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Meaning for fraction multiplication: thematic analysis of mathematical talk in three fifth grade classes.

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Summary: In this article we share the results of an analysis of the mathematical talk that occurred in discussions of a fraction multiplication task in three different fifth grade mathematics classes. The purpose of the analysis was to determine whether and how fraction multiplication might be construed differently through the use of language, even in classes where the same task was being enacted. We found that the discussions in each class did construe fraction multiplication differently, providing opportunities for students in different classes to develop different conceptions of what fraction multiplication means. This research represents an example of how thematic analysis can be used to shed light on the mathematics of the mathematics classroom, and has implications for research on the enacted curriculum as well as the teaching and learning of fraction multiplication.

Classification: F43

Keywords: thematic analysis; enacted curriculum; fraction multiplication

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