Summary

This thesis investigates how the Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality, teachers of Danish, and pupils in upper secondary school define and invoke the three standard exam genres of Danish: the debate article, the essay, and the literary article.

A study of 17 instructional documents regarding the three genres demonstrate that the Ministry operates with objective, homogenous and exhaustive genre definitions, resulting in blindness towards inherent inconsistencies.

As regards the pupils understanding of the examination genres, a study of 11 selected pupils’ essays and debate articles reveals that a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses can lead to descriptions of a number of genre defining features that are invoked to accomplish important self- and reader mentioning. The study also finds that the use of self- and reader mentioning varies systematically in terms of how the assignments are assessed.

Furthermore, three teachers’ written feedback to essays and debate articles are analysed. They show that comments regarding the use of self- and reader mentioning are almost entirely absent in teachers’ feedback. Moreover, the study reveals an overall discrepancy between the kinds of feedback teachers provide to high versus low assessed student papers.

The dissertation’s theoretical discussion leads to a five-pronged definition of a pragmatic genre understanding that supports the final didactical reflections, which entail concrete suggestions regarding how to further develop and improve the teaching subjects in upper secondary Danish.