



## Brief

# Lille Ting is herself. An early years picturebook in a translinguaging space

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A translinguaging space (Wei, 2011) is a place where all resources of language and communication that exist in a place are employed in order to promote strategies we all use in order to function in a language environment. A translinguaging approach opens up the communicative room and includes the different participants that meet there. All diverse communicative competencies and linguistic competencies that exist in and between the individuals are acknowledged as language competencies, and being language competent is not confined to having formal or defined skills in some features of a target language.

A close reading of the picturebook *Lille Ting spiser ABC* [Little Ting eats ABC] (Diep, 2011) shows that it represents a materialization of many of the ideas of leading translanguage profiles Cen Williams, Li Wei, and Ofelia Garcia. The close reading reveals a plethora of languages and language-like phenomena. We find not only words in Norwegian and other languages, but a series of other systems for creating meaning. This characterizes the book and contributes to a situation where the book by and of itself has the capacity to function as a provider of translinguaging. The book contains both examples and reading challenges to inspire readers to engage in translinguaging.

The picturebook genre with its multimodal play is a system for creating meaning, drawing upon the coexistence and collaboration of the modalities present. *Lille Ting spiser ABC* is also an alphabet book, which is a genre with its own conventions that contribute to meaningful reading and guide the interpretation, and alphabet books are language intensive. A third element in the book is the presence of performance elements. Performance art is a way of creating meaning that also follows conventions, just like language. The performance

artist involves the reader and the body in certain ways that we can recognize in this picturebook. In a translanguaging perspective the goal for the work with a book may not be to attain a reasonable interpretation. For the relevant target group, discovering, experiencing and enjoying the play between genre conventions, modalities and performativity could be a more worthwhile goal.

A book containing this kind of diversity as regards language elements, comprises a translanguaging resource. This can also be amplified by combining the book with other texts and activities related to the book, especially if there is focus on each participant's experiences and language competencies. *Lille Ting spiser ABC* is designed in a way that can promote the language engagement of diverse readers. These readers can also function as models for each other, given that different readers, especially young readers, tend to discover language elements that correspond to their life experiences and level, and that can make their peers curious.

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