Abstract


Every drama is launched by a conflict. Accordingly, the interaction of the characters creates that conflict. When actors work with a dramatic text during rehearsal, it is their task to act out the conflict through their bodies and voices. This study compares the dialogue written by two Swedish dramatists with the dialogue composed by a student who was enrolled in a year-long writing workshop for playwriting. The analysis of the Swedish drama writers indicates that conflict is present throughout the dialogue. The dialogue is not constructed by initiation moves followed by response moves, but by initiation moves responded to by other initiation moves. Further, some initiation moves either do not receive a response at all or, if so, the response does not appear to correspond to the information that was sought. The characters constantly change topics as their different wishes and wills collide. This makes the surface of the dialogue appear to be illogical, as the conversation does not develop in a linear way. The study then analyzes different stages of the student’s texts produced over the course of the drama workshop. Using extracts from the student’s drama texts, four genre traits for drama dialogue are discussed: 1) Initiation moves are responded by new initiation moves. 2) The subject of discussion constantly changes. 3) The surface of the dialogue gives an illogical impression. 4) The conversation does not develop in a linear fashion. The analysis indicates that the student did not fully master the genre traits for the dramatic dialogue.

Keywords: drama dialogue, interaction, conflict, genre traits, writing development, Swedish drama.