Svenska för invandrarskap?
Språk, kategorisering och identitet inom utbildningsformen Svenska för invandrare

av

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Abstract


The overall purpose of this thesis and the four independent studies it builds upon is to examine how categorizations and identity positions are constructed and negotiated in the educational program Swedish for immigrants (SFI) both historically and among participants in the program at the beginning of the 21st century. The analytical focus is on the discourses that frame the development of the SFI program with a specific interest in categorizations and identity in relation to gender, language and national belonging. The empirical material includes historical texts (curricula, commission reports, public inquiries, political propositions, laws) from 1965 to 2010, as well as approximately 95 hours of audio and video recorded data and ethnographic field notes from five SFI classrooms. The results are presented primarily in the four articles but partly also in the thesis itself.

Our analysis in the first study, that takes a sociohistorical perspective as a point of departure, indicates shifts in discourses with regards to the categories and aims of the educational program, thus, making certain identity positions more accessible than others at specific times. Using the approach of nexus analysis, the theoretical framework employed in the second study approaches language policies in terms of a dialectical relationship between policy and the learning that takes place in the language focused classroom. Feminist and postcolonial frameworks are employed more specifically in the third and fourth studies. The historical analysis presented in article three shows how the categories of “immigrant” and “Swedes” have been produced and negotiated in discourses on gender and gender equality in the SFI program since the early 1970s. The fourth study highlights the complex relationship between gender equality and integration policies, as well as the perception of gender equality as a central part of “Swedishness”, negotiated in the everyday conversations in the SFI classroom. Overall, the results illuminate the circulation of discourses both across time and between policy and classrooms. Moreover, it contributes to a critical discussion about the intersection of language, gender and national belonging in the negotiation of boundaries between insiders and outsiders in Swedish society.

Keywords: Swedish for immigrants (SFI), language education, language policy, categorizations, identity, second language learning, immigrantness, intersectionality

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