**Abstract**

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This is a study, in the polyphonic sense of Bakhtin, of the occurrence of different voices in a seemingly monologic text. The question is posed whether and to what extent polyphony – of a conflicting kind – occurs in prescriptive texts such as curricula for Swedish in Swedish compulsory schools from 1962 through 2000, when the most recent one was approved. Hidden dialogue is studied in four types of constructions: (1) contrastive relations indicated by the conjunction *men* ‘but’, subjunctions such as *även om* ‘even if’ or adverbs such as *dock* ‘though’, (2) negated sentences, (3) sentences with strong deontic modals, i.e. *måste* ‘must’ and *får inte* ‘must not’, and (4) claims for which reasons are given with overt causal markers such as *därför att* ‘because’. The conflicting viewpoints are identified within an ideological system articulated by Ball et al. (1990). The main finding in the study is that in the beginning of the period, dialogues are both frequent and articulate two distinct positions, although these viewpoints are not far from each other ideologically. By the end of the period, such dialogues are less frequent and it is hard to pinpoint the two positions and the difference between them.

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