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Språkdiraktik på (o)jämlig grund i migrationernas tid

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Akademisk avhandling

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The limits to multilingualism: Language pedagogy on (un)equal grounds in the age of migrations

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to critically examine opportunities and obstacles to develop teaching in Swedish as a second language on equal ground. This is done by ethnographically exploring a group of students' and their teachers' lived experiences of language and teaching practices in a school and society in northern Sweden's peripheralized interior. In the different chapters focus is on how Swedish and other named languages are socially constructed in relation to the students, and how this process affects (and is affected by) their conditions to produce lived multilingual spaces (cf. Lefebvre 1991) and to take place as legitimate speakers (Bourdieu 1991b) of Swedish.

By directing attention towards "the white listening subjects" (Flores 2021; Flores and Rosa 2015) that repeatedly assess the participants as inadequate language learners and illegitimate language users, neoliberal views of linguistic competence as first and foremost an individual skill are challenged (Del Percio and Flubacher 2017). In contrast to the monotonous and *dominated spaces* (Lefebvre 1991:164) where Swedish is used, it is also shown how the students produce more permissive spaces, where they learn languages such as Hindi, Moldavian and Turkish, from each other as well as from interaction with popular culture and digital medias. It is argued that the heterogenous language practices characterizing these *appropriated, polyrhythmic spaces* (Lefebvre 2004:105) or *heterotopias* (Foucault 2008a), have the potential to shed light on how a language pedagogy on equal grounds could be developed.

In the concluding chapter, the author discusses how we can imagine ways of teaching Swedish as a second language that, instead of being built upon *monolingualism* and *nativespeakerism* (Ortega 2019), tries to realize multilingualism and social justice. By drawing upon Rancière's (1991) radical notion of equality – where equality is seen as a starting point rather than a distant goal – it is not only suggested that a language pedagogy on equal ground must strive to open up spaces where valued linguistic resources can be developed, but also that we need new conceptualizations of language, better aligned with multilingual subjects in the age of migrations. The optimistic suggestion, following the sometimes disheartening descriptions of the young participants' lives in Nyland, is that the *heterotopias* (Foucault 2008a) of Fjällskolan can be a point of departure for a conversation about the more concrete didactical implications of this study.

Keywords

multilingualism, ethnography, linguistic repertoires, investment, social justice, uneven mobility, social space, stopped bodies, white listening subject

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