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English as a gatekeeper: Power through discourses in a Language Introduction Program

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This paper investigates power structures in English-language education within Sweden's Language Introduction Program (LIP). In Swedish society, a high proficiency in English plays an important role in accessing further education and the job market. Inadequate proficiency in English can lead to inequality in education, and thus to inequality in society in a long-term perspective. The methodology of this study is based on linguistic ethnography using interview data from seven semi-structured individual interviews with principals, mentors, a student counselor, and a special-needs educator involved in LIP at a Swedish school. Foucauldian perspectives of power and Fairclough's critical discourse analysis are used to examine power structures and language ideologies within the organization. The results show how LIP's organizational structures disadvantage the international language of English. Furthermore, power structures of governmentality within the organization steer students towards vocational programs rather than of theoretical programs.

Keywords: English education, discourses, governmentality, newly arrived students, organization, power.

1 Introduction

In Swedish society, English holds an important position (Gheitasi et al., 2022), and inadequate proficiency in English can therefore lead to inequality within several areas, one of them being education. The European Commission (2015) reports a clear connection between proficiency in English and employability, stating that sufficient English skills are important for gaining employment. The Language Introduction Program (LIP) is a nation-wide transition program for newly arrived students[1] aged 16-19 (The Swedish National Agency of Education [SNAE], 2013a). LIP is designed to ensure a fast transition to future studies at for example upper-secondary schools (Swedish Educational Act SFS 2010:800, Chapter 17, §3), and to strengthen students' proficiency in Swedish as a second language (SSL). Given the importance of proficiency in English within Swedish education and in Swedish society, it is surprising that very little research has been performed on English-language education at LIP.

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This study focuses on English-language education at LIP and the role of faculty members within the organization. Linguistic ethnography (LE) has been used for data production. The data set for this article consists of seven semi-structured individual interviews with principals, mentors, a student counselor, and a special-needs educator involved in LIP. Because of global migration, the educational setting of LIP is constantly changing. In this environment, organization is key to meet the individual needs of students. The role of faculty members at LIP is seldom researched but they hold important roles in school organization. Even though they are not teaching themselves, their functions enable learning and progression of students.

This paper aims to investigate LIP faculty members' verbalized discourses of English as a school subject. Also, this paper aims to investigate how power structures and discourses affect the positioning of English as a school subject at LIP.

The research questions are:

1) How is English positioned as a school subject within the organization of LIP?
2) What discourses about English as a school subject are verbalized among faculty members at LIP, and how can these be linked to power?

2 Migration and education

LIP is organized within upper-secondary school education, but the content of the courses is the same as within the mandatory school in Sweden. Since LIP is an individual transition program the heterogeneity of students is high, and the amount of time enrolled in the program differs among students. A student with a long history of schooling in their home country is expected to spend a shorter time on LIP, while a student with less of a schooling background is likely to spend more time. Various terms are used to refer to young people who have recently migrated. In the Swedish context, the term *newly arrived student* is used. According to The Swedish Education Act (SFS 2010:800, chapter 17, §7) all LIP students must have an individual study plan that is evaluated and changed continuously throughout their education. This study plan is constructed by mapping and evaluating the student's prior schooling and it affects the time for which students are enrolled on LIP. Although a large focus is on the subject SSL, other subjects from mandatory schooling are also valuable components of a successful transition. English is the only foreign language that is mandatory for all students in Swedish schools throughout their education, and a passing grade is mandatory for all further education in Sweden (SNAE, 2021). English is an important factor of participation in fields such as politics, education, economics, and international studies, as well as working life in Sweden (SNAE, 2022a). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2015) describes migration as a permanent condition of our time and calls for the education of newly arrived students to be a priority of governments. It further stresses the importance of providing permanent funding and working towards increased awareness of how to organize migrant education.

Education for young refugees and asylum seekers has been researched by many different scholars in a wide variety of contexts. Hamilton and Moore (2004), Pinson et al. (2010) and Pinson and Arnot (2020) contributes to an

understanding of the complexity of education and migration. These studies call for safeguarding the needs of newly arrived students and highlight the importance of school organizers' understanding the refugee situation's effects on learning. In a German context, Terhart and von Dewitz (2018) describe how organizational structures play a vital role in the inclusion and exclusion of newly arrived students. As a result of increased migration, many schools face a reality of linguistically diverse classroom settings. In this context, acknowledgment of students' language resources can play an important inclusive role. However, Gogolin (2013) describes the "monolingual habitus" (p. 40), where education instead plays a central role in enforcing monolingualism as a characteristic trait and the normality of national identity (pp. 40–41). In another publication, Gogolin (2021) describes how the idea of the monolingual state was formed, and its effects on the education system: "European societies, and consequently their public school systems, can be described as compositions of linguistic diversity" (p. 298). Linguistic diversity within education is a common, but Gogolin describes a national refusal to accept certain nations as states of diversity (p. 301) In a Norwegian context, Rodrick Beiler (2020; 2021) investigates writing at a program similar to LIP and shows that endorsement of monolingual norms is often present (2020, p. 21). Rodrick Beiler (2020) writes that even if a school approaches language diversity as a resource, education is often based on monolingual norms (p. 13).

Kramsch (2014) investigates how the mobility of people affects and challenges foreign language teaching. Kramsch calls for changed pedagogical practices and an understanding of how the mobility of people and capital are changing foreign language education (p. 302). Also, Canagarajah (2017) shows how language and migration are influenced by the neoliberal economy and regarded as "an important human capital" (p. 3). In this neoliberal world, communication becomes increasingly important. Furthermore, Canagarajah (2018) investigates communication and calls for an expanded view of English proficiency challenging set norms of successful language communication skills. Giampapa and Canagarajah (2017) write that English is often regarded as "the unquestioned and uncontested global language, as necessary for skilled migration." (p. 1) resulting in linguistic dominance and gatekeeping functions in society. Furthermore, the importance of English, together with trans-lingual resources by migrants, become tools for opening up and redefining identity positionings within neoliberal policies. (p. 3) Proficiency in English is often regarded as meritorious (European Commission, 2015), and is considered a necessity for education and the job market (Gheitasi et al, 2022). However, King and Scott (2014) show how English can function as a gatekeeper and limit social mobility and inclusion, when static ideas of linguistic success gatekeep minority groups. In addition, Feninger and Ayalon (2016) show how structural differences within the Israeli education system discriminate against the Arab-speaking population, using as lack of proficiency in English as a factor of exclusion.

In Sweden, various studies of LIP have been conducted, and several of these have focused on its organization. Wedin (2021a, 2021b) writes about the organizational features of LIP and the important role of principals, arguing that individual principals significantly shape the organization of LIP. Principals previous experience in second-language didactics has consequences for organizational success at LIP. This corresponds to a report conducted by The

SNAE (2013a) that emphasizes that all teachers working with LIP students need training in second-language didactics to be able to provide help and support. The SNAE states that if knowledge of this is missing in of the organization, success will be hard to accomplish (p. 13, 15). Bunar and Juvonen (2022) investigate how the agency of principals affects LIP organization and student progression in the long term. They state that the overall organization of LIP is exclusionary (p. 989, 991), and that students are often kept on LIP to "prepare them a little bit more than needed" (p. 1000). This is often done in the name of care and protecting students from the setbacks that are predicted to result from attending mainstream education (p. 1001).

Nuottaniemi (2023) describes students' feelings of being trapped in LIP in a rural town in Sweden, where lack of progression in the subject SSL becomes a gatekeeper for mobility and integration. Also, Nilsson Folke (2017) argues that challenges regarding motivation and progression can be traced back to a feeling of being in an "educational waiting room" (p. 41). Moreover, Fejes et al. (2018) describe LIP students' feelings of frustration but also add perspectives from teachers and faculty members. Fejes et al. state that organizational structures and activities that could increase LIP students' integration and contact with other school programs are seldom arranged (p. 39). Instead, the responsibility for inclusion is often put on individual LIP students, who are expected to make contact and physically locate themselves where mainstream programs are located. Tajic and Bunar (2020) describe the importance of school organization in the inclusion processes of newly arrived students in a secondary school context. Decisions about how and why inclusion is implemented are led by management and seen as a joint strategy for all personnel. Tajic and Bunar state that increasing inclusion requires management to structure and arrange activities and decisions that facilitate it.

2.1 English as a school subject in Sweden

Since the end of World War II, the importance of English has increased both nationally in Sweden and internationally in fields such as trade, politics, and economics. Gheitasi et al. (2022) describe how English replaced German as a compulsory school subject in Swedish schools in the 1950s, and how proficiency in English came to be regarded as a resource in several fields (p. 139). English is one of the core subjects in the Swedish school system and mandatory national tests are taken by all students in Grades 6 and 9 in mandatory schooling and at the upper secondary level. English as a school subject in Sweden is organized to mirror the CEFR levels of foreign language education (Council of Europe, 2020). Mandatory schooling is equivalent to CEFR A.1.2¬– B1.1, and upper-secondary schooling to B1.2–B2.2. (SNAE, 2022b).

Mainstream education and education at LIP are often organized differently. Cunningham (2023) describes several different ways of organizing English-language education, and the relevance of the subject to LIP students (p. 194). She argues that English is not just one subject among others in the Swedish education system. Rather, English in many ways functions as a second language in Swedish society, and internationally as a lingua franca (p. 176). Since English is a language that most Swedes master, it is often considered to be a resource in the language-learning classroom. Gynne (2019) describes how LIP students are

asked to only use Swedish or English when speaking in the classroom for the teacher to maintain control over what is being said.

Milani (2007) shows how societal tensions between English and Swedish originates from when Sweden entered the European Union resulting in increased influence of languages such as English. This led to a call for the protection of the Swedish language (p. 25) and in Swedish being named the principal language of Sweden (Swedish Government Office, 2002, p. 27; Swedish Language Act, SFS 2009:600). Milani (2007) discusses the hegemony of Swedish – how it was previously regarded as indisputable, and how the increased use of English in Sweden came to question such a view.

This article complements previous research about the organization of LIP, but also within the field of English in Sweden. While proficiency in Swedish as a second language is the emphasis of LIP, English is an important component in accessing further education and the job market in Sweden. Research about English education at LIP and the importance of English to make a successful transition from LIP is limited and necessary. In addition, research on faculty members at LIP is scarce. This article will contribute to addressing this research gap.

3 Theoretical perspectives

Foucault (2002) describes power as a socially constructed act that exists at all levels of society. Power and resistance can be traced in language to the different discourses in our social world, and the exercise of power in institutions can be observed in the everyday life of education (p. 338). The very foundations of school such as schedules (control of time), grading (valuing and giving or declining access), and detention (punishment) are core control mechanisms (p. 338). Power is a natural process that is continuously re-negotiated in the social interactions among people (p. 343).

Governmentality is described by Foucault as a higher level of government (p. 208) and grounded in acts of security, rationality, and morality (Strömmer, 2020). Rojo and Del Percio (2020) describe governmentality as a part of the neoliberal governmentality becomes "entranced with local, longer-standing histories of colonialism, modernity, and capitalistic exploitation and dispossession" (p. 4), urging us to detect and understand the impact that these processes have on our everyday lives. Foucault (2002) shows that governmentality can be identified with a certain procedure: identify a problem, collect information about the problem, find a described solution, undertake an information campaign aimed towards the people involved, and to continue until self-regulation takes place. Power structures linked to governmentality are described by Milani et al. (2021) in an analysis of a civic-orientation course for adult migrants in Sweden. They write that the act of governmentality is to instill the belief that so-called 'Swedish values' are superior to other values and change habits as an act of integration: "changing their routines, eating and drinking differently, and adopting a different lifestyle through which they can become healthy Swedish citizens" (p. 765). Foucault (2002) describes such a process as the act of self-government when self-regulation occurs as a result of repeated information given "the art of self-government, connected with morality" (p. 206). The initial stage of governmentality, according to Foucault (2002), is when a group or an issue is singled out from others. In this article, I refer to that stage as *identifying*

a problem. The isolation of the so-called 'problem' is described and categorized (p. 215), and the problem must be solved for "the common good" (p. 210) of everyone. This administrative phase is referred to as *collecting information*. To identify and specify a problem or issue, information must be gathered about the selected problem to describe and administrate it (p. 215). When all the information is gathered and compiled the next phase of governmentality – *finding a solution*, is enacted (p. 215). In this stage of governmentality, information is repeatedly used to change the behavior of the identified problem group (pp. 215–216). Here, the term *information campaign* is used to describe this stage.

Foucault's final stage of governmentality occurs when the information campaign has resulted in *self-regulation*; when the group changes its behavior to fit the described solution presented, without reinforcement. According to Foucault, the "control of the mind" is the ultimate power excursion (p. 217). Rojo (2020) investigates neoliberal governmentality within education stating that "success and failure are the exclusive responsibility of the subject". Gherson (2018) shows how neoliberal logics and individual responsibility are enacted and enhanced in the interaction between recruiters and unemployed. In this process individual strive is labeled the solution to structural problems (p. 178). According to Foucault (2002) extended focus on individual responsibility limits person's ability to resist power structures. In this article, the stages of governmentality are investigated through discourses and social practice among LIP faculty members.

4 Methodology

The methodology of this study is based on LE (Copland & Creese, 2015; Tusting 2019) in combination with critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 2010; 2015). LE and CDA both acknowledge the idea that language and society are linked together. The data used in this article is part of a research project conducted at two upper-secondary schools located in a medium-sized town in Sweden (Slope Hill High School and Meadow Hill High School[2]). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I had limited access to faculty members at Meadow Hill High School (Meadow Hill). This article therefore focuses on the faculty members and the organization of Slope Hill High School (Slope Hill) only. In Sweden it is the principal, and the school organizers that decide how to structure education at LIP which results in many different types of organizations. In this article, one possible way is explored.

Table 1. Data overview, larger study.

Participants	Observations	Interviews[3]	Field notes	Photographs
85	78	22	50,000+ words	300+

The data set for this article consists of seven interviews with principals, mentors, a student counselor, and a special-needs educator all working at LIP. There are seven interviews but only six participants, since one participant was interviewed twice, on his/her request[4]. The interviews were selected because

the participants are faculty members who support teachers in various ways and are involved in school organization. The focus of this article is to explore faculty members' verbalization of discourses related to English-language education.

4.1 Interviews and transcriptions

The individual interviews were semi-structured and were conducted in Swedish. All participants were given the questions one week before the interview. The questions were approved by The Swedish Ethical Review Board[5]. The questions focused on areas such as participants' previous background and education, organization of LIP, and students at LIP[6]. All participants were informed that they had the right to choose which questions to answer. The interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and were audio recorded and later transcribed.

The transcriptions were produced in a manner that represents the content of what the participants said. They have been edited to include writing conventions such as punctuation. The original Swedish transcripts were translated by me in a relatively free manner, i.e. not word-for-word. The quotes in this article are presented in English first, followed by the original Swedish version in parentheses.

The transcription conventions are:

Italics for emphasis.

[ ] for explanations

[…] indicates that a part has been removed

4.2 Participants and organization

The participants have been given the pseudonyms Åke (principal), Vera (principal), Tina (mentor), Unni (mentor), Bonny (student counselor), and Alma (special-needs educator). All participants gave written consent to participate in the study and had the opportunity to read and correct their transcribed interviews. The purpose of this article is *not* to portray individuals or their actions, but rather how individual actions can be connected to larger structures of power. However, Foucault (2002) states that power is enacted in the social interaction among people (p.343) and individual actions can be linked to the context where they are performed.

The work of different members of faculty at Slope Hill circles around the Student Health Team (SHT). The SHT is a team of faculty members that meet regularly to discuss student-health-related issues. The *principal* has two areas of responsibility: one as a pedagogical leader, and one as management. This divided responsibility relates not only to teaching practices and pedagogical decisions, but also to financial resources, schedules, and legislative decisions (Swedish Education Act, SFS 2010:800, 2nd chapter, §9). Another profession that is linked to school organization is the *special-needs educator*. In Swedish schools, they are a link between management, teachers, and students. A large part of the professional role involves guiding and supporting management in student-health-related issues, mapping students' progression and need for additional support, and assisting teachers with different adaptations for students who require extra support. The *student counselor* is often a member of the SHT and assists principals, mentors, and other professions in decisions regarding the future education paths of students. The student counselor also has individual

meetings with students and guides them in their transition to further education (SNAE, 2013b). The importance of the student counselor at LIP is underlined by the Swedish School Inspectorate (SSI, 2019) and the SNAE (2013a). Furthermore, the *mentor* conducts development meetings twice a year with the students and caregiver and are the foremost contact persons of the school for the student and parent/caregiver. The mentors are responsible for informing the SHT about student progression and student-health-related issues regularly. At LIP in Slope Hill, all mentors are SSL teachers.

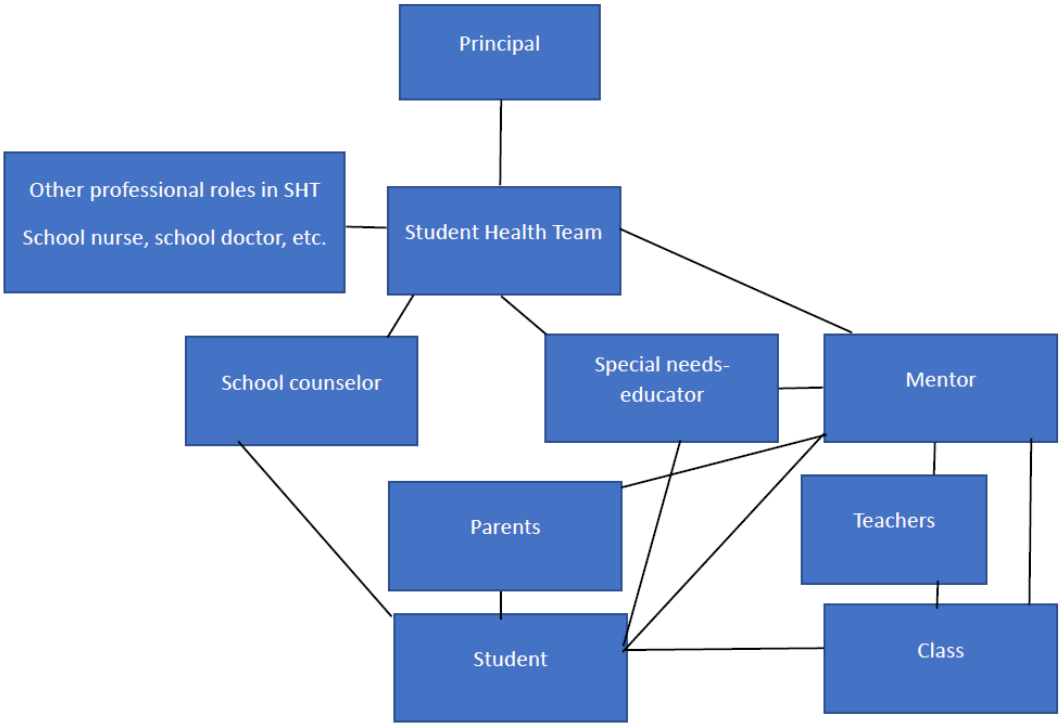

Figure 1. Organization map of LIP at Slope Hill High School

The organization map of faculty at Slope Hill illustrates the different levels of responsibility and can contribute to an understanding of the complexity of the organization. I created the map based on my field notes, informal conversations, and local policy documents. When this process was finished, the school's special-needs educator was asked to correct and clarify it, which she did. After I had revised the organizational map, the school's special-needs educator verified it and my alterations again.

4.3 Data analysis

The method of data analysis is CDA, using Fairclough's (2010, 2015) model that emphasizes discourses connection to the social practices. According to Fairclough (2015), humans can be positioned with different, contradictory, and competing ideologies, and studying these facilitates an understanding of how ideologies operate (p. 55). When analyzing discourse practices, the focus must be both on how speakers draw on already existing discourses, as well as how receivers consume and use these discourses. In this process the existing order of discourses is reconstructed and played out in the wider social practice of our

societies. Fairclough's CDA model holds three layers: Text, discourse practices and consumption, and social practice (p. 58). Within these layers', aspects of *description, interaction*, and *explanation* are connected.

In the initial stage of data analysis for this article, the selected interviews were transcribed and repeatedly read. Thereafter, codes were generated: *English, language ideologies, organization, othering, private discourse, and professional discourse*. After the creation of codes, the data analysis program Nvivo (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019) was used to code the data set. Nvivo provided a helpful tool in the process of analyzing the text practices and identifying the text-making of the selected data set. The coded extracts were then analyzed again, using Fairclough's CDA model investigating text making, discourse practice, discourse consumption, and social practice. First, CDA was used to analyze how major subject positions are constructed in discourse and, second what realities are reproduced and portrayed trough discourse practice and consumption at LIP. Furthermore, institutional meaning of the discourse practice was linked to the social practice at LIP (p. 67-70). In this process several discourses were identified, analyzed, and named: *Assimilation, English, Future, LIP as a program, Monolingual norms, National language, Othering,* and *Vocational programs*. According to Fairclough (2015, p. 56), discourses are a part of social practice and hold different dimensions of power. Discourses clash, strengthen one another, and compete in different ways. At this stage, the analysis of discourses was combined with Foucault's (2002) theories of governmentality to deeper analyze the social practice.

4.4 Ethics and positionality

Over approximately one school year, I was present almost daily in different classrooms at Slope Hill and Meadow Hill. It would be unrealistic to say that this did not affect the studied environment, and even in some ways the data itself. Hammersley and Atkinson (2019) argue that it is important to acknowledge the influence of the researcher in the creation and analysis of data. One example of how my presence changed the environment is how English as a school subject became more visible in the organization. One of the participating English teachers, Sara, said "[it is] since you came here that we have begun to speak [about] English ("[Det är] sen du kom hit som vi har börjat prata [om] engelska."). The researcher changes and increases focus on certain issues merely by being present in the researched environment.

The overall research project was designed according to ethical guidelines from All European Academics (ALLEA, 2017) and The Swedish Research Council (2017), with a focus on *Reliability, Honesty, Respect*, and *Accountability*.

5 Result: Discourses in place at LIP

In the result section I will first show how English becomes a gatekeeper for LIP students through discourse practices. Secondly, I will demonstrate how the positioning of English can be linked to power structures and the process of governmentality through discourses among faculty members.

5.1 (Discourses of) Power and English as a gatekeeper

The analysis shows that discourses that label English as a problem are frequent at LIP. Several of the participants speak of how students want to proceed within the educational system, and how English is a limiting factor in this process. English is often described as complex and difficult for LIP students. Discourse production and consumption of English as a problem are often combined with discourses related to students' futures. One of the mentors, Unni, describes an ambitious student who worked hard and had dreams of going onto a theoretical program at upper-secondary school, but failed English and had to relinquish this dream: "And in the end, it resulted in the student lacking qualifications in English." ("Och till slut landade det i att eleven saknade behörighet i engelska.") Unni (mentor). Another participant, Bonny, the student counselor, speaks of how important English is for LIP students, as well as the challenges that come with English: "They [LIP students] don't understand how high a level it is to study at English 6 level [CEFR level B2] and make it. And that is really the toughest requirement." ("De [Språkintroduktionselever] förstår inte hur hög nivå det är att läsa en Engelska 6 [CEFR B2] och att klara den. Och det är ju, det är ju det tuffaste kravet."). Bonny's understanding of the importance of English is also expressed by other participants, for instance in relation to how English has become more present on the agenda in LIP. In Extract 1, the special-needs educator Alma, describe how Bonny address the importance of English for LIP students.

Extract 1.

English	Swedish
Alma: I think that we have become better and better at embracing English. And I actually think that this is because we now have a student counselor who is present at all EHT-meetings [student health team] too and comes in and tells how things are regarding English	Alma: Jag tycker dock att vi har blivit bättre och bättre på att ta till oss engelskan. Och jag tror faktiskt att det kan bero på att vi har en studie-och yrkesvägledare nu som finns med på alla EHT-möten [elevhälsomöten] också och som kommer in och säger hur är det med engelskan.

Alma's witnessing of Bonny's persistence in addressing the importance of English to LIP students shows an awareness of these matters. However, the social practice from the discourse production and consumption regarding English as a difficult subject for LIP students, strengthen discourses of LIP students' individual responsibility. Such social practice makes students' limited progression detached from the structures of the organization. Students are thus positioned as being personally responsible for not moving forward with their studies. Challenges in the organization are often linked to students limited educational backgrounds and learning strategies and are often presented as something that is set and unfixable. In Extract 2 Alma (special-needs educator) say:

Extract 2.

English	Swedish
A challenge that we have at LIP, there are many, one of the challenges is that we have many students who do not really understand what demands and expectations that exist on different levels perhaps, in English for example.	En utmaning som vi har på Språkintroduktion, det finns ju flera, en av utmaningarna är ju att vi har ju många elever som kanske inte riktigt förstår vilka krav och förväntningar som finns på de olika nivåerna kanske, ta som till exempel i engelskan

Alma links these challenges to students' previous school background, claiming that "Our students may not have a large school background and they have not really grasped the Swedish school [system]" ("Våra elever kanske inte har så stor skolbakgrund och de har ju inte riktigt greppat svensk skola [systemet]"). Many issues involving organizations are linked to students' knowledge and are described as being fixed and out of reach for the organization. Rather than describing a desire to change the organizational structures to meet the educational needs of students, the participants seem to expect students to choose differently to fit into the organization.

Discourses about students' lack of proficiency in English are described by Bonny (student counselor) when she says that English is a reason why LIP students do not apply to theoretical programs. In this consumption of discourses, the social practice affects the organization decisions of the school. An example of this is when Bonny describes the so-called IMV-spots[7]. The contradictory social practice of Bonny describing the IMV-spots as an "opportunity" ("chans") for LIP students, but also states that she was glad that the same places were no longer available at the theoretical programs such as the Science program. "But they used to exist at the Science program, but they [school organizers] have removed their spots now and I think that is really good." ("Men de har ju funnits på Natur hade men de [skolans huvudman] har tagit bort sina platser och det tycker jag är jättebra"). The IMV-spots are now only available in vocational programs. The discourses practice and consumption labeling English as a problem for LIP students, at theoretical programs, support the enactment of social practice which limits the access to the IMV-spots and the variation in educational paths for LIP students.

One identified discourse in the data was of Swedish being the focus of the organization, and how Swedish will provide a future for LIP students. In this future, English is described as less important than Swedish, and the role of English in Swedish society, higher education, social life, etc. seems to describe a reality that is far from that of the students at LIP. In Extract 3 the student counselor Bonny states

Extract 3.

English	Swedish
On the other hand, you can almost only be without Swedish if you are working at the university. Only there. It [Swedish]is really needed everywhere else in society.	Å andra sidan kan du nog nästan bara vara utan svenskan om du jobbar på universitetet. Det är bara där. Det [svenskan] behöver du ju i samhället i övrigt.

Discourses that position English as something out of reach and of less relevance to the students at LIP are frequent. In Extract 4, the principal Åke states that English is "super important" if you will attend a mainstream program, but not if you attend an introduction /transition program.

Extract 4.

English	Swedish
If you are going to a mainstream program, then English is super important. If they are going to an introduction program at upper-secondary school, there you can remove either	Ska man in på ett nationellt program, då är ju engelskan superviktig. Ska de in på ett introduktionsprogram på gymnasiet, där man kan ha borta antingen matten eller engelskan.

Math or English.

In addition to the statement in Extract 4, Åke (principal) also downplay the importance of English for LIP students when adding "English is not more important than any other subject." ("engelskan är inte något viktigare än nåt annat ämne"), despite English being a core subject, mandatory for further education, and a norm on the Swedish job market. As a result, social practices contribute to English becoming a factor of LIP students' immobility, and a gatekeeper to mainstream education.

5.2 (Discourses of) Power through governmentality

According to Foucault (2002), "Government is the right disposition of things" (p. 208), and the process of governmentality involves *identifying a problem, collecting information, finding a solution, an information campaign*, and *self-regulation*. As described in the previous section, discourses of English as a challenge to LIP students, and gatekeeper to successful transition to upper-secondary school are frequent at LIP and affect the social practice of the organization. Foucault (p. 338) states that power is performed in the social interaction among people (p. 343) and actions of individuals are of importance when analyzing power structures (p. 337). In the analysis discourses of vocational programs become visible, and despite the absence of interview questions regarding vocational programs all participants spoke of the value of vocational programs for LIP students. Discourse production connecting proficiency in English with enrollment in vocational programs become visible in the social practice through governmentality.

The first step of the governmentality process, the *identification of a problem*, is low progress in English. Vera (principal) speaks of LIP students' difficulty in passing English classes at theoretical programs: "It is one thing to get in, but to get out [i.e. graduate] is something else" ("Att ta sig in är en sak. Men att ta sig ut [ta examen] är något annat"). Rather than providing support within the organization, Vera seems to view students' knowledge of English as fixed and stable. Another example of the identification of a problem is when Tina (mentor) speaks of students' frustration when learning English, paraphrasing student experience as follows: "it is like this damn bloody English. (…) I am really learning one language and here is another one that you shove down on me that I have to learn on the same level" ("det är så här förbannade jävla engelska. (…) jag lär mig ju ett språk och här bara trycker ni på mig ett till, som jag ska lära mig på samma nivå"). Tina seems to view students' challenges in learning English as personal experiences, instead of an issue relating to resources or changes required in terms of organizational structures. The solution to the *identified problem* is to steer students towards vocational programs: "We can't have everyone studying at the Science program, as doctors. Because it is not needed." ("Vi kan inte heller ha alla som läser Natur, som läkare. För det behövs inte.") (Vera, principal). This is in line with Foucault's ideas of governmentality being grounded in rationality and ideas of the common good (2002, p. 210, 328). Referring to future professions of LIP students as useful and needed by society, connects rationality and administration to the individual choice of LIP students. This marks these choices by LIP students as a problem that needs to be addressed and solved.

According to Fejes et al. (2018, p. 51) student counselors and faculty members steer LIP students towards vocational programs or programs that are regarded as being useful to society. The extended focus on vocational programs for LIP students is also identified in a report by SSI (2017) where encouragement of LIP students to apply to a vocational program instead of a theoretical program could be found at several different levels of organization such as municipality level, principals, teachers, and student counselors (p. 20). This information process is illustrated when Vera (principal) states that the mapping meetings and the information counselors provide to students are the backbone of the organization at LIP: "The entire stay at Slope Hill High School really starts with a meeting with the student counselor." ("Hela vistelsen på Bergsbackaskolan börjar ju, inleds ju med ett besök hos SYV."). At that meeting the first organizational structures surrounding the student are formed: schedule, individual study plan, mapping of previous schooling, etc. In the process of governmentality, this is when the *collecting of information* starts. The individual study plan becomes a powerful tool in the administration of information regarding LIP students and in their future plans.

Unni is a mentor and SSL teacher with several years of experience. The mentors conduct development meetings twice a year with students and caregivers and these meetings have a strong focus on school progression, plans, and educational paths after LIP. The analysis shows how the development meetings are an important part of two steps of the governmentality process: *finding a solution* and *information campaign*. In Extract 5 Unni speaks of LIP students as often having the goal of continuing to theoretical programs:

Extract 5.

English	Swedish
Many students also aim for a theoretical program. Something that we can't stop them from applying to. And of course it is really good that they have high goals. But sometimes you see pretty early on that another education path have been preferable	Många elever siktar ju också på ett studieförberedande program. Vilket vi inte kan stoppa dem ifrån att söka. Och så klart det är ju jättebra att de har högt ställa mål. Men ibland så ser man ganska tidigt att en annan studieväg hade varit att föredra.

The idea of providing information to students about different career opportunities is nothing new in school organization, and the purpose of LIP is to help students transition to further education and the job market. However, the possible futures for LIP students are presented in rather narrow terms. Discourses relating to students' unwillingness to attend vocational programs are reoccurring in the data. Discourse practice and consumption circle around school faculty members having to explain why LIP students' hopes and dreams are not achievable. "That door is shut." ("Den dörren är stängd.") Vera (principal) says, referring to a conversation about a student who wanted to apply to a technology program.

This social practice of steering LIP students towards vocational programs is also expressed by Unni (mentor) "and then we were several on several positions, we tried to talk to the student and say that there are different paths to go" ("och då var vi flera på flera håll så, försökte vi prata med eleven och säga att det finns andra vägar att gå.")

Both Vera (principal) and Unni (mentor) express that such a path exists but outside of LIP. This repetition of information from several different directions

and professions can be seen as an act of governmentality. According to the analysis, several participants suggest vocational programs to students, and sometimes portraying these as the only option for LIP students. In Extract 6 Vera describes the difficulty of theoretical programs for LIP students.

Extract 6.

English	Swedish
We don't help them by tricking them into something. Then, it is really better to go towards a vocational [program]. And many times it is that path that is the best path for our LIP students.	Vi hjälper inte dem genom att lura dem in i någonting. Utan då är det ju bättre att gå mot en yrkesförberedande [program]. Och många gånger är det den vägen som är den bästa vägen för våra språkintro-elever.

In their powerful and dominant positions as members of the government system, school faculty members enjoy the freedom to interpret situations and make assumptions about reality. In Extract 7 Bonny (student counselor) describes the collaboration with colleagues as valuable and useful to her in her professional life when she provides relevant information to students:

Extract 7.

English	Swedish
[we] have a student counselor group for newly arrived students. We have the same boss as student counselors, it is VUX [adult education], us at the upper-secondary school, and at the compulsory school.	[vi] har ju en SYV-grupp för nyanlända. Vi har ju samma chef som studie- och yrkesvägledare, det är VUX [vuxenutbildningen], vi på gymnasiet och på grundskolan.

Vera (principal) emphasizes the significance of the school's student counselors and states that "All student counselors are very important". ("Alla SYV:ar [studie- och yrkesvägledare] är jätteviktiga.") She also praises the collaboration between counselors at different schools and levels in the education system and describes them as important. In Extract 8, *self-regulation* - the final stage of governmentality, can be seen when Vera speaks of several students who now intend to apply to vocational rather than theoretical programs.

Extract 8.

English	Swedish
Vera: And there is a shift happening. And we really see that clearer and clearer. There are not just doctors and dentists [that the students want to become], there are those too.	Vera: Och det här är ett skifte som sker. Och det ser vi ju tydligare och tydligare. Det är inte bara läkare och tandläkare [som eleverna vill bli], det finns sådana också.
Researcher: But why do you think that this is the case?	Forskare: Men vad tror du det beror på?
Vera: Yes, guidance. I hope it has been good guidance too that. So that counsellors at the compulsory schools, yes I hope. Yes, yes. Or that it is the counselors here [that are responsible for the change].	Vera: Ja, vägledning. Jag hoppas att det har varit bra vägledning också att. Så att SYV:arna på grundskolorna ja, jag hoppas. Ja, ja. Eller att SYV:arna här [som är ansvarig för förändringen].

In Extract 8 Vera expresses that the efforts of student counselors have been successful in causing students to change their preferences for future educational

paths, suggesting that the process of governmentality labeled *self-regulation* has been effective. Foucault (2002) describes this power enactment when citizens "obey the laws, accomplish the tasks expected of them, practice the trade to which they are assigned, and respect the established order" (p. 210). Foucault also writes that self-regulation shapes the individual into a new form (p. 334) and that this transformation is undertaken for the common good and as a higher form of integration (p. 341). *Self-regulation* is thus a result of governmentality and is played out as a development of the self, acting as if the regulated act is committed trough consent and free will.

6 Discussion and concluding remarks

The analysis shows that discourse practices position English as a complex and difficult subject for LIP students. In discourse practice and consumption English is often portrayed as linked to problems of various kinds. Cunningham (2023) describes the subject of English as different from the rest of the subjects taught at LIP. While other subjects teaching course content can be incorporated into the larger aim of the program, which increase proficiency in Swedish, this is not the case for English. Cunningham describes English as "outside and parallel" (p. 175) positing English and its teachers in a different position than other teachers at LIP. My analysis supports this and shows how management and faculty members are seemingly unaware of this positioning of English at LIP and somewhat downplay the importance of English for LIP students. This might be traced to the tension between Swedish and English discussed by Milani (2007) and a recurring discourse that describes learning Swedish as more important than English to live in the nation of Sweden. The ascribed importance of Swedish by faculty members can be linked to what Gogolin (2013) describes as the professional habitus: "establishing monolingualism in the official national language is an imperative in a teacher's professional ethos" (p. 42). The focus on Swedish is not surprising since it is the main language in Sweden. However, it is somewhat surprising that school faculty members do not seem to regard English as an important factor in making a successful transition to further education or the job market for LIP students. The importance of English in Swedish society (Gheitasi et al., 2022) must not compete with the importance of the national language Swedish. The social practice of the organization at LIP circled around English as a problem, and not as a resource for LIP students. Lack of proficiency in English is used as a gatekeeper and as a reason for steering LIP students towards vocational programs describing them as the only option for LIP students. The current positioning of English as less relevant to LIP students may lead to inequality in education, thus in the long-term limiting the full participation of LIP students in political, educational, and social contexts (European Commission, 2015; SNAE, 2022b).

Through governmentality, English becomes a factor in steering LIP students toward vocational programs. Discourses about lack of proficiency in English are used as a factor of exclusion, and a way of justifying pushing LIP students towards vocational programs in the name of the common good. King and Scott (2014) show that ideas of static linguistic knowledge are often used in gatekeeping ways in institutions. At LIP, institutional discourses and the governmentality process of rationality, label English at theoretical programs too difficult for LIP students. Therefore, they are unfit for attending these programs.

When Vera (principal) says that it does not help LIP students "tricking them" into theoretical programs, it can be connected to Bunar and Juvonen's (2022) observations about school staff making decisions on the believed best interest of LIP students. This presumed imperative interpretation of what students may need is an act of power. The findings show that several contradictory discourses exist at LIP, often labelled as caring for or helping students. However, on several occasions the participants speak of having to persuade students to accept this so-called 'help'. Advising and informing students about different paths within the education system is valuable, but if a student declines a suggested path, that decision should be respected. Fejes et al. (2018, p. 51) and the SSI (2017) show how faculty members push vocational programs for LIP students and often within a discourse of usefulness. Nuottaniemi (2023) also address ideas of newly arrived students fulfilling a claimed usefulness in society. In this social practice and through discourse practices, power differences between LIP students and faculty members can be related to differences in attaining power in a larger societal context. Foucault (1970) states that not everyone "may speak of just anything" (p.8) and the power to speak of anything to anyone is not attained by all. It is therefore important to be aware of how power is enacted within the school system to prevent injustice. Pinson et al. (2010) write that "Refugees and asylum seekers today are often seen as aliens, strangers and the ultimate Others in society" (p. 1) and argue that various ideologies exist below the surface of our modern, liberal-democratic nations when we refer to migration. When school faculty members at LIP assume interpretive prerogative and ascribe vocational programs as the only educational path for LIP students, this creates what Dailey-O'Cain and Horner (2019) describe as "social positioning" (p. 7) through discourses. LIP students are labeled as being fit for one thing, in this case professions attained through vocational programs.

The results show how monolingual norms at LIP disadvantage English as a school subject. This may be traced back to LIP's position as a transition program with a focus on SSL. However, a broadening of such a perspective may be needed. If a student applies to a national program such as the Science program, it is to be expected that Physics, Chemistry, and other subjects related to the profile of the Science program would have dominant positions. However, having a passing grade in these subjects does not mean that the student does not have to pass subjects such as English or Social Studies or that these subjects can be dealt with later in life. This, however, is how English is positioned in the discourse practice at LIP.

According to the analysis, English in LIP is regarded of less importance to LIP students, leading to English becoming a factor of exclusion. Proficiency in English should be possible to achieve for *all* students in the Swedish school system, and not be seen as something to be dealt with later in life or never.

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Endnotes

[1] The Swedish Education Act (SFS 2010:800, chapter 3 §12a) defines 'newly arrived students' as people who have recently migrated to Sweden and are enrolled in the Swedish school system. After four years in Sweden, they are no longer defined as 'newly arrived'.
[2] Pseudonyms
[3] Interviewees were students, faculty members, English teachers, and principals
[4] The reason given was that the participant wanted to provide more information regarding the organization at LIP.
[5] Application number: 2021-02629
[6] Interview questions are attached as an appendix.
[7] If a student lacks the required competence in for example English, there are positions at upper-secondary school (IMV-spots) that students can apply to and by this enrolling in upper-secondary programs without a passing grade of English.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.

Interview mentor

Background and previous work experience

1. Tell me about yourself (education, experience, professional interest, years working at LIP)?
2. Please describe your work at LIP.
    - What do you consider to be the greatest challenges in your daily work?
    - What do you consider to be the greatest possibilities in your daily work?
3. How do you view your mentorship?
    - Possibilities/challenges?
    - Have you been given any in-service training for this position?

Students

4. What do you consider to be the greatest academic challenges for your mentor students?
5. What do you consider to be the greatest academic possibilities for your mentor students?
6. How do you think the students value the subject of English?
7. What role do you think that English has in the life of the students, now and in the future?
8. At the development meetings and when giving information to parents and care givers, is the importance of English in domains such as future studies and working life, discussed? What information regarding English is given to parents and care givers?

Organization

9. What happens if one of your students are given an F-warning (warning of potential failing grade) in English?
10. How common is it with collaborations between different subjects at LIP?
11. How much are students' language resources used in the education at LIP?
    - For what are the language resources of students used?
12. Do you have any thoughts about the meaning of language resources?
13. How involved are you as a mentor regarding potential support, dispensation in English, and support plan related to the education at LIP?

Additional topics

14. Is there anything else that you would like to address?

Interview principal

Background and previous work experience

1. Tell me about yourself (education, experience, professional interest, years working at LIP)?

2. Please describe your work at LIP.
    - What do you consider to be the greatest challenges in your daily work?
    - What do you consider to be the greatest possibilities in your daily work?
3. What do you consider to be valuable professional qualities to do a good job as a principal at LIP?

Organization

4. How is English education at LIP organized?
    - What works well /less well?
5. Do you see any need for improvements in English education at LIP?
6. What happens if a student to not pass English?
7. What kind of support is initiated for students who are struggling with English?
8. How does the organization address dispensation in English and future career paths for students if they lack a passing grade in English?
9. What criteria are there for decisions in these matters and who makes those decisions?
10. What information regarding the importance of English for future studies and professional life is given to students and parents/ care givers?
11. Are students' language resources used in the education at LIP?
    - If yes, how?
    - If no, why not?
    - For what are the language resources of students used?
12. Do you have any thoughts about the meaning of language resources?

Students

13. What role do you think that English has in the life of the students, now and in the future?
14. How do you think the students value the subject of English?

Additional topics

15. Is there anything else that you would like to address?

Interview special needs educator

Background and previous work experience

1. Tell me about yourself (education, experience, professional interest, years working at LIP)?

2. Please describe your work at LIP.
    - What do you consider to be the greatest challenges in your daily work?

- What do you consider to be the greatest possibilities in your daily work?

3. How do your regard your professional role as a special needs educator at LIP?
    - Possibilities/ Challenges?
    - Have you been given any in-service training for this position?

Students

4. What do you consider to be the greatest academic challenges for your students regarding English?
5. What do you consider to be the greatest academic possibilities for your students regarding English?
6. What role do you think that English has in the life of the students, now and in the future?

Organization

7. What happens if a student is given an F-warning (warning of potential failing grade) in English?
8. What kind of support/measures are taken?
9. What kind of support is there in English for students who are struggling with English?
10. How much do you co-operate with the teachers who are teaching English?
11. Are you part of the planning of teaching practices of English?
    - If yes, could you describe that work?
    - If not, why do you think that is the case?
12. How is support for students mapped and followed up?
13. From a perspective of a special-needs educator, what kind of need of development work do you see in English education at LIP?
14. What do you think could be needed in case of resources and focus for support issued in English education?
15. How much are students' language resources used in the education at LIP?
    - For what are the language resources of students used?
16. Do you have any thoughts about the meaning of language resources?

Additional topics

17. Is there anything else that you would like to address?

Interview student counselor

Background and previous work experience

1. Tell me about yourself (education, experience, professional interest, years working at LIP)?
2. Please describe your work at LIP.

- What do you consider to be the greatest challenges in your daily work?
- What do you consider to be the greatest possibilities in your daily work?

3. How do you regard your role as a student counselor at LIP?
    - Challenges /Possibilities
    - Have you been given any in-service training for this position?

Organization

4. What kind of support is initiated for students who are struggling with English?
5. What happens if a student fails English at LIP?
6. How does the organization address dispensation in English and future career paths for students if they lack a passing grade in English?
7. What criteria are there for decisions in these matters and who makes those decisions?
8. How is mapping done and how is it evaluated /followed up during students' enrollment at LIP?
9. How are students and parents /care givers informed about the importance of English for future studies and working life?

Students

10. What do you consider to be the greatest academic challenges for your students regarding English?
11. What do you consider to be the greatest academic possibilities for your students regarding English?
12. What role do you think that English has in the life of the students, now and in the future?
13. How do you view the future within future studies and working life in Sweden for LIP students in relation to their proficiency in English?
14. How do you think the students at LIP value English in their conversations with you as a student counselor?

Additional topic

15. Is there anything else that you would like to address?

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