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Section VII Teaching disciplinary literacy in all subjects – new research and practices.
Part II

Chair: Sari Sulkunen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Tuesday, July 24, at 11.30–13.00 **Location:** Seminar Building / Room S 22

LITERACY CHANGES LIVES.

History essay writing as a disciplinary practice

Presenter:

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Abstract:

Knowledge in history is constructed using various textual documents as evidence, and therefore it is highly interpretative in nature (Schleppegrell & de Oliveira 2006). In Finland teaching and learning history in upper secondary school should include the knowledge-construction practices of the discipline. These practices are intertwined with complex literacy practices typical to the discipline of history. (See Veijola & Mikkonen 2016.) In this presentation I focus on document-based history essays and their textual and linguistic features.

The data of the study consist of 52 essays that students have written as a part of a history course exam in Finland in 2015, and they are analysed within the framework of the systemic-functional language theory (Halliday 2014). In the presentation I introduce some of my key findings, concentrating especially on the ways that historical documents are recontextualized in the essays. The texts reflect naturally their more general writing context (i.e. upper secondary school), but additionally the study suggests that there are linguistic features that can be seen specific for the discipline of history. It seems, that writing in history stands out from writing in other subject-areas, and therefore attention should be specifically paid to writing in history lessons, as it could affect learning the subject-content.

References:

Halliday, M. A. K. 2014 [1985]: *An introduction to functional grammar*. Revised by M. I. M. Matthiessen. London: Arnold.

Schleppegrell, M. J. & de Oliveira L. C. 2006: An integrated language and content approach for history teachers. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 5, 254–268.

Veijola, A. – Mikkonen, S. 2016: Historical literacy and contradictory evidence in Finnish high school setting. The Bronzen Soldier of Tallinn. – *Historical Encounters* 3 (1), 1–16.