



UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

# SPRÅKBEDÖMNINGSPRAKTIKER I FÖRSKOLEKLASS

**Lärares arbete med kartläggnings-  
materialet *Hitta språket***

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## Akademisk avhandling

som med vederbörligt tillstånd av Rektor vid Umeå universitet för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen framläggs till offentligt försvar i hörsal Hohaj (HUM.D.230), Humanisthuset, fredagen den 6 september, kl. 13:00.

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Language assessment practices: Teachers' uses of the material *Hitta språket*.

## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the body of knowledge about teachers' language assessment practices with young learners. This is achieved by describing, analyzing, and discussing teachers' uses of the material *Hitta språket* ('find the language') in Swedish preschool classes (6-year-old children). The study is relevant in light of the increased use of language assessments in recent decades. A notable example is *Hitta språket*, which the Swedish National Agency for Education has mandated for use in preschool classes.

Methodologically, the research project uses case study to examine language assessments through *Hitta språket*. The empirical material consists of data from observations, interviews with teachers, and documentations of two preschool classes, as well as from group interviews with another 13 preschool class teachers. The analysis is based on the theory of practice architecture (Kemmis et al., 2014), which describes what constitutes and influences a language assessment practice. In addition, validity theories (Messick, 1989; Newton & Shaw, 2014) frame the discussion of the significance of the practices, along with their usages and possible effects.

The results show that teachers' uses of the assessments with *Hitta språket* vary, and that they are not always undertaken in accordance with the instructions that accompany the assessment material and outlined in the Education Act. These variations can be explained by the teachers' perceptions of assessment methods and constructs (those which are meant to be assessed), the perceived clarity of the instructions, and the priorities of school organizations regarding collaboration opportunities and time for preparation. Despite varying conditions, teachers view the assessment as credible, and use the information to modify their teaching. Additionally, the results show that to include the languages spoken by the students in the assessments can inform how teachers plan their teaching. However, this is largely dependent on teachers' own linguistic repertoires, since multilingual support is scarce.

In this dissertation, issues of equity are discussed in relation to various conditions, particularly regarding the co-assessment with multilingual students. In addition, the tendency of teachers to differ from the procedures and concepts described in the Education Act is discussed as an effect of unsatisfactory conditions for preparation, as well as a need to make adjustments in order to improve the formative function that the assessment is supposed to have.

*Keywords:* language assessment practices, young learners, second language learners, language assessment literacy, practice architecture, validity, preschool class

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