

# Mother Tongue Tuition in Sweden - Curriculum Analysis and Classroom Experience

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Received: 19 April 2013 / Revised: 11 June 2013 / Accepted: 21 October 2013

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## **Abstract**

The model of Mother Tongue Tuition (MTT) which has developed in Sweden since the 1970's offers speakers of languages other than Swedish the opportunity to request tuition in their mother tongue, from kindergarten through to year 12. It is unique among the major immigrant-receiving countries of the world yet little is known about MTT and its syllabus outside of its Nordic context. This article examines the syllabus for MTT from two perspectives; firstly using the framework of Constructive Alignment, secondly from the perspective of what is hidden. The intended syllabus is revealed as well-aligned, but the hidden curriculum impedes successful enactment in many contexts. Examples from case studies in a larger on-going research project offer an alternate approach to syllabus implementation when the negative effects of the hidden curriculum are challenged. While highly context-specific, this model may represent a step in the right direction for implementation of the syllabus.


**Keywords:** Mother tongue tuition, Syllabus, Constructive alignment, Hidden curriculum.

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## **Introduction**

The Swedish model of Mother Tongue Tuition, (hereafter MTT) whereby students from kindergarten through to year 12 can request tuition in their mother tongue at school, is unique among the major immigrant-receiving countries, yet little is known about it outside of Scandinavia. Teachers of MTT are also often involved in Study Guidance in the Mother Tongue (SGMT), which is available to students who need help in understanding the school subject matter (which is in Swedish) in their mother tongue. While research and evaluations (Skolverket, 2008; Taguma et al., 2010, Skolinspektionen, 2012) have indicated that changes in the way MTT is organized and implemented in Sweden need to occur if the educational needs of multilingual students in Sweden are to be better met, the syllabus and content of MTT have not been the subject of much academic research (Bunar, 2010, p. 115). This article aims to

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contribute to that field through critical examination and evaluation of its syllabus for years 7-9 (hereafter MTT 7-9).

This article addresses the questions firstly of how well-designed the syllabus for MTT 7-9 is, secondly how enactment is influenced by factors external to the syllabus itself, and finally how impediments to successful implementation may be challenged. Curriculum documents, the literature on and evaluations of the subject and examples from case studies in a larger, on-going, qualitative study on Mother Tongue Tuition comprise the data.

After this introduction, a brief overview of the history of the MTT will be given, followed by a discussion of the theoretical and analytical frameworks used in this study. The methods, materials and participants involved are introduced and then the results. Finally the results of the evaluation are summarised and implications discussed.

The first research question which explores the design of the intended syllabus for MTT will be addressed through examination and evaluation of the written curricula documents. Firstly, embedded in its macro-context - the curriculum for the Swedish compulsory school, pre-school class and leisure time centre (Lgr11, 2011), the syllabus for MTT 7-9 will be described and evaluated using the framework of constructive alignment (Biggs and Tang, 2011). This framework is an approach to curricula development and evaluation in which clear connections, or consistency, between curricula aims, learning activities and assessment criteria is a central feature. As structured learning objectives are central to the syllabus for MTT 7-9, as well as the starting point for curriculum development in the framework of constructive alignment, evaluation of the syllabus in this framework is appropriate.

The internal consistency of the syllabus for MTT7-9 will be evaluated by exploring whether its learning aims can be traced through both learning and teaching activities and assessment criteria. The wording of the syllabus aims, learning activities and assessment tasks will also be measured against those principles characteristic of constructive alignment, e.g. the use of appropriate verbs from the SOLO taxonomy in describing course aims (see section on constructive alignment below for further detail).

The second dimension of analysis in this article draws on traditions of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970/2000; Apple 1990; McLaren, 2007) and addresses the second research question: How is enactment of the MTT syllabus influenced by factors external to the syllabus itself? It is proposed that a hidden curriculum for MTT impedes successful enactment of the syllabus in many cases. Critical theorists regard the hidden curriculum as the "unintended outcomes of the schooling process" which "can often displace the professional educational ideals and goals of the classroom teacher or school" (McLaren, 2007, p. 212). It is that part of the curriculum which is not written in documents, but is known about, learnt, expected and experienced by students and teachers alike. Evaluations of the subject of MTT (Skolverket, 2008; Taguma et al 2010, Skolinspektionen, 2010), for example, report that it is usually held after-hours, in borrowed classrooms, when all other students have gone home. This sends signals to students and staff that MTT is something which is not included in the daily work of the school, that the environment in which it takes place is not a priority, and that it takes place when other students or teachers have finished their daily work and have moved on to other activities. Other results from these evaluations and responses from semi-structured interviews with MTT teachers conducted in a larger on-going research project have been coded, analysed thematically, and categories, including challenges faced by MTT teacher, established. These challenges, it will be argued, form the basis of the Hidden Curriculum of MTT, which hinders its successful enactment in many environments.

The final research question, which explores how impediments to successful implementation of the syllabus might be challenged, will be addressed through analysis of examples of the enacted syllabus for MTT 7-9 collected in case studies of a Northern Kurdish MTT class, part of an on-going Ph.D. research project. Classroom documents describing procedures and assessment criteria, and classroom activities recorded through photographs, field notes and recordings from lesson observations comprise this data, which will be evaluated in the framework of constructive alignment, in terms of their internal consistency and their alignment with the intended syllabus. While this analysis is highly context specific, it will be suggested that awareness of and directly challenging the conditions which create the hidden curriculum of MTT 7-9, may be a step in the direction of improved implementation, enactment and outcomes.

### *Mother Tongue Tuition in the Swedish compulsory school*

*History.* While students with Finnish as a mother tongue were able to study Finnish as an elective subject in grades 7 and 8 at school from 1962, it was not until 1977, as a result of the Home Language Reform that mother tongue tuition in other languages was introduced into the Swedish compulsory school (Hyltenstam & Milani, 2012). This government reform meant that students at Swedish compulsory schools who spoke a language other than Swedish at home would, under certain conditions, be able to study and develop knowledge of and competency in their mother tongue, in a subject offered through the state education system. The conditions at the time of the reform included that the language should be a “living element” in the home life of the student, that a group of at least four students could be formed and that a suitable teacher could be employed (p. 57). Being an elective subject, students and parents were required to request it, rather than it being a part of the standard curriculum.

Since 1977 there have been many investigations into and evaluations of Mother Tongue Tuition in Sweden (e.g. Hyltenstam & Tuomela, 1996; Axelsson, M. et al., 2002; Tuomela, 2002, Skolverket, 2008; Taguma et al, 2010; Hyltenstam & Milani, 2012). These have led to a range of adaptations of and changes to the conditions under which MTT is provided and the ways that it is implemented and organized. In 1985, the definition of who is eligible for MTT changed from those for whom the language was a “living element” to being only available to those for whom it was “the daily language of communication with at least one guardian”. The minimum number of students to form a class was also increased to five. The official national minority languages in Sweden, and those spoken by internationally adopted children were exempt from these regulations (Hyltenstam & Milani, 2012). In-service courses for pre- and primary school teachers, designed to raise awareness of the issues involved with working with multilingual children, including the significance of mother tongue tuition have been introduced in some metropolitan municipalities (Axelsson et. al., 2002). The number of hours per week allocated to MTT which was “according to need” in the original Home Language Reform, then fluctuating between less than one and two hours per week (Tuomela, 2002, p. 16) is still unpredictable. A two-year teacher education programme for MTT teachers was started in 1977 and then stopped in 1988. Approximately 1000 teachers were educated to work with MTT and SGMT in 20 languages during the time this programme was available. After 1988, the education of MTT teachers was supposed to continue as a special strand in the Primary Education programme, but for various reasons, very few teachers have been educated in MTT since then (Hyltenstam & Tuomelo, 1996, p. 51). The name of the subject itself has been changed. Originally called “Home Language Tuition” it is now called “Mother Tongue Tuition”.

There is some debate surrounding the name of the subject and the phenomenon itself. García draws attention to and problematizes the term “mother tongue” by asking the question “How does one identify an individual’s mother tongue when many are spoken by the mother in the home and acquired simultaneously...? And how does one then acknowledge the role of the father and other relatives...?” (García, 2009, p. 58). These questions are just as relevant in the Swedish multilingual context as anywhere else in the world, but while García elects to work with the term “home language practices” in her book, this article will use the term “mother tongue” in line with the current name of the school subject being analyzed.

Today, MTT remains an elective subject in the Swedish compulsory school, available, providing a suitable teacher can be employed, to groups of five students or more who speak a language other than Swedish at home. For Sweden’s official minority languages (Finnish, all Sami languages, Torne Valley Finnish (Meänkieli), Romani and Yiddish), no minimum number of students is required. A new teacher education programme at Stockholm University for teachers of Finnish as a mother tongue has just been approved by the Swedish Higher Education Authority and a total of 150 languages were taught in MTT during the school year 2011/2012 throughout the country of Sweden. (Personal correspondence; J, Spetz: Language Council of Sweden, 13 May 2013).

*Fundamental values, tasks, goals and guidelines – The umbrella curriculum of the Swedish compulsory school*

The syllabus for MTT (and all other subjects taught in the Swedish compulsory school) is informed by the fundamental values and tasks of the Swedish school system and the overall educational goals and guidelines, as determined in ordinances drawn up by the Swedish government. These values, tasks, goals and guidelines are discussed in opening sections of the Swedish curriculum and form the basis of the overall or umbrella curriculum for the Swedish compulsory school. The syllabus for MTT and all other subjects (consisting of the aims of the course its core content) and the knowledge requirements, are authorized by the Swedish National Agency for Education.

The discussion on the values opens with a statement of the democratic principles on which the national school system is fundamentally based. Understanding and compassion for others, objectivity and open approaches, equivalent education and rights and obligations are the values on which the education system should rest. The tasks of the school are delineated as promoting pupils’ learning and imparting fundamental values “in order to prepare them to live and work in society” (Lgr 11, p. 11).

The overall goals and guidelines are intended to “specify the orientation of work in school” (p.14). Both the overall goals and the knowledge goals are prefaced by statements which indicate the social efficiency ideology (Schiro, 2008) underlying the curriculum, namely, “The school should actively and consciously influence and stimulate pupils in embracing the common values of our society, and their expression in practical daily action”, further, “The school should take responsibility for ensuring that pupils acquire and develop that knowledge that is necessary for each individual and member of society” (Lgr 11, p. 14). An understanding of the values expressed in the umbrella curriculum should also inform any evaluation of a subject in the Swedish syllabus, MTT representing no exception. This will be discussed in more detail in the results section.

### *Theoretical perspectives*

*Constructive alignment.* In curriculum theory, a range of different models of curricula have been described, one of these being the social efficiency model. This model is based on ideas that schools, through their curricula, are responsible for shaping knowledge and behaviour in order to prepare their students for life in the society outside the school gates. Curricula developed in this model are often structured through clearly definable learning objectives (Schiro, 2008). The curriculum for the Swedish compulsory school falls clearly into the social efficiency model as can be seen above through the wording of its overarching goals and values and in the structure of the subject syllabuses (see section on intended curriculum below for a more detailed description of the structure of the MTT 7-9 syllabus).

The clearly definable learning objectives of the intended syllabus for MTT make constructive alignment an ideal tool for evaluation. The term “constructive alignment” was first used by John Biggs in 1994 to describe an approach to outcomes based teaching and learning (Biggs and Tang, 2011, p. 51) or as a meta-approach to curriculum design (Biggs, 2003, p. 10). It combines theories espousing the constructivist approach to learning (whereby learners actively construct knowledge rather than passively absorbing it) with ideas of alignment between components. In a syllabus, course or unit which is constructively aligned, there is clear thread which runs from the “Intended Learning Outcomes” (ILO), through the “Teaching and Learning Activities” (TLA) and on to the assessment tasks. This clear thread allows students to more easily understand and thus, through their learning activities in the classroom and assessment tasks, attain the intended learning outcomes. A syllabus, course or unit which is less well-aligned lacks this clear thread, and the connection between the aims, teaching and learning activities, and assessment may not be obvious at all to learners or teachers.

Other important principles in constructive alignment include the wording of the ILOs, TLAs and assessment tasks. A crucial factor to consider when writing course aims in this framework is “to stipulate the kind of knowledge to be learned (declarative or functioning), and to use a verb and a context that indicates clearly the level at which is to be learned and how the performance is to be displayed” (Biggs and Tang, 2011, p. 64). Declarative knowledge can be summarised as being content knowledge, the kind of knowledge that indicates that the relevant facts have been learnt and can be reproduced. Functioning knowledge on the other hand, is knowledge which learns and understands the facts, then applies them to new contexts to solve problems, generate new ideas and at best, create “new” knowledge (p. 82).

The kind of knowledge and the level of the aim should be appropriate for the level of the class they have been designed for, and can be written based on the levels of understanding described in the SOLO (Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome) taxonomy. This taxonomy “...provides a systematic way of describing how a learner’s performance grows in complexity when mastering many different academic tasks” (p. 87) and thus is a useful resource for writing course aims. Verbs specific to those levels can be used when writing the course aims and the content or topic to be learned should also be clearly identifiable in the aims.

The levels prescribed in the SOLO taxonomy build on each other, and reflect, at the lowest level (prestructural), a lack of basic understanding, and at the highest level (extended abstract) an outcome which indicates not only deep understanding but also application of that understanding to a new context. See Table 1 for a brief description

of each level and some examples of verbs which can be used when writing aims at each level (adapted from Biggs and Tang, 2011, pp. 88-90, 123).

**Table 1. Summary of levels of understanding and verbs from SOLO Taxonomy.**

<b>SOLO taxonomy level</b>	<b>Description of learning outcome</b>	<b>Some examples of verbs to use when describing this level</b>
Prestructural	Misses the point entirely or shows little evidence of relevant learning.	
Unistructural	Addresses the task in part but misses important details indicating a basic understanding of terminology and a start to the task at hand, but little more.	Memorize, identify, name, tell, write, label, find, count
Multistructural	Presents facts but does not connect or see beyond them. Can be compared with seeing the trees but not understanding the wood.	Classify, describe, list, report, discuss illustrate, select, outline, narrate
Relational	Ties facts and details together and integrates into a whole indicating deeper sense of understanding.	Apply, integrate, analyse, explain, review, argue, compare, contrast, examine, predict
Extended abstract	Addresses, links and integrates facts into deeper understanding and then conceptualises all in a new context	Theorise, hypothesize, generalise, reflect, create, invent, compose

### *Critical pedagogy and the hidden curriculum*

The hidden curriculum has been defined by critical theorists as “the unintended outcomes of the schooling process”, including “...the messages that get transmitted to the student by the total physical and instructional environment” (Mc Laren, 2007, p.12), “...the one [curriculum] that no teacher explicitly teaches but that all students learn...that powerful part of the school culture that communicates to students the school’s attitudes towards a range of issues and problems...” (Banks, 2001, p. 23). It includes the ways that students get shaped by teaching and learning activities, rules of conduct, the way classrooms are organised and messages transmitted by the physical and instructional environment (McLaren, 2007). Classic studies on, for example, gender roles in classrooms (e.g. Sadkev and Sadkev, 1985), show the way that teacher attitudes to boys and girls in the classroom (giving more academic attention to boys than to girls; showing boys how to complete tasks, but completing tasks for girls) teach boys independence and girls dependence. That kind of attitude and those kinds of instructions are certainly not included in the intended curriculum of any school or subject, but nonetheless impact significantly on schooling outcomes.

In her critical analysis of the Australian curriculum, Ditchburn (2012) contrasts the “two competing narratives” (p. 347) of the document, the overt narrative which promotes a “world class curriculum”, with an alternative, hidden narrative, which indicates that the curriculum rests on conservative and narrow ideologies. This hidden narrative is revealed by extracting statements from the intended Australian curriculum, then thematically grouping and analyzing them. The statements (from the intended curriculum) are found to reveal layers of meaning, contradictions and assumptions which, without this analysis, would have gone unnoticed and uncommented but remained influential on teaching and learning procedures and outcomes in Australia. Ditchburn argues that revealing the hidden narrative can lead to valuable healthy

debate about the shape of the curriculum itself, and in the best case scenario, influence the way the curriculum is implemented in classrooms in Australia.

A critical approach to curriculum analysis has a responsibility then, to examine not only the intended curriculum, but also the attitudes, organisational and implementational aspects of curriculum. These aspects are not explicitly stated in the intended curriculum but shape student outcomes and attitudes and arguably influence wider socially held perceptions about schooling and subject value. This examination and awareness can be used to influence implementation of curricula and improve outcomes.

## **Methods and materials**

### *Analysis of the intended curriculum*

To evaluate the intended syllabus for MTT 7-9 using the framework of constructive alignment, the aims of the syllabus (that which Biggs calls Intended Learning or ILOs), followed by the core content (which form the basis for the Teaching and Learning Activities or TLAs) and the knowledge requirements (assessment criteria, rather than tasks) as set out in curriculum documents, will first be analysed for internal consistency. Internal consistency implies that the aims will be reflected in the core content and knowledge requirements, meaning that students, as well as teachers know what has to be achieved, how they will go about achieving it and then feel that the ways in which they are assessed enable them to demonstrate their knowledge. If the aims can be traced through both content and knowledge requirements, the syllabus is internally consistent and well aligned,

The second method for evaluation concerns alignment with principles of course design specified by Biggs and Tang (2011), The syllabus will be closely examined to see if the words used to describe the aims resemble those recommended in the SOLO taxonomy, and if a context for the aim is given.

### *Uncovering the hidden curriculum for MTT*

In order to conduct a critical analysis and evaluation of the MTT 7-9 curriculum, awareness of the very particular context of this subject, which is realized in 150 different languages throughout Sweden and implemented both administratively and pedagogically under greatly varying conditions, is essential. It is true that in any given school subject, teachers have their own individual way of implementing any given course or teaching any given unit. However, the breadth and variety of the languages taught in MTT as well as the huge variations in its organization, implementation and resources afforded to its teachers (Skolverket, 2008) makes the enactment of this curriculum a particularly complex and multifaceted phenomenon to both organize and evaluate.

As discussed in the section on critical pedagogy and hidden curriculum, the hidden curriculum is not written, it emerges rather from the range of circumstances by which the subject is surrounded. To uncover the hidden curriculum of MTT, investigations into the subject (Skolverket, 2008; Taguma et al., 2010; Bunar, 2010; Hyltenstam and Milani, 2012, Skolinspektionen, 2010), responses of four MTT teachers in semi-structured interviews and observations made during on-going case studies in MTT classrooms are drawn upon.

These collective data are analysed inductively, coded and grouped thematically. A category of “challenges” emerges, and these are further categorized into sub-categories of challenges (implementational, attitudinal and classroom-based) and then

further condensed into statements about the subject which have their basis not in curriculum documents but in evaluative literature and experience, documented through interviews and reports on the subject. It is proposed that this series of statements represent the hidden curriculum of MTT. The statements are compared to the underlying tasks, goals and values of the Swedish compulsory school expressed in the umbrella curriculum, to see in what respects the hidden curriculum differs from the intended curriculum. In line with critical pedagogical theories, it is suggested that awareness of the hidden curriculum can lead to reflection and discussion on implementation, which may hinder the negative effects of an unexamined hidden curriculum.

*Research and Evaluations of MTT* Research findings and official evaluations of MTT in Sweden have revealed long lists of challenges; problems with implementation and organisation, problems with teachers who traipse around between schools to only to meet small groups of students for an hour or less in rooms which they cannot assume will always be available (Skolverket, 2008, p. 17). The subject has not been successfully integrated into daily school life and parents are not informed or involved which has had led to the marginalisation and low status of the subject (Municio, 1987, in Hyltenstam and Milani, 2012). A long list of problems associated with the subject was pointed out as early the 1980's, these including "lack of clear understandings of different teaching models, limited time allocation, inappropriate timetabling, inappropriate textbooks/teaching resources, lack of collaboration with other staff members, inappropriate rooms.....teacher competence, teacher education, teachers' working conditions...negative attitudes to MTT in society in general and in individual schools and negative reports on the subject in the media" (Hyltenstam and Milani, 2012, p. 65) [author's translation]. Many of these problems remain the same almost 30 years later, as can be read in a report from the Swedish Schools Inspectorate where it is reported that MTT "lives its own life, without connection to or collaboration with all other teaching" (Skolinspektionen, 2010, p. 7).

In the OECD report on Swedish Migrant Education it is pointed out that while MTT is available to multilingual students, it is not widely taken advantage of or known about. This, in combination with a decentralized educational system sets up a challenge to the implementation of the policies supporting MTT (Taguma et al, 2010).

*Case study data- semi-structured interviews.* The interview data was collected from four MTT teachers of languages prominent in the migrant community in urban Sweden, who were selected to be interviewed through snowball sampling. Three of the four teachers interviewed have the majority of their working hours at the same lower secondary school (given the pseudonym of Star School). The majority of the fourth teacher's working hours are at another lower secondary school in the same municipality as the first (given the pseudonym of First School, the same school at which the lesson observations described in the section on analysis of the enacted curriculum were conducted). All four of the teachers work in more than one school, which is a typical situation for mother tongue teachers in Sweden (Skolverket, 2008). The interview participants, two males and two females, are teachers of Northern Kurdish, Turkish, Arabic and Spanish respectively. As well as being language teachers, they work with study guidance in the mother tongue for students who have arrived recently in Sweden.

Through a process of inductive analysis, interview responses were coded and themes and categories were identified. These themes and categories were compared, contrasted and cross-checked with the results of investigations into the subject (Skolverket, 2008; Taguma et al., 2010; Bunar, 2010), policy and curricula documents (LGr 11), field notes taken during visits to schools, and photographs of student works



and classroom environments to strengthen validity (Burns, 2010, p. 96). The category in focus in this article is that of “Challenges”.

#### *Analysis of the enacted curriculum*

To bring an applied perspective to this evaluation, examples from the enacted syllabus for MTT 7-9 will be examined for alignment with the intended syllabus. The data is taken from non-participant observations made in a Northern Kurdish MTT class for gr 9 students during on-going fieldwork. The classroom is in a school in suburban Sweden (given the name of First School to preserve anonymity). 100% of the students attending First School speak a language other than Swedish at home and 80% of the students participate in MTT.

At First School, concrete measures have been taken by school leadership to influence and change the hidden curriculum and give the intended curriculum for MTT a chance to work. Data collected at First School provides many examples of what can be achieved in the subject of MTT when awareness of the hidden curriculum is followed up by direct action to improve the conditions under which the subject operates.

At First School, the subject of MTT is written into the schedule of every student in the school who takes the subject, and 80% of the students entitled to MTT do so. MTT lessons take place throughout the school day, not after school is finished, in designated classrooms, at least two of which are specifically resourced for two different language groups. Five mother tongue teachers are employed by the school, and they form part of a teaching team called “Bridges”, which also includes modern language teachers. These MTT teachers are involved in the daily life of the school to an extent which is unusual for the vast majority of MTT teachers.

The teacher of the lesson in focus in this analysis (given the name of Cegar to preserve anonymity) was born and educated as a primary school teacher in Turkey. He worked as a primary school teacher for five years before moving to Sweden. After 11 years of doing other jobs in Sweden, Cegar saw an advertisement for MTT teachers in Northern Kurdish. He applied, got the job and has taught MTT in that municipality ever since. During the 13 years he has worked as a Kurdish MTT teacher, he has also taken university courses in pedagogy and classroom leadership. Cegar is employed at First School and has the majority of his students there although, in common with all MTT teachers, he does work at other schools as well. He is also the leader of a teaching team at First School, which includes French, Spanish and other MTT teachers.

The 11 students in the classes observed are in year 9, which means they are between 15 and 16 years old and all are girls. They were all born in Sweden to parents who were born in regions of Turkey where Northern Kurdish is spoken.

The unit, “Alla mina Kurdiska Ord”, (All my Kurdish Words) was introduced to these students in the Autumn term of 2012. The description of the unit was printed on a paper hand-out, which was distributed to students in class, and was also accessible to students, teachers and parents online. The first observed lesson involved Cegar and the students reading through the document, describing the up and coming unit of work in both Swedish (the unit description was written in Swedish) and in Northern Kurdish. In the second observed lesson, students were working with the results of interviews they had conducted with (multilingual) teachers in their school in the course of that unit. Working in pairs, students asked these pre-selected (by Cegar) teachers questions about their languages, sense of cultural and personal identity and thoughts on being multilingual. Three of the students were writing up the responses teachers gave to the

interview questions on the whiteboard. Those sitting down were dictating the responses from their transcriptions. While the dictation of these responses and the writing on the whiteboard was in Swedish, discussion between the students and their teacher was mostly in Northern Kurdish, with Swedish being used intermittently. Cegar asks the students which teacher's response corresponds most closely with their own feelings about their own languages and sense of personal and cultural identity, in other words, which teacher students could identify with most closely in those respects.

The lessons were audio-recorded, described in detailed field notes, photographs of student work and the classroom environment were taken, and all the Swedish used during the lesson was transcribed and translated to English. The teacher also spoke about the lesson in Swedish after the students had left, and this was transcribed and translated as well.

To evaluate the enacted curriculum of MTT 7-9 in the framework of constructive alignment, classroom activities recorded through photographs, field notes and recordings from lesson observations will be drawn on. The activities undertaken will be evaluated in terms of their alignment with the syllabus for MTT 7-9.

#### *Reflecting on transcription and translation*

The lessons observed were in Northern Kurdish and Swedish. The Swedish used in the lessons was transcribed, then translated to English. As analysis is on-going, none of the Kurdish has been transcribed or translated yet. The interviews were conducted in Swedish, transcribed in Swedish, then translated to English. This process was quite complex in that it involved interviewing teachers in their second (or third) language and the researcher's second language then translating it all to English.

The production of a transmuted text, as translated transcriptions have been called (Halai, 2007, p. 347) involved making decisions about the most appropriate way of representing ideas presented in one cultural context so that it makes sense to readers in completely different geographical, cultural and organizational locations. Halai summarises the optimal outcome as "... to translate the interview text in such a way that the basic requirements of (a) making sense, (b) conveying the spirit and manner of the original, and (c) have a natural and easy form of expression were (sic) all met adequately" (p. 351). Those reflections underlie the transcription process used in this study.

#### *Results of analysis of intended and enacted curriculum in the framework of constructive analysis*

*Intended curriculum* - Internal consistency and alignment with design principles. This section will first trace the words used in the "Aims" of the syllabus for MTT 7-9, to see if they are present in the core content and the knowledge requirements, in other words, to see if those different elements of the syllabus are constructively aligned. Secondly, it will examine the wording of the course aims and knowledge requirements to see if they follow the design principles advocated in constructive alignment.

The specific aims of MTT state that "Teaching in the mother tongue should essentially give pupils the opportunities to develop their ability to:

- Express themselves and communicate in speech and writing
- Use their mother tongue as an instrument for their language development and learning.
- Adapt language to different purposes, recipients and contexts,
- Identify language structures and follow language norms,

- Read and analyse literature and other texts or different purposes, and
- Reflect over traditions, cultural phenomena and social questions in areas where the mother tongue is spoken based on comparisons with Swedish conditions” (Lgr 11, p. 83).

Analysis reveals that all six aims of MTT 7-9 can be clearly traced through core content and knowledge requirements. The way this alignment is created is similar for all the aims. A detailed description of how this is done with one of the aims is given to exemplify this process.

The third aim of MTT 7-9 is that pupils should develop their ability to “adapt language to different purposes, recipients and contexts” (p. 86). This aim is picked up in the core content in the Reading and Writing, Speaking, Listening and Talking and Use of Language sub-headings, where the following content is suggested: “Strategies for writing different types of texts adapted to their typical structures and language features...Adaptation of language, content and structure to purpose and recipient...Differences in the use of language depending on the context, the person and the purpose of communication” (p. 85).

These strategies and adaptations are, in turn, addressed in the knowledge requirements at three different levels. To achieve the highest grade A, “Pupils adapt in a well developed [sic] way the contents of their texts and language so that they function well in the situations for which they are intended” (p. 93, my italics). For grade C, the wording is identical, but instead of pupils adapting their language in a “well developed way”, they do it in a “developed way” and instead of the language “functioning well”, it “functions relatively well”. Grade E, the passing grade is achieved if students adapt their language in a “simple way” and their language “basically functions [sic]” in the situation.

Every one of the aims of the MTT syllabus can be clearly traced in the same way as described above, through the core content and knowledge aims, in other words, the intended syllabus is internally consistent.

A closer analysis of the aims of MTT 7-9, in terms of the kind of knowledge expected and at what level (as explored in the section on constructive alignment above) reveals that knowledge at almost every level of the SOLO taxonomy is expected and described using verbs from the SOLO taxonomy (or verbs that mean the same). The only knowledge at the unistructural (basic) level refers to identification of language structures and following of language norms. From this level, the course aims move through the relational and into the extended abstract range. The topic or content to be covered is also indicated in the aims and functioning knowledge (higher level) is expected in all but two of the aims. All aims are within the reach of a year 9 student, as will be illustrated by examples in the results section on enacted curriculum.

A summary of the aims of the syllabus for MTT 7-9, in relation to the kind of knowledge they presume and at what level of the SOLO taxonomy they aim, is given in Table 2. The SOLO taxonomy verbs are in bold and the topic or content is italicized.

**Table 2.** *Analysis of syllabus Aims – Mother Tongue Tuition years 7-9.*

<b>Aim (ILO)</b>	<b>Declarative or functioning</b>	<b>SOLO taxonomy level</b>
<b>Express themselves and communicate</b> in <i>speech and writing</i>	Functioning	Extended abstract –as To “express oneself” is indicative of creation or generation.
<b>Use</b> their mother tongue <b>as an instrument</b> for their <i>language development and learning</i>	Functioning	Relational - as using language as an instrument could be considered as “applying” .
<b>Adapt</b> language to <i>different purposes, recipients and contexts</i>	Functioning	Relational – as “adapting” implies “differentiating” “integrating” “contrasting” and “applying”, verbs all found at the relational level .
<b>Identify</b> <i>language structures</i> and <b>follow</b> <i>language norms</i>	Declarative	Unistructural
<b>Read and analyse</b> <i>literature and other texts for different purposes</i>	Declarative	Relational
<b>Reflect</b> over <i>traditions, cultural phenomena and social questions in areas where the mother tongue is spoken</i> based on <i>comparisons with Swedish conditions.</i>	Functioning	Extended abstract

The verbs recommended in the SOLO taxonomy are used in the aims, and describe different levels of knowledge in different context, indicating alignment with the principles of constructively aligned curricula development.

This wording used in the knowledge requirement also resembles examples from Biggs and Tang (2011) of assessment criteria (knowledge requirements) where the ILOs are assessed in terms of how well they have been achieved (see example above). It could be argued that there is a need for discussion and development of the wording of these criteria. It is easy to imagine considerable debate arising between teachers who have different perceptions of how “well” “developed” has to be before it is considered “well-developed” and, despite following the principles of constructive alignment, this is an aspect of the MTT 7-9 which could be perceived as less than transparent.

## **Results**

### *Uncovering the hidden curriculum*

The literature on and evaluations of MTT based on larger scale studies and interviews with four mother tongue teachers working in the same area of suburban Sweden, were compared and a number of similarities were found. These similarities were inductively analysed and categorised into themes. One of the themes was that of the challenges

faced by MTT teachers. These challenges were further categorised into structural, attitudinal and classroom-based, and are summarised in Table 3 (below).

**Table 3. Summary of challenges faced by MTT teachers**

<b>Structural</b>	<b>Attitudinal</b>	<b>Classroom issues</b>
Too little time for the subject (max. 1 hour per week).	Negative attitude (of school employees and parents).	Having to chase other teachers to initiate project work.
MTT is not compulsory.	Lack of knowledge about MTT.	Keeping students interested.
Allocation with resources (budget).	Status of MTT.	Teaching materials – quality and supply.
Implementation at municipal and school level.	Helping students develop a multicultural identity they are happy with.	Different levels of ability in the same class.
Difficult to organize MTT with smaller language groups.	Lack of communication.	Writing texts on the computers which have Swedish keyboards in languages which use another script.
Having to take children out of other lessons for MTT.	At the periphery	Tired, unmotivated students

By examining these challenges and comparing them with the values, tasks, goals and guidelines of the intended umbrella curriculum, a number of inconsistencies arise. While the intended curriculum stresses that “that teaching should promote students’ learning and acquisition of knowledge based on their background, language and knowledge (Lgr 11, p.11) empirical data tells us that students who speak a language other than Swedish at home, approximately 20 % of students in Swedish schools today, have only approximately one hour a week to learn about and in their mother tongue. Newly arrived students receiving Study Guidance in their Mother Tongue (SGMT) may be allocated more hours initially but these hours are reduced as the student gains better competence in Swedish, and finally, taken away altogether unless specifically recommended. Swedish research indicates that many schools have little knowledge of what SGMT is or even know that it is available (Skolinspektionen, 2010, p. 22).

It is difficult to provide students with “a wealth of opportunities for enhancing confidence in their language abilities” (Lg11, p. 11) when the only subject taught in their mother tongue is allocated just one hour per week, and where mother tongue teachers come after hours or not at all, and are not part of the pedagogical life of the school to any extent. The lack of resources compounds this problem, as does the low status of the subject, the lack of communication between MTT and other teachers and the peripheral positioning of the subject.

Curriculum documents for the Swedish compulsory school state clearly that democratic working forms include "...being able to choose courses, subjects, themes and activities..." , and should be applied in practice in schools. They also state that while education should be "equivalent", that does not mean "the same", indicating that each school must take into account their specific context and student body (pp. 10, 11) when implementing and organising curricula. While theoretically this sounds democratic and reasonable, background knowledge of the issues surrounding MTT bring another perspective. In order to be able to choose a course, students and parents must have knowledge about the benefits and knowledge offered in it. When MTT has low status and has been the subject of negative reporting in the media ((Hyltenstam and Milani, 2012, p. 65), how can students make an objective and positive choice? And how can multilingual students living in both rural and urban contexts in Sweden be guaranteed "equivalent" (if not the same) education in MTT? Their contexts can be vastly different – they may be one of only five students speaking Turkish in a country town, or enrolled in a school where the majority of students speak languages other than Swedish, including their own.

The concluding comments of the introduction of the curriculum for the Swedish compulsory school point out clearly where the responsibility for spreading information about MTT and ensuring equivalent education lies , "The principal organiser has a clear responsibility for ensuring that this [school activities matching up to national goals] takes place" (Lgr 11, p. 13). This puts successful organisation and implementation of the subject and syllabus of MTT into the hands of each school leadership group. It follows that a school leadership with knowledge about language development and the importance of the mother tongue may implement the subject in a different way than a school leadership without this knowledge. Empirical data supports this claim of irregular implementation of the subject (Skolverket, 2008).

By viewing the contradictory data presented above through a critical lens, a number of general statements about the syllabus for MTT can be generated:

- MTT is non-essential (elective),
- MTT is less important than other languages (1 hour per week as opposed to 3 or 4 hours per week in English, Swedish and Modern Languages)
- MTT is inconvenient (after-hours, sometimes held in another school, always in another classroom),
- MTT is low status (short on resources, books and qualified teachers) and
- MTT is disconnected from every other aspect of school life.

I suggest that these statements represent the hidden curriculum of MTT, that which is not in alignment with all the fundamental values tasks, goals and guidelines of the Swedish compulsory school and which impedes successful enactment of the intended curriculum in many contexts.

#### *Enacted curriculum – "All my Kurdish Words" and MTT 7-9*

The conclusions reached by the Swedish National Agency for Education's investigation into the learning conditions for students with a mother tongue other than Swedish (Skolverket, 2008), have been used to illustrate the implementational and organisational difficulties associated with the subject. However, the results of the report were not all negative. In fact an interesting contradiction arose in terms of the role of the subject of MTT. On the one hand, MTT is described in the report (p. 17) as a highly marginalised elective subject with the majority of teachers working under conditions which can only be described as unsatisfactory. On the other hand, statistical analysis of

the average merit ratings of student results, reveal that not only do those multilingual students who have participated in MTT have a higher average merit rating than those who have not participated, but they also have a higher average merit rating than students with a Swedish background. As the report puts it, it seems almost “remarkable” (p.18) that one hour’s tuition in a marginalised elective subject, which is taken by only half of those entitled to it, should have such a noticeable effect on students’ academic performances. Complicating factors (e.g. number of years of tuition, motivation) are also discussed but the strength of the finding stands in stark contrast to other, more negative results from evaluations and investigations of the subject.

*First School* The year following the National Agency for Education’s 2008 investigation into MTT, a reform known as the “Mother Tongue Tuition Reform” was undertaken in the municipality in which First School lies. This reform had many implications, including that a percentage of the mother tongue teachers previously employed centrally by the municipality were moved over to the schools where they had the majority of their students. With years of experience of negative attitudes towards MTT and themselves as teachers of it, the teachers who were moved over to First School were initially concerned that these negative attitudes would become stronger, given that, in accordance to the guiding principles of the Swedish curriculum, the principal of the school would now be their employer, and responsible for how their subject would be administered. However, it turned out that a different attitude existed at First School.

*Example 1*

*Den negativa attityden när jag ser (3.0) de skolor som vi har flyttats över till, den fortsätter i (2.0) i i i några skolor. Men här i Förstaskolan så hade vi, ja, säga, kanske tur, eller vi hade en skolledning som hade en annan åsikt.*

*That negative attitude when I see (3.0) the schools we were moved over to, that continues in (2.0) in in in some of the schools. But here in First School we were, well, yes, maybe lucky, our school leadership had another attitude. (Interview with Cegar, Northern Kurdish MTT teacher. First School).*

*The classroom* The following data were collected in 2012 in case studies which are part of a larger-on-going Ph.D. project. Observations and recordings from the classroom in combination with field notes and photographs of student work reveal how this written document was put into action in the classroom during two lessons.

The first stage of the task was the actual presentation of the project. This was done by the teacher bringing up the unit plan, written in Swedish, on a projector so the whole class could see it, while also being supplied with their own paper copies. The teacher asked different students to take it in turns to read from the Swedish document. After each section was read aloud in Swedish, it was discussed in North Kurdish.

The hand-out describing this unit starts with a series of questions:

*Example 2*

*Vad betyder egentligen kurdiskan för mig? Varför studerar jag kurdiska? Har jag någon nytta av det? Är ett språk bara ett språk, eller påverkar språket min identitet? (vem är jag), min personlighet (hur är jag, vad är jag). Är både svenskan och kurdiskan en del av min kulturella identitet?*

*What does Kurdish actually mean to me? Why am I studying Kurdish? Do I have any use for it? Is a language just a language, or does it influence my identity (who I am), my personality?*

*(What am I like? What am I?). Are both Swedish and Kurdish a part of my cultural identity?" (Extract from written unit plan– First School)*

The teacher describes the aim of the unit first in personal terms:

*Example 3*

*Mitt syfte med undervisningen: Jag vill att du genom samtal och diskussioner ska tänka/grubbla (tänka djupt) över frågorna ovan*

*My aim with this unit: I want you to think/ponder (think deeply) about the above questions through conversations and discussions. (Extract from written unit plan– First School)*

In response to a question (in Kurdish) from a student, Cegar expands on this aim in Swedish:

*Example 4*

*Man tanker djupt ja. Har ni sett kanske mamma eller pappa eller ni själva ibland går och sen pratar och tänker för sig själv va? Det betyder grubbla. Vi ska tänka högt. Vi ska tänka djupt.*

*One thinks deeply yes, Have you maybe seen mum or dad or yourself sometimes, walking, talking to themselves right? That is to ponder. We are going to think aloud. We are going to think deeply. (Classroom audio recording – First School)*

Tasks that students will undertake during the unit are described (here with English translation only):

*Example 5*

- *We are going to read 6 short texts in Kurdish about how Kurdish youth (girls and boys) think about what Kurdish means to them. (The texts are from the book "Dergûşa Nasnameyê"/Identity's Cradle). We will also read 2 short texts in Swedish. (Book "Two languages or more"). In the texts I have highlighted several words: Language, multilingual, culture, identity, cultural identity. We will look for different meanings for these words and discuss their meaning in large groups.*
- *We will look on the Internet for job advertisements in which different companies are looking for multilingual staff.*
- *You and a friend will interview a teacher/member of staff at First School and ask three questions: How many languages do you know? What does Swedish/your mother tongue mean to you? Is it possible to feel like a Kurd/Turk/Arab/Syrian/ and a Swede at the same time? Or can one feel like none of them? Write the answers or record the interview with your phone. Then write the answers on your computer.*
- *During the last two lessons you will write a short text on what Kurdish means to you and what use you have for it now and in the future. And how you yourself feel: If you feel that you have parts of both Swedish and Kurdish culture. Use the words and concepts you have learnt during this unit. The text will be written on the computer and put in the "Kurdish" folder,*
- *We will play the game "Hangman". :)) (Extract from written unit plan– First School)*

Cegar showed the class the books that the texts they will be reading come from, and pointed to where the dictionaries were located, so students would know where to look for help.

The specific wording of the assessment criteria (Table 4), and how they would be used in this unit, was also covered. For example, Cegar explained that by achieving the first intermediate aim, students will get the passing grade (E). Fulfilment of the fifth and final intermediate aim will give students the highest grade (A).



**Table 4. Assessment criteria from unit “All My Kurdish Words”**

<b>Inter- mediate aim (1)</b>	You recognise the concepts “language, multilingual, culture, identity” (you have heard or read the concepts at school, on TV, in the newspaper etc.	You can read some Kurdish letters with support from the teacher: c-ç, e-ê, i-î, j-y. s-ş, u-û. Retell/ summarize med support from the teacher or friends. You partake in conversations.
<b>Inter- mediate aim (2)</b>	You recognise (you have heard in school, on the TV, in newspapers etc.) the concepts “language, multilingual, culture, identity” and try to use them when you speak. You use the phrases: I think that..., I feel that.... because....	You read aloud with support from the teacher and re-tell/summarize the texts. You partake in discussions.
<b>Inter- mediate aim (3)</b>	You know what the concepts “language, multilingual, culture, identity” mean and you use them when you speak and write. You use the phrases: I think that..., I feel that.... because....	You read fluently. Re-tell in your own words. Use LEXIN and the Internet to find out the meanings of words and spelling. Partake in discussions with interest. Start using the words the words you have learnt. You reflect on other’s thoughts about the subject.
<b>Inter- mediate aim (4)</b>	You use the concepts “language, multilingual, culture, identity” in speech and writing. You start to use concepts such as cultural identity, personality, multicultural. You use the phrases: I think that..., I feel that.... because....	You read very fluently. Use LEXIN and the Internet. You can even “read” between the lines. Partake in discussions with interest. Start to use the words you have learnt in the correct context. You reflect on (think about what others have said) and compare other’s thoughts with your own.
<b>Inter- mediate aim (5)</b>	You use the concepts “language, multilingual, culture, identity” in speech and writing. You start to use concepts such as cultural identity, personality, multicultural, diversity. You use the phrases: I think that..., I feel that.... because....	You read very fluently. Use LEXIN and the Internet. You can even “read” between the lines. You can argue for what you think using your own experiences (speak about your arguments and say why your arguments are strong, other arguments are weak), reflect on and compare other’s thoughts with your own.

The discussion of these aims is intense and in Kurdish and Swedish. Cegar explains both what specific words in the description of the aims mean and how students are to reach those aims. For example, in this discussion (in Swedish) about the word “begrepp” (concept) which is used repeatedly:

*Example 6*

*S1: Ja så grunden {well, the basics}*

*T: Begrepp {concept}*

*S2: Det är som innehåll, det som innehåll i texten {It’s the content, the contents in the text}*

*T: Mmmm {mmmm} [rising intonation]*

*S3: det viktigaste {the most important}*

*S2: Eller det som ingår {or what's included}*

*T: Begrepp är ett ord (1.5) ett ord som till exempel man säger ett betydelsebärande ord i en text alltså en viktig ord i en text som man måste kunna {Concept is a word (1.5) a word that for example you can say carries the central meaning in a text that is an important word in a text that one should know}*

*S1: Mmmm {mmmmm} (Classroom audio recording – First School)*

When reading through the intermediate aims, pointed questions and referencing between the different aims helps students understand the difference between them, and the resulting grade that reaching these aims will give them. In example 7, Cegar refers to the key concepts to be learnt in the unit, distinguishing between aim 2, which is reached if the concepts are recognised and an attempt is made at using them, and aim 3, where the concepts are used in reading and writing:

*Example 7*

*T: [indicating and quoting from intermediate aim 2]..försöker använda när du talar, men här... {...try to use them when you speak, but here...}[indicating intermediate aim 3]*

*S: [in chorus, quoting intermediate aim 3] man använder {one uses}*

*T: du använder de när du talar och skriver {you use them when you speak and write}*

Over the seven weeks that followed, students worked on the tasks described in the unit both in and outside of class, in pairs, groups and independently. The next group of examples come from the lesson in which students discussed the results of their interviews with multilingual teachers at First School. Students were given specific questions to ask the teachers, concerning the languages they spoke, the way they felt about their mother tongue, multilingualism and their sense of personal, social and cultural identity (the key concepts which are in focus throughout the unit, written on the whiteboard and regularly referred to both in Swedish and in Kurdish)(See Figure 1). Students were asked to compare their own feelings about their mother tongue and sense of identity with their teachers' thoughts. Some students used Kurdish to express these thoughts, others used both Swedish and Kurdish. While considering the responses of one of the teachers who, although he feels Swedish in many respects, cannot discount the influence that food and friends connected to his culture have, one student reflects:

*Example 8*

*S: Jag håller med [namn på lärare]. Jag förstod hans svar, jag känner mig svensk på många (2.0)*

*{I agree with [name of teacher] I understand his answer. I feel Swedish in many} (2.0)*

*T: [hjärper] avseende [helping] {respects}*

*S: Ja på olika sätt, men vissa saker så kan man inte ta bort eftersom det kan beror på matvanor umgänge.../.../ på det sättet känner han sig svensk.*

*{Yes, in different ways, but certain things you can't take away since it could be food or your circle of friends.../.../ in that way, he feels Swedish} (Kurdish MTT lesson observation, First School)*

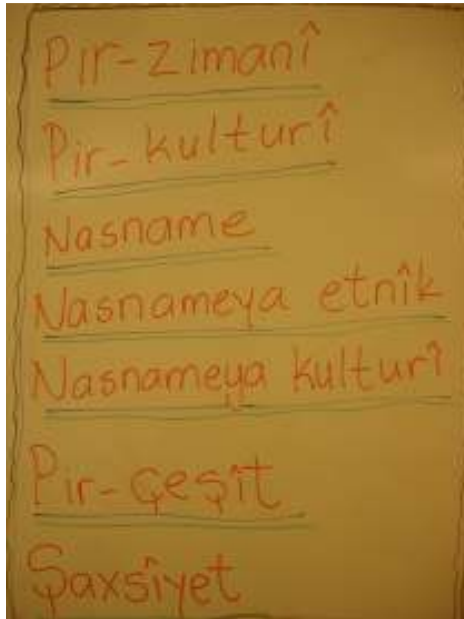


Figure 1. Key words from the unit



Figure 2. Students texts in Kurdish (translation of Figure 1) multilingual, multicultural, Identity, ethnic identity, cultural identity, diversity, personality.

Or as another student puts it, quoting first the words of a teacher with a Serbian background in the interview, then switching to describe her own feelings:

*Example 9.*

*[quoting the Serbian teacher's response to interview questions] ...men det är viktigt att känna sina rötter och kunna förstå vad man är. För att passa in i samhälle måste man anpassa sig till den svenska kulturen eftersom vi bor i Sverige så känner jag att en del utav mig är svensk och lever i svensksamhället trots att jag är Serb men jag tänker trots att jag är kurd*

*{ ...but it's important to know your roots and be able to understand what you are. To fit into society, you have to adapt to the Swedish culture, since we live in Sweden I feel as though a part of me is Swedish, living in Swedish society although I am a Serb [changing the narrative so it is about herself in the last phrase] but I think although I am a Kurd. (Kurdish MTT lesson observation, First School)*

The final assessment piece (Fig. 2) was the writing task, in which all the reading, speaking, and writing students did throughout the unit, came together in a piece of reflective writing done in class. In the essay, in which students write about themselves, their languages and their identity, one student chooses to write in both Kurdish and Swedish. In the Swedish essay, she writes:

*Example 10*

*Jag har växt upp med två kulturer. För att mina föräldrar har en kultur som kommer från deras hemland och där jag är född ifrån har man ett annat kultur. På så sätt kan jag känna mig (pir kulturî). Ibland känner jag mig både svenska och kurd. För att jag är född i Sverige och mina föräldrar är födda i Turkiet. Jag går i en skola i Sverige, där man pratar svenska och har deras regler. Men när jag åker till mitt hemland då känner jag mig mer kurd.*

*I have grown up with two cultures. Because my parents have a culture which comes from their land and where I was born from [sic] there is another culture. In that way I feel*

*(multicultural) [author's note, this student used the Kurdish word for "multicultural" and bracketed it]. Sometimes I feel both Swedish and Kurdish. Because I was born in Sweden and my parents were born in Turkey. I go to a school in Sweden where Swedish is spoken and have Swedish rules. But when I go to my homeland I feel more Kurdish. (Student essay, First School)*

The aim of the unit, that these 11 year 9 students should "think deeply" about questions of language and identity, is directly connected to aims from the MTT 7-9 syllabus which states that students should "reflect over traditions, cultural phenomena...in areas where the mother tongue is spoken, based on comparisons with Swedish conditions" (Lgr 11, p.83). The work undertaken in and out of class (see examples in Figures 1 and 2 and examples 2-10 above) in the forms of learning new words, reading texts, conducting interviews and then writing and discussing the interview data and finally, writing essays also fulfils at least three other MTT 7-9 aims (see Table 2). Students "expressed themselves and communicated in speech and in writing" (see Fig. 2), they "used their mother tongue as an instrument for language development and learning" and "read and analysed texts" when they read texts in Northern Kurdish and learnt new words and concepts in that language from the texts (See Table 3).

In summary, empirical data suggests strongly that students understood the aims, completed the teaching and learning activities and fulfilled at least some of the intermediate aims (knowledge requirements) of the unit "All My Kurdish Words" and the syllabus for MTT 7-9. The enacted syllabus of MTT 7-9, in this classroom at First School thus aligns with the syllabus for MTT 7-9 and is internally consistent.

### **Discussions and Conclusion**

The critical analysis and evaluation of a curriculum which can be enacted in at least 150 different languages is not a straightforward task. In order to gain a deeper perspective, the intended syllabus for MTT 7-9 was first examined in terms of its internal alignment, in relation to the macro-context (the curriculum for the Swedish school. Then, using an approach from the tradition of critical pedagogy, results of evaluations and examples from an on-going research project were examined to locate and evaluate the hidden curriculum. Finally, examples of classroom implementation at one school in suburban Sweden were evaluated in the framework of constructive alignment.

Although the intended curriculum for MTT 7-9 has been evaluated as being internally consistent and constructively aligned with the Swedish compulsory school's overall values, tasks and goals, there is a hidden curriculum which in some respects does not align at all. In other words, there is a significant gap between what the subject of mother tongue tuition aspires to do and what it is able to achieve, which is dependent on the specific context in which the subject takes place and limited by the negative associations of the hidden curriculum. In one context, where MTT is implemented effectively in at least one classroom, and the hidden curriculum thus changed, there is improved alignment between the values, task and goals of the schools and all aspects of the subject, despite the limited hours the subject is afforded and its elective nature. It is difficult however to argue that that same constructive alignment exists in settings where the hidden curriculum remains unchallenged and the subject thus not implemented so effectively.

This article, using data from a Kurdish MTT 7-9 classroom in suburban Sweden to complement curricula documents and evaluations, brings the possibility of a new narrative, and an alternative approach to enactment of the syllabus for MTT. In the school as at which these lessons took place, the hidden curriculum of MTT has been

actively challenged by school leaders, and this has changed the conditions under which MTT teachers enact their curriculum. Changed conditions surrounding the implementation and organization of the subject have changed the hidden curriculum at that school, for at First School:

- MTT is an elective subject which the majority of students take.
- MTT is important and has its own slot in the timetable, although it is still only allocated 1 hour per week as opposed to 3 or 4 hours per week in English, Swedish and Modern Languages.
- MTT is convenient (held during the school day in a designated classroom in the “Mother Tongue Corridor”),
- MTT has the same status as other subjects (it has a budget for resources and five of the teachers are employed under the same conditions as any other subject teacher at the school)
- MTT is an integrated, “normal” part of school life.

While this school lies in its own specific sociocultural environment and the results are not generalizable to every other context, the significance of challenging the hidden curriculum is valid for every context. It is proposed that an awareness of the hidden curriculum and implementation of concrete changes to challenge its negative effects, may, in different settings where MTT takes place, be a step in the right direction for future enactment of the MTT syllabus in Sweden.



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