity as a multilingual preschool teacher with an immigrant background before the design of texts, speeches and practices since the relationship is not linear. Instead, this preschool teacher is constantly created and transformed according to Johansson. We, as humans, are not completely defined by dominant discourses but we can combine parts of different discourses that appeal to us and we are in the process of producing new discourses. For example, there are discourses about mathematics, or about multilingual children related to mathematics, or about languages. Kajal shapes her subjectivity by combining parts of these discourses. But in order to combine these discourses and attempt to innovate, she must seek approval and validation while avoiding any risk of being excluded (Davies & Gannon, 2006). People are who they are not only by a combination of a choice to be as they want to be and by their heritage, but their choices are also dictated by the discourses which prescribe what is recognizable as an accepted form of subjectivity (Laws & Davies, 2000). I am interested in examining how Kajal's subjectivity is shaped when she teaches on the basis of expectations and discourses.

The following section describes the prevailing social discourses that may shape Kajal's subjectivity. By deconstructing social discourses, the "taken for granted" can become visible and we can better understand the conditions under which we are formed.

Today's discourse on mathematics

A "taken for granted" discourse in today's society is that mathematics is an important (pre)school subject. The knowledge of mathematics is considered important for social development and circulates in Swedish society, but also internationally. For example, the OECD (2014) argues that mathematics is a necessary skill for personal development, for future employment and for full participation in society. It is a discourse that is rarely questioned and therefore becomes self-evident for most people. Preschool is an actor in the task of providing mathematical knowledge and skills to younger children because it is believed that children's early development in mathematics is a cornerstone, not only for an individual's later success but also for the democratic development of society (OECD 2017, Walderkine 1998). Such discourse enables various decisions to improve the mathematical skills of younger children. For example, one of these decisions was to introduce a course in mathematics as a compulsory part of preschool teacher education. Another decision was to revise the mathematical objectives in the curriculum (Ds 2009: 21). A preschool teacher therefore becomes an important puzzle piece in a society's success if they can teach mathematics and prepare the children for future schooling as well as a lifelong learning. They can be considered as bearers of discourses and act as gatekeepers for what knowledge is considered important to convey and which knowledge is excluded in society (Axelsson & Qvarsebo 2017).

Discourses on multilingual children and mathematics learning

International assessments show that children in both Europe and the United States find it difficult to succeed in school mathematics (Cross, Woods, & Schweingruber 2009, Sarama & Clements 2009, Starkey, Klein, & Wakeley 2004). Researches show that students with a different cultural and linguistic background perform significantly worse in mathematics than their peers who speak a majority language. It is said that the gap in reading and mathematical proficiency already exists when children begin in the school preparatory class (Clements & Sarama 2011, Denton & West 2002). Children who start with the lowest achievement show the lowest mathematical development from preschool to third grade (Bodovski & Farkas 2007). This prevailing discourse among researcher and teachers is called "deficit discourse", which focuses on the students' weakness and their parents' deficiencies such as background and socio-economic status rather than on their strengths

(Valero & Meaney, 2014). Even if there is less agreement on the impact of ethnicity (see Svensson Källberg, 2018 Agirdag, et.al., 2012) this correlation of school achievement are used to explain poor school results (Halai, et.al., 2016, Healey & Powel, 2016). In Runfors's study (2003, see Svensson Källberg, 2018) teachers talk about immigrant children, in comparison to "Swedish children" or "normal children", where immigrant children are described as lacking sufficient knowledge of the Swedish language and cultural/social skills. When it comes to research in mathematics education many studies (Langer Osuna, Moschkovich, Norén, Powell & Vazquez, 2016) are conducted within a deficit framework according to Svensson Källberg, 2018, focusing on students' deficiency instead of their resources. A common perspective in mathematics education research is taking the monolingual student as a norm and adopting a deficit perspective, seeing the multilingual children as disadvantaged (Powell & Vasquez, 2016). In connection to the deficit perspective research indicates that a preschool that offers early experiences of mathematics, and high-quality mathematics didactics, can improve the development of children who are deemed to be at risk of falling behind their peers. This discourse is conducted primarily around children from low-income families or children with an immigrant background and helps prevent or reduce mathematics learning difficulties (Clements & Sarama 2011; Cross, Woods, & Schweingruber 2009; Jordan et al. 2009; Korat, 2005, Magnusson et al., 2004). Furthermore, Douglas, Klentschy, & Worth (2006) claim that multilingual children can benefit greatly from participating in mathematics education at preschool provided they are allowed to explore the world actively together with a teacher. Mathematics activities support their language development when given the opportunity to use the majority language for various purposes in a specific context. Studies conducted in the United States show that many teachers are not aware of the relationship between language learning and technology and mathematics activities. They are usually of the opinion that children must first learn the majority language before they can be exposed to mathematical activities (Lee & Buxton 2013).

Discourses on the use of first languages

Based on the "deficit discourse" that is conveyed in many studies, several researchers have begun to investigate whether the use of pupils' first language (L1) as a resource can increase confidence in mathematics in multilingual children (Adler 2001, Chronaki 2005, Norén 2010, Planas & Setari-Phakeng 2014, Drury 2013, Moschkovich 2002, Ni Riordáin 2011, Setati 2005). Researchers in linguistics, developmental psychology, pedagogy and social sciences agree that the support students receive in their first language is valuable and absolutely crucial to the student's personal development and success in school (Swedish Research Council 2012). The results of the studies show that although language cannot shape and determine all of our mathematical thinking, it can affect it to a certain extent and facilitate our thinking and perception. We learn best in the language we know best, Lindberg (2002) states, and in a multilingual environment, students should be given the opportunity to use all their languages to solve mathematical problems, discuss and share their thoughts with teachers and peers. These studies relate to the compulsory school but can still be relevant to preschool as the view of mathematics teaching seeps into preschool. Over the past ten years, several critical voices have been heard against the perspective of deficit that some research points to where students' results are perceived with a focus on their weakness rather than their strengths. Negative attitudes of teachers affect children's academic success throughout their lives (Lee & Loeb 2000). Teachers who teach vulnerable groups often think that children do not have the same opportunities for success as other children (Valencia 2012; Van den Bergh et.al 2010). The consequence is that they lower their expectations and take less responsibility for children's learning (Gay 2000, Banks 2006, Diamond, Randolph & Spilane 2004).

The expectations that teachers have for multilingual students become prevalent and prevent them from recognizing the student's talents (Ford & Grantham 2003). If the teacher expects that multilingual students cannot perform well in mathematics, when they do not master the majority language, they will focus on their shortcomings in language and miss their talent

in mathematics. Teachers may perceive students as different from themselves, for example if the children speak another language. The teacher may perceive children's use of a language they do not understand, another variation of their own language, a difference in culture or even behaviour as an indication of intellectual inferiority (Gorski 2010). Lack of competence in majority languages is often seen as the reason why children cannot actively participate in mathematics education (Valero 2007) while some studies (Saunders 2001, Valero et al. 2008) show that it is rather the way of looking at and the way to use different languages that affect students' results in mathematics. The attitude to multilingualism and how the languages can be used has a major impact on how the children are involved in mathematical activities and if they are allowed to be multilingual in their everyday lives they get the feeling that the school is for them as well.

The deficit discourse that flourishes in Sweden about children with immigrant backgrounds doing poorly in school is criticised, for example, by Svensson Källberg (2018). Her study shows that "conditions concerning future plans, otherness, Swedishness, perceiving their parents as inferior in relation to Swedish parents, segregation and feelings of exclusion affect students' perceptions of their opportunities to learn mathematics" therefore deficiency explanations are not sufficient to explain achievement in mathematics. Discourses, knowledge and power

As I mentioned earlier, discourses point to what knowledge is taken for granted in a particular institution and defines what is normal or abnormal, accepted or unaccepted. According to Foucault (1990), this knowledge is directly linked to power because it will regulate how we choose to act. Power and knowledge presuppose one another. For example, the discourse on mathematics as important and desirable knowledge in preschool will regulate what activities preschool teachers will prioritize, and the deficit discourse on children with an immigrant background will regulate how activities will be designed. Truths, norms and what is taken for granted are seen as right and thus preschool teachers are expected to live up to this. Preschool teachers control their own and each other's actions by enlivening dominant discourses. The exercise of power is explained by Foucault as using different techniques to regulate the space of others and their own possible actions. Power is not about total domination, it requires freedom and opportunity for resistance. Power has enabling and controlling aspects and produces and maintains the meaning that people make about themselves. The identity and subjectivity of the preschool teacher is shaped and questioned in everyday life (Walshaw 2004). By shaping their practice based on expectations and discourses, they fabricate their subjectivity. According to Hacking (2006) and Popkewitz (2008, 2016), the concept of fabrication means that a certain type of citizen is made in direct relation to a desirable society. By fabricating a certain type of citizen, the future can be planned by controlling the present (Popkewitz 2008, p. 252). Popkewitz uses the word fabricate to point out that it is not just a matter of constructing an image of citizen, but it has actually, identity and sometimes bodily effects. Discourse on the citizen has practical implications for how different categories of people can actually live if they are not to suffer from cultural sanctions such as exclusion. Of course, this also applies to the opportunities for preschool teachers, or more specifically the multilingual racialized preschool teachers' opportunities. By racialized I mean how these multilingual preschool teachers are seen as stereotypes based on prejudice about their background or origin. The multilingual preschool teacher is defined with certain characteristics that can be used to help the children who are considered problematic because of their background. We usually categorize different types of people and give them different characteristics, for example Swedes are calm, children are playful, teenagers are rebellious, French are Anglophobes and so on and we expect people who fall into these categories to behave in a certain way. We even see the world and organize our existence based on these expectations. But that doesn't work, according to Hacking's (2006) "looping effect", because people change in the way they interact with others and are not necessarily who we thought they were.

Kajal can adapt to or resist expectations and discourses, thus shaping her subjectivity. The teacher becomes the key player in how the education system develops and exerts a strong

influence on society with the opportunity to transfer knowledge and promote opportunities for lifelong learning for all (Popkewitz 2009, Montecino & Valero 2015).

Study approach

I first met Kajal when I was looking for preschool teachers who were willing to be part of an ethnographic study on preschool mathematics, which I did in connection with my doctoral dissertation. I interviewed and followed ten preschool teachers in four different preschools to investigate how they interpreted and implemented the mathematical goals in the curriculum (Delacour 2013/2019). Kajal became interested because she worked actively with mathematics, had studied 30 points at university and held collegiate courses in the subject. Kajal caught my interest because of my own background as a bilingual preschool teacher in purely bilingual departments in the early 1900s. I discovered similarities but also differences between what influenced my actions then and the focus came to be on how Kajal's subjectivity as a preschool teacher was shaped in today's Sweden. Today there are no purely bilingual departments in Swedish preschools and home language teachers who used to come a few hours a week to work with the children have also disappeared. However, the National Agency for Education (2016) writes that preschool should work for children with languages other than Swedish to have the opportunity to develop their ability to communicate both in Swedish and in the languages they speak at home. Multilingual preschool teachers can facilitate the work of getting the children's multiple languages to be a complement to Swedish in their daily activities. But the National Agency for Education (2013) writes: "If there are staff with a mother tongue other than Swedish, these should not be perceived primarily as representatives of their mother tongue but as anyone in the staff, but with a special competence" (p.50).

In other words, the view of multilingual children and the tasks of multilingual preschool teachers has changed since I started working in Swedish preschool. And in this changed practice, the expectations of the preschool teacher and her possibilities for subject position have changed.

A preschool teachers' decisions are dictated by social discourses, but they are also influenced by their personal experiences and perceptions, as well as the expectations of colleagues and superiors. In the current ethnographic study, I combine observations and interviews and was influenced by nexus analysis as a tool for understanding complexity. I link Kajal's micro-actions with great social discourses. By conducting a nexus analysis, the researcher draws attention to factors or discourses that are relevant or at the forefront of the data being explored (Scollon & Scollon 2004). The preschool teacher's story about mathematics and her work is the nexus. Major social issues, micro-actions, expectations and discourses that come from different times are brought together in one and the same nexus (Scollon & Scollon, p. 14). Accordingly, in this study, I want to explore how Kajal navigates among expectations and discourses as she talks about and teaches mathematics to children aged three to five and how she shapes her subjectivity.

I did not participate in the activity but sat where I did not disturb and observed what could be regarded as mathematical activities, either planned by the preschool teacher herself, or spontaneously in the free play. I wanted to understand Kajal's words/sentences and her actions as expectations and discourses that occur at preschool and in society, including in previous research and then analyze how she shapes her professional subjectivity. I examined what social discourses dictated her choices, what expectations she must take into account and how she finally navigates among these to find her own practice. There are a plethora of factors that influence preschool teachers' work and it is important to study their complex nexus, says Palviainen and Mård-Miettinen (2015) because "education is not only dependent on personal experience but is also deeply embedded in a unique social, historical and political context" (p. 397).

It is difficult to assess validity and reality in this type of analysis. I have tried to capture significant nuances and reflected on whether or not I made hasty conclusions based on prior knowledge or my own experience. Although a single preschool teacher's speech and practice is analyzed, a pattern emerges that gives us important information on how subjectivity is formed. The ethical consideration is especially important since I initially did not know what the focus would be (Wästerfors, 2008) and thus could not inform Kajal about it. I have been particularly careful not to reveal Kajal's identity and would also like to point out that she is not the origin of a certain discourse or expectation.

Kajal builds her subjectivity on the basis of different expectations

Kajal, works in a department with twenty children, three to five years, with two colleagues and a resource educator. Three of the children are exclusively Swedish-speaking, the others are multilingual and understand and speak Swedish at different levels. Six different languages are used among the children. In addition to Swedish, Kajal speaks the same language as nine of the children and can help them when needed.

We have nine who are Arabic speaking children in the department and most have their parents who only speak Arabic at home so when they come to preschool to us they cannot speak Swedish as a Swedish child, then when we sit and have activities or spontaneously we do something you have to translate to them so we look at their face and body that they do not understand what we are saying.

There are different expectations about how much Kajal should speak Arabic as well as what that implies in what she does or does not do. She explains that the parents who work all day would like her to speak Arabic with their children because they feel that they do not have that opportunity themselves. The parents who are at home preferably want her to speak only Swedish and are worried that their children will not learn Swedish otherwise and thus not manage in school.

...They want them to develop the Swedish language. And we respect that and we do not, but some say no it is good also that you speak Arabic but Swedish also at the same time for some parents, we have children who are here ten hours (a day), they do not have time for the children so we try to help in everyone way.

Kajal says she understands these parents' concerns because she has been in the same situation as she has experience of how important it is to master the majority language in order to succeed in society. She herself has grown up bilingual. But in school she was only allowed to use the majority language, which she did not experience as a problem in understanding and coping with school work. In addition to parents' expectations, her colleagues may have opinions on her use of language. They used to complain to the headmaster in case it gets too much Arabic even though - according to Kajal - they know that the mother tongue is important for the children to learn Swedish. There is a cleavage among colleagues and Kajal herself. On the one hand, what the research says that children need to be good in their first language in order to acquire a second language. On the other hand, the fear that they will not learn Swedish if they speak too much in their first language. Among these various expectations, Kajal has found her own solution. She speaks mostly Arabic with the youngest children. In conversations with the older - four to five year olds - she only translates words they don't seem to understand. She clarified that they will soon start school and it is important that they learn Swedish. Another strategy is to talk to the headmaster about how the department should be organized.

I myself have talked to the headmaster a couple of times that it is not good to gather all Arabic-speaking children in one department. Yes try to spread a little because it takes over between the children as they sit and talk. It is not wrong but for them to learn better Swedish when they start school...

Kajal seems to have a certain authority as a multilingual preschool teacher and wants to use her experience and knowledge as a multilingual to influence the headmaster's decision. She can shape her own practice based on the trust she gets from the parents and the headmaster. Bressler and Rotter (2017) distinguished two groups of teachers with an immigrant background. One group defined themselves on the basis of the great significance they attributed to their immigrant background. They saw their life experience as more important than their educational skills. The second type defined itself by the denial of the importance of their background. Kajal sees her own background as important while her background does not replace her educational competence. She sees the children and uses their language skills to help them understand mathematical concepts and motivate it as such:

... we have a child when we explain to her in Swedish she just looks. When I explain to her in Arabic then she answer in Swedish. ...Some become very happy, you can see that the face is glowing. When you explain, you know that now I understand and yes it actually helps.

But her language skills have their limitations and Kajal says that sometimes she does not feel adequate when she meets children who do not understand what she is saying.

For example, if we say yes this is a square do we know what it is called in Arabic? But it also feels a little silly for some kids, for a child has Albanian and I can't speak Albanian so how should I help that child? Sometimes you do not feel adequate, but you do as best you can in the languages you can.

As a multilingual preschool teacher, Kajal seems to feel responsible for the language issue even if her different language skills are not enough. There are plenty of staff in the preschool who know different languages but when the children are placed in different departments, it is the age and vacancies that determine where the child ends up. Kajal says she uses her colleagues' different language skills if a child seems to have great difficulty understanding. She can ask for help from someone working in another department. She also collaborates with the educator, who works as a resource and they ask colleagues at the other departments for help with translating words into different languages which they then set up on the wall. She also usually teaches children to count in different languages. They have recorded when the children say the name of different shapes in their own language in order to use a language pen and pictures with bar codes.

During meals, Kajal sits with only children who speak Arabic and then have greater opportunities to use their language when someone does not understand Swedish and without anyone feeling as an outsider. As I ate with them, I witnessed how she could help a child figure out the concept of "sharing" (dela in Swedish). The child was given the task of dividing (dela) an apple into different parts and counting so that it would suffice for everyone. Then Kajal asks the child to distribute (dela) the apple pieces. The child looks at her and the apple pieces surprised and says: "I have shared"! Later, the child tells us that he sleeps in the same room as his siblings. Kajal says: "ok so you share (delar) rooms". The child looks terrified at the knife and says: "no I don't share (delar) a room". In both cases, Kajal could use Arabic to work out the difference between different meanings of the word "dela". Unfortunately, not all children receive the same help, which Kajal feels is unfair, but she does as best she can and sometimes takes the help of parents to help all children.

we want the children to learn, we take the help of parents, we have written in Albanian, Arabic, English, Swedish,...

The parents also have different expectations on what mathematical level Kajal should teach. The Swedish parents do not talk much about whether the children should learn mathematics or Swedish. They should have fun, they should be able to cut, they should be able to paste, they should experience preschool. But the parents who have different backgrounds concentrate more on Swedish and math for those thinking, and if I think about myself too, they have different backgrounds, they should be preparing for school when they start there. You are in a hurry to learn, but you miss it, that fun you have at preschool.

Kajal perceives that parents have different expectations depending on whether they are “Swedish” or have an immigrant background. The “Swedish” parents let their children play, while the “immigrant” have to think about the children's future according to Kajal, which becomes more challenging because of their background, something that Kajal understands and has experience with. She still thinks that the children miss out on the fun and have to adapt to different expectations, she offers the children playful mathematical activities based on the children's interest, uses storytelling to introduce different mathematical concepts and draws attention to these concepts in the children's free play. In this way, she fulfils everyone's expectations but she thinks that despite her understanding of the parents with different backgrounds, as she puts it herself, she wants to be a bridge between them and Swedish society.

... sometimes parents interfere or I shouldn't say interfere, they'll interfere but we sit and discuss with them. Here is in Sweden and things like that.

She wants parents to know that here in Sweden, children are not allowed to do advanced mathematics, but they also have to play. She has shown them at a parent meeting with the help of materials, documentation and Power Point how she works and testifies that the parents were impressed and grateful.

Kajal enters into discourses to build her subjectivity

Math is interesting, and it is something living, not boring as language. I don't know, it depends... You can explain a lot in many ways. You can count many things. We count people, we count chairs, we count windows. Different shapes are everywhere. You can find hundreds of things to do with the kids actually. I do not know. Maybe because I don't have the Swedish language as a background.

Kajal loves mathematics and has read 30 points in college courses. She also has teacher credentials and can teach grades one through three. The knowledge of mathematics is considered important for the development of society and her great interest in mathematics fits in. She can build up her subjectivity as she enters or resists current social discourses. She can use her professional skills and authority among parents, colleagues and management. She enters into the social discourse on mathematics and at the same time adapts her teaching to preschool pedagogy, where the discourse operating on preschool education in Sweden is that activities must be playful and based on the children's interest. At the same time, Kajal opposes the discourse that children with an immigrant background would find it difficult to achieve good results in mathematics.

if you help them now when they are young then they have a great chance of actually learning. You have to give the children something to prepare them to start school. It is actually starting now.

She believes that it is the preschool teacher's responsibility to teach mathematics in a preschool and that even though the language can be a challenge for the children, they still have the same chances as everyone else. She is given the opportunity to use her different languages and let the children do the same when working with mathematics and in this way she also embraces discourses that when children start early with mathematics and are allowed to use all their languages, they can achieve the same results as the children who have the majority language as their first language. If multilingual preschool teachers are not available, she can use material, technology, and the environment and utilize the knowledge of other colleagues and parents.

Kajal has a different picture of the relationship between mathematics and immigrant background.

We immigrants are better than the Swedes in mathematics. (Laughter), some say no it's not. Well, it actually is.

There, she is influenced by another discourse, namely that people with an immigrant background are proficient in mathematics and she explains that in her country the children are taught more advanced mathematics than here in Sweden. Equally, according to Kajal there seems to be more respect and appreciation for teachers who help children learn more and better in her country. Here we can see how Kajal speaks within the social discourse about mathematics as important and necessary to meet the future and the importance of starting early with mathematics as she shapes her teaching based on her own interests. She also opposes the discourse that children with an immigrant background would find it difficult to achieve good results in mathematics. By meeting different expectations and different discourses about the pre-schooler, preschool pedagogy, mathematics, and incorporating them into her experience and her interests in the same nexus, Kajal shapes her subjectivity. These expectations and discourses limit what she can do, but also enable her to act (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983). A strong discourse makes it possible to think, act and control without being questioned. Kajal also has the opportunity to rely on her experience to oppose other discourses. The knowledge, linked to how a multilingual preschool teacher with an immigrant background is expected to act, is linked to power because it will define what is normal and what is abnormal within this institution.

Conclusion

Kajal's talk about, and work on mathematics at preschool, paints a picture of a strong preschool teacher who navigates among expectations, knowledge, experiences and different discourses to fabricate her subjectivity. Discourses make it possible to act according to Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983) and we can see that the discourse on mathematics as an important subject enables Kajal to act and plan activities based on the children and her own interests. It gives her an important position at preschool because she "loves" mathematics and sees herself as very good at it. How Kajal responds to different expectations is linked to social and preschool discourses. A dominant discourse in Swedish preschool pedagogy is that play is of great importance. Younger children learn when they play, play when they learn, and you cannot separate play from learning (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson 2008). Such discourse determines what is possible to think and what is valid knowledge at preschool (Foucault 1974). Another dominant discourse in preschool pedagogy is that children have many different kinds of expression (Dahlberg & Åsen 2011). It appears in Kajal's thoughts about languages. For example, she thinks that language is important, but that multilingualism is not just about spoken language. She believes that she wants to give the children the opportunity to express themselves by drawing, building, painting and more, and she uses a lot of material to practice and reinforce different mathematical concepts. The department is filled with improvised and self-designed materials and games that the children can use freely and that help them understand. Kajal's micro-actions meet expectations and discourses that come from different times in the same nexus (Scollon & Scollon 2004, p. 14).

She uses a different discourse that people with an immigrant background are good at mathematics, and she thus opposes the discourse about the multilingual child who performs poorly in mathematics than her peers who speak the majority language. The discourse about the importance for children to use all their languages to better understand mathematics, but also to better learn the majority language also allows her to act. If similarities are placed between understanding majority language and understanding mathematical concepts, preschools risk contributing to the strengthening of differences and limiting some children's opportunities for development. With her knowledge that younger children are helped by different forms of expression other than the verbal to understand mathematical concepts, and with the help of colleagues and parents, she can plan activities that include all children. However, she uses her experience as an immigrant and even her knowledge about research

results to try to influence how much Arab children should hear and speak so that it is not too deliberate and prevents the children from learning Swedish.

Kajal is skilful at managing everyone's expectations and weighing them up against different discourses, her knowledge/experience and the different needs of the children. She produces her own ideas, adapts to some discourses and opposes others, reproduces prevailing ideals about preschool activities and creates new ideas about teaching at preschool. Her nexus is shaped by a plethora of factors that affect her work. Her internship is embedded in her personal experience and in a unique social, historical and political context (Palviainen & Mård-Miettinen 2015). Kajal breaks new ground and her work is important in preschools' efforts to give all children the same opportunities but the shape of her subjectivity is strong and connected to social and institutional discourses and the expectations of her colleagues. The teacher's subjectivity is not shaped by her personal choices but by the conditions of possibility, namely what she is able to do within the limits of what is seen as accepted subjectivity (Laws & Davies, 2000). Kajal is accepted and valued by her colleagues because of her knowledge in mathematics which is valued by society, because of her language skills and cultural experiences which is needed in a growing multilingual society and because of her knowledge of Swedish preschools pedagogy. Without this acceptance, a teacher will not be able to challenge established practice. But even so, challenges are limited and should not pass a certain boundary, in this case, do not speak too much Arabic, or any other foreign language.

More studies are needed to pay attention to which elements shape multilingual preschool teachers with immigrant backgrounds subjectivity as their roll contribute to development and social change.

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