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# Doing reading – insights into literacy development from joint reading interactions

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L'analyse des situations de lecture conjointe et auto-initiée par des premiers lecteurs en situation multilingue contribue au développement de nouvelles perspectives sur la nature sociale des processus de lecture et de leur constitution langagière en interaction. Partant de l'analyse séquentielle des pratiques discursives établies par les co-lecteurs, le présent article identifie et discute trois éléments constitutifs qui permettent l'accomplissement du processus de lecture conjointe ainsi que la construction d'un objet de lecture partagée. L'analyse des processus de lecture partagée met en lumière des dimensions socio-cognitives situées, impliquées dans les (inter-)actions de lecture, complétant ainsi les questionnements récents autour des approches adaptées pour une analyse des littéracies en développement.

**Mots clés:**

Littératie, lecture conjointe, construction de discours, multimodalité, développement du langage en interaction

## 1. Doing reading – social accounts for analyzing reading and its development

Reading and literacy in general have become a major focus in applied linguistics with its undisputed relevance to issues of contemporary interaction and society, involving learning. Having been identified as the "currency" of the information age (Cook-Gumperz, 2006), the linguistic aspects of literacy have, however, barely been looked at from the *social* side of the phenomenon.

More precisely, the very construction of the concept of literacy as a societal accomplishment has well been traced back in terms of society driven constraints of achievement, relating it to the more educated or more specifically trained layers of modern communities (for instance, Cook-Gumperz, 2006; Kinard & Kozulin, 2008). Also, the community-boundness and domain-effect of reading and writing have been pointed out by (diachronic) sociolinguistic research, discourse analysis and text-linguistics. Indeed, the essential interrelatedness of reading capacity and discourse-format on the one hand as well as specific content-domain on the other hand have been demonstrated (Gee, 2003; Schlieben-Lange, 1987).

With these two dimensions of the fundamental social nature of literacy brought to light, current debates on literacy as the main dimension in educational achievement gradually indicates both the arbitrary character of literacy as a social construct or norm on the one hand, and the importance of content-

intergratedness when looking at reading accomplishments on the other hand (Koretz, 2008).

At the same time, however, these debates show that we lack a deeper, even exploratory understanding of *literacy as a social phenomenon on a micro-analytical level*. Indeed, little is known about the socio-cognitive dimensions involved in this genuine feature of human doing, that of reading. Quite strikingly, when looking at literacy, even socially oriented research focusing on social exclusion through literacy norms tends to focus on the "social isolate" of an individual or the reading at stake. In fact, these studies still conduct the analysis on the basis of individual reader and her verbal reading of mostly paper-based material without taking into account the micro-sequential process which is deployed when reading is actually "done".

This paper then aims to explore this third, *micro-analytical social dimension*, providing a detailed sequential account of reading as an essential social action, accepting the statement that such presumed "mental" achievements, namely literacy and thinking, are, in reality, also and *primarily social achievements*" (Gee, 2003: 1, my italics). Going beyond research in line with "new literacies" studies which refer mainly to established practices of reading outside as opposed to inside of schooling environments, the present paper explores social interaction as emergent from shared reading sequences amongst peers within a K1 classroom in a regular public school in Luxembourg.

The questions guiding this research include the following:

- How can reading as a micro-social deployment and accomplishment be approached beyond the research artefact of "social isolates"?
- How can verbal reading be looked at in its social, that is situated, construction?
- How can reading be assessed in its sequential, multi-layered emergence and discursively anchored historicity?
- How can the resources brought about for "doing reading" be adequately described as literacy in an ontogenetically valid framework of symbolic interaction and discourse development?

In line with the increasing attempts to disengage from the well established, taken for granted psycholinguistic landscape of researching text formats in terms of composition and de-composition of information and linguistic elements (e.g., phonemes, graphemes, syntax) rather than literacy, the current study, based on a data-driven comparative micro-developmental analysis, discusses the following aspects of emergent reading: Firstly, we will focus on the issue and approachability of reading in its interactional micro-genesis within the wider framework of learning and development. Secondly,

the analysis of instances of shared "doing reading" discusses the quality and development of these reading interactions in terms of sequential management, discourse organization and multi-resourced repertoires in and for reading. Finally, the insights which can be gained from the analysis of reading as a joint accomplishment allow for drawing conclusions on the essential social nature of reading as a comprehensive basis for getting a grip on literacy and its situated development.

## **2. Doing language and literacy as collaborative accomplishments**

Economical aspects regarding education like standardized such as literacy assessments have produced heated public debates on exclusive schooling systems, fractured curricula and closed as opposed to open teaching practices (e.g., PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)). Moreover, these concerns represent the existing blind spot which requires the discussion of two major issues regarding the fundamental concept of literacy as a humanly shared activity which is being neglected by assessment demanded itemizations.

On the one hand side, critics of the evaluation practices and their grounds for isolating specific features as indicators for assessing reading have pointed out that they often rely on homogenizing monolingual and context-extracted assumptions on literacy development (Switalla, 2002; Koretz, 2008). On the other hand – and of crucial relevance for the current study – discussions of these broadly distributed assessment exercises have not only raised critical awareness for the role and place of reading in modern societies, going beyond traditionally accepted means and pathways of literacy acquisition inside the teacher-taught classroom. Also, they have shown a need to put the issue of the very object of literacy as a major and fundamental feature of human development at the centre of interest in educational sciences. That is, instead of focusing on isolated elements within a reading object or a separated phase within a larger, individually accomplished action of reading, the *why* and *how* of reading for an individual as a social being mobilizing different modalities of language are identified as being of core interest.

Explaining this newly operated recalibration of focus, at least three levels of interest can be identified:

Firstly, established visions of language and languages as being closed systems to be integrated by the individual learner continue to be challenged by ontogenetically as well as phylogenetically inspired analyses concerned with

- a. social interaction constituting the basis for language and therefore human development on the one hand side and



- b. joint (inter)action being the comprehensive artefact that leads to identifiable features of language on the other hand. These features of language development, however interesting, merely appear to be clumsy elements if taken out of their micro-interactional situatedness of socio-cognitive mutual engagement. To give an example, grammatical features in a particular language reveal their full potential only if analyzed within the actual socio-interactional framework by means of which the interactants in a specific situation construct, regulate and manage the situation at hand (Lerner, 2004; Ochs *et al.*, 1996).

Secondly, the construct of the individual as a "social isolate" is similarly replaced in developmental terms by an understanding of human cooperation in and through different modalities of language which are acted into being in and as "human cooperative communication" based on "shared intentionality, which originated evolutionarily in support of collaborative activities" (Tomasello, 2008: 11).

Finally, regarding the level of materialization of communication, conversation analysis amongst others has contributed to identifying practices and devices for accomplishing the collaborative business of human interaction, including turn-taking, referencing, requesting, list-making and excluding from participatory frameworks or category memberships. The essence (again, ontogenetically as well as phylogenetically) of these materializations of practices and devices is multi-resourced and multi-repertoired, as symbolic re-enacting and the management of hic-et-nunc physically "do" interaction.

Therefore, formerly neglected dimensions of the multi-modal business of interaction are reconsidered in their own right, putting the activity of joint action, en-actment and re-enactment at the top of developmental research into language (Tomasello, 2008; Gullberg *et al.*, 2008) in line with the comprehensive analysis of the activity of formulating as one essential achievement in interaction (Koschmann *et al.*, 2007). The analysis of these methods and devices for doing joint attention and shared intention on negotiated common ground(s) as sequential actions with formulations in and through en-actments contributes to the stabilization of a third level of language analysis. Here, the former logocentrism of looking at language learning and literacy development in and as "social isolates" at a particular age rather than in its situatedness are challenged by a multi-resourced (multi-modal, multilingual) understanding of learning and interaction.

### **3. Doing joint reading – micro-genesis of reading in interaction**

If, as is the case now, research regarding language development widely acknowledges its interactional and socio-cognitive basis (Bruner, 1983; Tomasello, 2008), how does this relate to the very specific process –

developmentally and socio-institutionally speaking – of *entering literacy* at the beginning of "serious schooling" (Taylor, 1983)? More specifically, in which respects does the analysis of *reading in and as interaction* support or even extend these socio-interactional perspectives on language development? Finally, how does the analysis of particularly *multi-resourced joint reading activities* (multi-modal, multilingual) allow for comprehensive insights into language as (inter-)action, including specific forms and materializations such as reading?

Regarding the idea of literacy in line with and as expansion of cooperation and interaction based perspectives on language development, *self-initiated joint reading* activities open a particularly rich window to the deployment and emergence of resources and sequentially structured methods, brought about and shaped in a micro-situation of "cooperative communication" (Tomasello, 2008: 11). More specifically, the process of reading – not as an action of a "social isolate" who is making sense of information and more or less distant literacy practices (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2006) – but as a *shared and situatedly accomplished activity* can be understood as an expansion of initial (phylogenetically and ontogenetically) cooperative communication. That is, practices of doing or formulating the "what-we-are-doing-together", the "who-we-are" and the "what-we-are-talking-about" in regard to the "what-we-have-been-talking-about-before" (Heritage & Watson, 1979; Auer, 1986) imply all available and deployable resources, including, specifically, pointing and gesturing. These multimodal formulating practices have been looked at with particular regard to identifying and re-enacting "locations" at stake in talk-in-interaction, when it comes to re-designing (more than merely referring to) a locus of interest in, for example, a body, a geographical site but also in a larger sequential interplay of a joint re-narrating of a movie or shared activity (Sidnell, 2006; Koschmann *et al.*, 2007). With regard to emergent and collaborative reading practices, a second domain of analysis is of major interest, in formulating practices of referring and retrieving in talk-in-interaction have proven to be rich loci for multi-modal accomplishments when managing the "what-we-are-referring-to", "what-we-are-talking-about" and "what-we-are-focusing-on". From a developmental perspective on collaborative activity, joint intention and cooperative communication, these practices mark major steps, as formulating is done sequentially through verbal and gestural means enacting that which is retrievable or referable at a particular moment in an interaction (Tomasello, 2008: 102).

With regard to instances of joint reading in emergent verbal literacy, the latter practices are of particular interest as both, the *management of the jointly available readables*, e.g. a page in a book with its textual and pictural inscriptions, on the one hand as well as the actual *reading in and as interaction* on the other hand, feature instances of formulating which are not

only managing but actually doing the reading as located and mediated between the actual readable elements and the actual reading activity. The analysis of instances of formulating as accomplished in the particular situatedness of joint reading activities allows for a closer description of enactments, re-enactments and (embodied) depictions deployed by the interactants in the joint reading activities. These formulating practices can firstly be understood as interactional and processually semantized accomplishments in their own right as has been shown in several studies, relating to gesture, prosodic features and other available means (Bavelas, 2007; Goldin-Meadow, 2003; Linell, 2005; Thibault, 2004).

Secondly, as these practices are shaped by the available reading object while at the same time doing the actual reading, they are observable materializations and sedimentations of the *micro-social process of literacy* within and as cooperative communication. Therefore, they allow for insights into reading as micro-social sequential practice where written, conventionalized and graphemized forms of language and discourse are not simply conceived of as "reading" as an isolate action of de-/re-composition but rather as a joint accomplishment where features of language development as identified from a socio-cognitive and interactional perspective are tangible. In sum, the picture afforded by an interactional perspective on reading is somewhat reversed or opposed to the more traditional, itemized one, as the micro-genesis of the mediated practice of literacy is accessible in and as joint activity. Reading therefore is not about appropriation of available items or written artefacts but about reading as emergent in interactionally situated practice. Whereas this perspective will be of central interest for the analysis of individual formulating practices within joint reading (see below), the sequential aspects of collaborative literacy activities lead to the following discussion of a second dimension of reading as a micro-social accomplishment.

#### **4. Practices of literacy, practices of joint discourse making**

The sequential nature of joint reading activities points to another developmental feature regarding language as emergent from talk-in-interaction and its materializations of practices. That is, studies into the ontogenesis of verbal literacy forms and therein materialized practices place list-making and list-organizing at the heart of the human activity of literacy at crucial moments in the evolution of discourse mediational practices and, most prominently, cultural languages (Tomasello, 2008: 302). Interestingly, from a phylogenetic perspective, the first written forms of individual languages have tended to have the discursive, and later narrative, format of lists (Koch, 1988), as being anchored and situatedly constituted in the "hic-et-nunc" and available to the interactants, letting the features of discourse-organization – linearization, situatedness and socio-cognitive conditions – in and through

interaction become apparent in their verbal and later written form (Jefferson, 1991; Lerner, 1994, 2004). Joint reading activities, as observable in the following examples, then not only represent an essential, interactionally valid intersection between reading objects or formats and the social phenomenon of reading as accomplished as talk-in-interaction, with lists being identified as a fundamental feature in discourse organization. Moreover, the ontogenetical as well as phylogenetical connection of the practice of formulating and joint organizing processes when doing and developing language, here in terms of verbal literacy, is highly tangible in joint reading activities as they reiterate and (re-)establish the developmental bonding between *sequential discourse organization* on the one hand side and the *materialization of formulating practices* in multi-modal verbalization on the other hand.

To sum up, the analysis of joint reading activities provides a window into the emergence of socio-cultural processes in line with theory building regarding literacy in general (e.g., Lee & Smagorinsky, 1999; Kinard & Kozulin, 2008) and the diachronic socio-linguistic analysis of "cultural processes" in particular (Koch, 1988). As regards the young learner, reading then has to be conceived of as available to her from the joint reading work which necessarily links discourse-organizational sequential interaction with literacy forms as deployed and (re-)enacted in immediate formulating activities.

Developmentally speaking, the incidence of joint reading activities and their micro-social and multi-modal accomplishments can therefore be seen as privileged moments in literacy development as the distant readable element (e.g., the object or book and its textual or other inscriptions) and the actual reading are observable as being connected through the human activity of cooperative communication which marks all language and literacy development (Goody, 1977). Although not being the object of the current analysis, extensive joint reading activities, similar to other ecologically valid literacy engagements (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008; Rogoff *et al.*, 2002), should obviously contribute to literacy enhancement in an ontogenetically direct way, not only and probably not primarily with regards to verbal literacy, surely on all relevant levels for building and developing literacy as language and discourse in interaction. The following analysis sets out to investigate precisely this, the process of joint reading accomplishment as being the locus of doing and developing literacy.

## **5. Object of analysis and data**

The present paper takes up a concern in the field of literacy development within the Luxembourg schooling system. The socio-economic and socio-linguistic environment of this schooling system, with its inherited languages in the curricula (Luxembourgish, German, French), its high rates of migrant students and its many features of multilingualism qualifies the Luxembourg



site as both a scene of problematic literacy achievement issues and a site for unique investigations into multi-modal, multi-lingual and multi-repertoired interactions.

The data under scrutiny stem from Luxembourg's public schooling environment, which is marked by highly multilingual schooling populations (up to 70% in a primary classroom), highly demanding and normative literacy practices as well as high rates of school failure (around 20% in 2006/07, figures published by MENFP 2008). In sharp contrast to pedagogical initiatives relying on diversity, multi-literacies and open teaching formats, many classrooms in this public schooling environment stick to manual-driven instruction procedures, homogenising and socially isolating the individual learner as a "lonely reader" facing pre-allocated reading material from and for the limited space and framework of the classroom. However, initiatives for creating learner-driven literacy spaces do exist, mostly in terms of free selectable reading material with a range of content, languages and media-origins (e.g., books, newspapers, children's magazines, free daily newspapers, websites etc.) with the intention of giving the learner the opportunity to initiate and participate in activities involving reading. In fact, these setups where learners are given leave to jointly "do reading" allow for engaged reading activities through which children rely on a variety of resources and repertoires, not only from the official trilingual curriculum but on elements and practices from outside the curriculum (e.g., different modalities and languages as for example Portuguese, Italian, Chinese).

In fact, joint reading activities have become a main field of investigation at primary level in Luxembourg: Studies have shown that these reading interactions allow young learners to exhibit shape and develop practices and devices to a considerable extent as opposed to other reading activities, which do not. The close analysis of these reading interactions allows for the tracing of literacy in the making as well as for researching basic socio-cognitive features of the micro-social phenomenon of literacy. This double focus of analysis, that is, identifying issues related to situated literacy development on the one side and analyzing socio-cognitive processes involved in multi-resourced joint reading by peer learners on the other, contributes to the growing understanding of the quality of reading development in children.

Recent literature suggests that free reading activities, joint reading and other forms of literacy activities are of benefit to young learners and their literacy development (Gee, 2003; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Michaels, 2006). Moreover, the systematic description and analysis of such situated joint reading practices require a thorough conception of literacy development as micro-social accomplishment which would ideally relate these practices to the written object and the learner's improvement in handling further reading objects and

their aligned discourses. Given the above discussion, the specific objects of analysis are then

- the multimodal and multilingual organization, management and quality of "who-we-are", "what-we-do-and-read-here-together" and "what-we-read-here-together-regarding-what-we-have-discursively-accomplished-before",
- the deployment of shared and multi-resourced formulating activities as well as
- the structuring and co-organization of the joint reading activity in and as the reading-artefact and the process of reading.

The selected instances stem from a larger corpus of video/audio recordings which have been collected over several years within the same classroom in a public school. The corpus was started as a comprehensive collection of socio-culturally relevant activities observable in the larger classroom environment. In general, the organization of the particular classroom allows for peer-interactions and self-selecting activities by the learners. Main foci of the corpus are concerned with the development in activities involving tools and media that learners engage in outside pre-allocated classroom activities in the classroom.

The following sequence features one learner, Tim, as he engages in joint reading instances with peers during the fourth month of K1 schooling. In general, the corpus allows for tracing the overall joint reading activities and, more importantly, Tim's activities and relevant development across time. When self-selecting the joint-reading activities, Tim is often to be found in the position of the holder of the physical, jointly selected reading object at stake. Here, it is a book, written in the language of the school's primary literacy, German, detailing "Life under water" (Tölle, 1989). The reading object and, more specifically, the pages selected by the young readers in the book at hand (Fig. 1) present

- a. written text,
- b. explanatory anatomical black-and-white sketches and other model representations and
- c. colored drawings of the animals and elements featured in the section of the book.

In "doing reading", Tim and his peer readers, Ben and Mia, jointly enact what is available in and through the reading process, constructing discourse in line with and as emergent from their joint activity. In the selected stretch of joint reading interaction, Ben's and Mia's actions are available to the analysis as



they are engaged in the activity through the use of different modalities, despite the fact that they are not sharing Tim's prominent position as a reader.

Tim holding the book

Mia



Ben, holding a pencil

Fig. 1

Indeed, throughout the sequence, Tim is not only holding the book in the convenient position of reading (Fig. 1) but also initiates (Fig. 2) and negotiates page turning (Fig. 3), selects others (Fig. 4) and repeatedly initiates topical moves in the discourse constructed as joint reading.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Whereas Mia's actions in the joint reading sequence follow a request by Tim (Fig. 4), Ben, on the other hand, acts continuously from his inconvenient reading position as he is sitting at the top-end of the open book, employing his right hand and arm by relying on a pencil when doing joint reading (Fig. 1, Fig. 3).

## 6. Organizing joint reading as constructing discourse in interaction

The first perspective on this joint reading sequence focuses on the organization of "what-is-read" and "how-do-we-read" as accomplished by the readers. In fact, the establishment of cooperative communication between the situatedly available participants is at stake when the available readables from the pages in the book have to be coordinated and negotiated, according to what is jointly read and accepted as such by the participants within the reading situation. Moreover, the specific reading object from which the participants, Tim, Ben and Mia, enact their joint reading is particularly challenging regarding

the joint construction of the discourse of reading as the specific reading object provides an open structuring of readable elements in texts and in pictures (Fig. 1, Fig. 3), with several paragraphs correlated with pictures (see Fig. 1). Therefore, the practices of organizing the jointly produced discourse-of-reading as well as the means deployed for accomplishing this organization between the readable elements and the readers' enactment thereof are particularly tangible at the intersection of the joint reading as discourse construction in sequential interaction. The main language used in doing joint reading in the following excerpt is Luxembourgish. Interlinear as well as conventional translation is provided in English, transcriptions conventions adapted in a simplified version of the following excerpt (Selting *et al.*, 1996).

### Excerpt 1:

- 02 TIM: eh <<acc> (benny=benny=benny=benny=benny)(0.1)  
 03 matt dat k=matt dat kann en dei stären pechen  
 with that with that can one those stars glue  
 one can glue those stars with that  
 TIM points with his right index finger to the starfish (\*1) on the double pages in the book
- 04 BEN: m=mh  
 05 TIM: kuck eng keier (.) hei as den mond (.) awer wou as en  
 look one time (.) here is the mouth (.) but where is it  
 look (.) here is the mouth (.) but where is it  
 TIM points at another representation of a starfish (\*2) on the double pages in the book
- 06 do?  
 there?  
 there?  
 07 (.)  
 08 BEN: do: (.)  
 there  
 BEN points with pencil to the middle of the starfish (\*1)
- 09 TIM: an der mett (.) <<p> an der mett as säin mond>  
 in the middle (.) <<p> in the middle is its mouth>  
 TIM pushes BEN's pencil away and then points again to the middle of starfish (\*1)
- 10 (.) eh: kuck get en och sou kuck  
 (.) eh: look exists it also like this look  
 (.) eh: look it also exists like this look  
 TIM points to the left side of the double pages
- 11 BEN: ua: (.)  
 12 TIM: [dat sinn (gef)  
 [that are (dang)  
 13 BEN: [kuck .hhh [eih: eih: eih  
 [look .hhh [oh: oh: oh:  
 BEN points with pencil to the right side of the double pages in the book
- 14 TIM: [dat as gefeier(lech)  
 [that is danger(ous)  
 TIM leans forwards towards indicated section of the book
- 15 kuck hei (f)  
 look here (f)  
 16 BEN: kuck do as de mond  
 look there is the mouth  
 BEN points with his pen to the left side of the book
- 17 TIM: jo (.) wat kann de fesch? (.)  
 yes (.) what can the fish? (.)  
 yes (.) what can the fish do? (.)



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

Throughout this sequence (excerpt 1), attention-getting devices are traceable features allowing for organizing the joint reading activity, particularly on the levels of negotiating what is read and how this reading is to be done in interaction. In fact, requests for establishing mutual attention and, presumably, shared attention to a readable element, which one of the participants is orienting to, are accomplished through deictic elements *kuck eng keier* (l.5), *eh kuck* (l.10), *kuck* (l.10), *kuck .hhh eih:* (l.13), *kuck hei* (l.15) as well as *kuck do* (l.16) by both participants, Tim and Ben, engaged in the joint reading activity. These organizing devices cooperate with pointing gestures and other indicative activities (such as body positioning, l.14) to help to accomplish participants' joint orientation to the selected readable element and to ratify or complete what is read. For example, in pointing with the pencil as deictic tool (l.8-9, Fig. 7-8) to the indicated readable element (here a picture), Ben responds to Tim's initiation *hei as den mond (.) awar wou as en do?* (l.5-6), not only ratifying and completing the readable, *do:* (l.8, Fig. 7), but also managing the jointly read as traceable and suitably organized discourse, navigating through the (here) double pages to be read. In fact, along these multimodally accomplished attention getting and deictic actions which – at first sight – seem to govern the sequence of (joint reading) interaction, the readable element, the actually accomplished reading becomes "legible" in terms of literacy as the participants primarily construct organized discourse throughout this sequence.

Firstly, the joint reading enacts a discourse pattern available from the two pages of the book, by starting with an identified prominent discourse object *dei stären* (l.3), available as a picture from the center of the double page *matt dat k=matt dat kann en* (l.3-4, Fig. 5). The enacted discourse from the readable responds to the textual structure by moving to the lower left-sided corner of the double pages (l.5-6, Fig. 6) and leading back to the main discourse object, *an der mett (.) <<pp> an der mett >* (line 9), giving way to a negotiation, then ratification of the integration of the traceable discourse movement (*get en och sou*, l.10) which has just been accomplished by bringing both participants – pointing-wise – back to the prominent discourse object (l.9-10, Fig. 7-8) in the middle of the readable pages. The joint reading activity then takes the participants further in the enactment of the discourse movement. They move from the central object, the picture on the double pages available, to the upper right part of the reading (l.14, Fig. 9) to finally moving downwards before the page is turned by Tim (Fig. 10) after a final or concluding reiteration of what is discursively accomplished by the participant's *jo (.)* (l.16-17). Subsequently, the next prominent discourse element is introduced by Tim verbally *wat kann de fesch?* (l.17), leading to turning the page, opening for newly available readables on the following double pages in the book (l.19).

Secondly, the joint reading activity also enacts the traceable structure on a discourse constructural level. That is, the participants follow the structuring of

the readable in placing the topic of the reading (*stären*, l.3) followed by immediate ratification (l.4), giving way to further specification (*hei as den mond*, l.5), discursive embedding (*an der mett as säin mond*, l.9) and aligned additional information (*get en och sou*, l.10; *dat as gefeier(lech)*, l.14) before – interestingly – providing a discursive closing of the available readable by concluding on the main feature of the prominent discourse object discussed or better, accomplished in joint reading (*do as de mond*, l.16). Interestingly, the joint readers in this reading activity systematically deploy and develop literacy in a threefold pattern which is legible from the analysis provided: In doing reading, the available pattern of the readable is traceably reenacted. Moreover, the discourse construction follows the discursive structure of the readable.

Finally, the process-bound perspective on joint reading provides insights into how literacy is deployed in jointly negotiated reading activities which engage elements in discourse-in-interaction which have barely been considered as relevant phenomena in literacy learning (e.g, requesting and deictic devices, non-verbal deictic devices for accomplishing discourse construction). Precisely these sequentially deployed and multimodally enacted actions seem to function as literacy pivoting devices, making way for so called "serious" literacy which – to date – hasn't placed these devices as fundamental elements for emergent literacy in terms of discourse construction and formal language learning.

## 7. Joint formatting as legible discourse structure

The second perspective on this joint reading sequence (excerpt 1) follows from the observations previously outlined regarding the overall organization of the activity and its gradually but systematically accomplished discourse structuring. Indeed, the participants in the joint reading activity follow or better enact the prescriptive formats of the available reading as they systematically co-construct relevant formats which build the literacy development of the young readers. Interestingly, the participants, here, Tim and Ben, draw from two discursively basic constructional formats.

In relying on question-answer devices, the joint readers manage to establish a discursive structuring which becomes stabilized – in a less evident way – throughout the sequence of talk-in-interaction. The pair initial questions, twice deployed by Tim (l.5-6; l.17) are referentially linked with the readable at hand and feed into the deictic moves as outlined above. Tim's *awer wou as en do?* (l.5-6) finds its immediate format tied answer, given by Ben *do* (l.8). Moreover, this socio-interactional and micro-sequentially accomplished discourse formatting is continued on two levels, both representing higher developed discursive devices. Indeed, Tim expands on Ben's format tying given answer *do* (l.8) in first adding on *an der mett* (l.9) then further expanding *an der mett*



(I.9) on a previously set format (*hei as den mond*, I.5) by merging the formats into *an der mett as säin mond* (I.9). This is then developed into a closing formula placed by Ben at the end of the discursive formatting activity *do as de mond* (I.16). The formatting actions in their specifying and gradually complexifying alignment have the participants literacy activity becoming apparent when the foregrounded question-answer sequence allows for the deployment of more suitable discursive patterns of reading. Therefore, the initial question is sequentially transformed into *den mond* (I.5), *an der mett as säin mond* (I.9), *do as de mond* (I.16). As is demonstrated in the overall corpus of the data discussed here, format tying and discourse formatting activities are a rich domain in literacy development through (and probably amongst other) joint reading activities. Not surprisingly, the discursive level which is tying sequentiality (in interaction as well as in reading), the construction of the discourse object and finally the deployment and integration of different discourse formats is of crucial importance for the young readers.

A second device in discourse construction are observable features concerning the instantiation of a topic-as-readable in the cooperative communication. In fact, underspecified devices accomplishing and marking the placement of a discourse object are introduced, often in turn initial positions (I.3, I.5, I.9, I.12, I.14, I.16), and allow for doing and advancing the reading on three levels: Firstly, readables involving challenging and eventually unavailable naming and labeling devices are successfully placed in line with multimodal (pointing or other deictic) indications in the joint reading dynamics. Without naming the discourse-object concerned, the readable is nevertheless developed through the discursive devices in further constituting the discourse-object: *matt dat k=matt dat kan en* (I.3), *an der mett as säin mond* (I.9), *do as de mond* (I.16), *dat sin (gef)* (I.12), *dat as gefeier(lech)* (I.14). As such, these practices allow for placing, developing and discursively stabilizing the readables in and through joint reading. Secondly, joint reading as a "window" to literacy in development becomes tangible as the readers mutually accomplish what and how they identify the readables to be read. In fact, the aforementioned discourse devices allow for integrating and displaying relevant elements for the learner and his co-readers when doing the particular reading action. The reading at hand therefore is organized and placed as jointly readable and mutually "legible" from available resources, such as displayed or shared experiences (*mat dat kann en dei stären pechen*, I.3; *dat sin (gef)*, I.12; *dat as gefeier(lech)*, I.14) and discursively integrated mediation between the individual reader in the joint reading situation, the readable at hand and the reading as given in the open double pages of the book. Thirdly, and most importantly regarding literacy development, the continued sequential work on the discursive formatting of the readable, leading up to tangible, discourse formats – like tied expansions, lists and connected utterances – as emergent from or already identified in the participants' discourse organization should be

acknowledged. For example, the first placed and multimodally linked format of *hei as den mond* (l.5) is discursively developed into the lesser deictic and reading-object bound *an der mett as säin mond* (l.9). These are formatting accomplishments which allow the joint reading to move on (l.5, l.9, l.16) after having achieved a stabilization of the discourse object and, more importantly, its format allows for tracing literacy development in its deployment in joint reading when the readable is formatted as the actual reading in line with written literacy practices.

To sum up, the analysis of the given sequence in terms of sequentially accomplished formatting of discourse elements and structures reveals the features, conditions and potentials of literacy development in and through joint reading activities. In these instances of mutually displayed and negotiated discourse formatting in line with the available and constraining readable elements demonstrate the actual work that reading involves in terms of "doing reading" in general, as opposed to the simplified socially isolated "reading of the book / reading". Moreover, and of major importance for future studies into literacy development as analyzable in joint reading activities, the joint readers accomplish literacy beyond the immediate sequentialized discourse-organization, leading up to normatively expected, discursively bound literacy formats as they develop on and expand from immediate, multimodally and sequentially tied formatting to legible discourse formats in line with literacy constraints.

## **8. Expanding modalities in formulating and literacy development**

A third perspective on the selected joint reading sequence demonstrates that the young joint readers indeed not only identify but orient to the challenges in line with the micro-sequentially observable literacy development. In fact, the systematics of the sequential and multi-modal work as accomplished in the organization and stabilization of joint reading reveals the participants' available and shared orientation to the needs as well as the constraints of literacy. In fact, participants enact placements, negotiations and closings of discourse objects as induced by an ongoing, gradually progressing reading process which moves on through the readable elements. Besides the micro-sequential and discourse organizing features discussed, this is available from the participants' gradual movement to the right bottom end of the open double pages of the book as Tim finally moves his orientation downwards (Fig. 10) before the page is turned by Tim. This – literacy relevant movement – is co-constructed and achieved after a final or concluding reiteration of what is discursively accomplished by the participants *jo* (.) (l.16-17) before the next prominent readable element is introduced by Tim: *wat kann de fesche?* (l.17).



Moreover, and of particular importance to current debates on literacy development in particular settings such as highly diversified literacies, multilingualisms and multiculturalisms, the formulating activities as observable in the discussed sequence display a strong interlinkage between modalities, their sequential availability and their dynamic discursive complementariness. That is, participants rely on a variety of modalities for glossing, for practices in indicating (e.g., *hei as den mond*, l.5), pointing, other deictic work as well as when formulating what is read. Expanded and multimodally interconnected pointing as well as the systematic placement and continuation of – gradually changing, replacing or completing – elements and formats at particular discourse structures is evidence of literacy work. Indeed, what is done in and through joint reading is suitable formulating work which is gradually stabilized as a particular, verbally intelligible wording or formatting. Initial organizing as well as formulating work is then available in a particular discourse feature which comprises the expanded organizing and formulating work which had to be accomplished in doing reading prior to the achievement of the actually read. Ben's pointing gesture indicating the book, though outside the open readable double pages (Fig. 10, l.16) illustrates this achievement from a process of expanded formulating and organizing work which can not be grasped in its systematic micro-development without an integrated vision of the multimodal and multilingual resources at stake. The selected sequence of "doing reading" indeed takes place in languages and modalities different from the language of the reading as provided in the book (German, drawings, pictures). However, as the micro-development of doing reading can reveal, these modalities of the reading object available are not only (re-)enacted by the readers though available and suitable means but also respect and draw from the constraints and conditions that comprise the reading as discourse. As such, the systematic expansion and gradual stabilization of particular features in line with the reading object point to the very instances of literacy development as tangible in joint reading activities.

## 9. Concluding remarks

The single case analysis provided here gives insights into ways for systematically providing evidence and tracing literacy development in line with Gee's comprehensive statement indicating that "when you read, you are always reading something in some way. You are never just reading "in general" but not reading anything in particular" (Gee, 2003: 1). Indeed, the specific case of joint reading activities with their window into ontogenetically relevant literacy work as organizing discourse, stabilizing discourse features and integrating modalities allows for tracing micro-developments which operate on the larger literacy awareness and development of a particular participant. Moreover, the systematics which are deployed in these joint

reading activities provide grounds for approaching the phenomena of literacy development in general and, more importantly, with regard to the widely discussed problematic issues of homogenizing literacy assessment (in one language, by one individual, in one modality), ecologically and situatedly valid indicators for literacy development as well as insights into the value of rich (rather than limiting) reading objects and practices. Currently conducted longitudinal, as well as diversified, single case analysis regarding individuals, discourse-organizational phenomena as well as specific situations will deepen the theoretical as well as the methodological understanding of how reading and literacy in development can be captured and documented in socio-culturally and socio-cognitively comprehensive ways, occasioning a shift in perspective on *doing* reading.

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