

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

Linguistics and Education

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/linged

Prata svenska, vi är i Sverige! [Talk Swedish, we are in Sweden!]: A study of *practiced language policy* in adult language learning



Jenny Rosén^{a,*}, Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta^{b,c}

^a Academy of Humanities and Languages, Dalarna University, Falun, Sweden

^b School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, HumES, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden

^c Centre for Rehabilitation Research (CRR), Örebro University Hospital, Örebro, Sweden

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Available online 6 June 2015

Keywords:

Practiced language policy

Language learning

Nexus analysis

Swedish for immigrants (Sfi)

ABSTRACT

The study presented here draws upon the ongoing work in project-CIC, Categorization of Identities and Communication. Project-CIC is interested in both the social practices and the discourses that frame a tailored education for adult immigrants in Sweden. The Swedish Language Act from 2009, maintains that “Swedish is the principal language in Sweden”, and that “all residents of Sweden are to be given the opportunity to learn, develop and use Swedish”. The Act furthermore decrees that persons with “a different mother tongue” are to be “given the opportunity to develop and use their mother tongue”. The balance between Swedish as the principle language on the one hand, and a recognition of many language varieties on the other, and which is reflected in such central policy documents, comes also alive in the language learning classroom. Research concerned with the language situation of adult immigrants in different European national contexts is not uncommonly founded upon an understanding of language varieties in terms of being standardized, static and with defined (often national) boundaries. The theoretical framework employed in the study that is presented here approaches language policies in terms of a dialectical relationship between policy and the learning that takes place in the language classroom, using the approach of nexus analysis developed by Scollon and Scollon, wherein the social action is placed into the intersection of discourses in place, interaction order and the collectively framed historical bodies of both participants and institutions. Our analysis sheds light upon how interaction at the micro level is constituted in and at the same time constitutes discourses on a macro level as well as the historical bodies of the participants in the interaction in institutional settings.

© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Introduction

The Language Act is based on current language policy, which includes objectives such as that Swedish is to be the main language in Sweden and that everyone has the right to language. [...] Linguistic diversity in Sweden and individuals' access to language are also to be safeguarded. It is very much a matter of democracy that everyone has the right to language and that society has a common language that everyone can understand and use. The Language Act contributes

* Corresponding author at: Dalarna University, Campus Falun, 79188 Falun, Sweden. Tel.: +46 23 77 87 13.
E-mail address: jro@du.se (J. Rosén).

to increased awareness of the importance of safeguarding the country's main language as a complete language, serving and uniting society (Ministry of Culture, 2009).

The opening quotation from the summary of the 2009 Swedish Language Act reflects the nature of contemporary Swedish language policy, in which Swedish is claimed and promoted as the main language in the geopolitical space of Sweden while recognition is accorded to the communicative repertoires and ways of being with words of many people who inhabit this space. Swedish is endorsed as the country's main language; a language for serving and uniting society.

In the study presented here, we examine how concepts concerning language, identity and learning are oriented towards at different levels covering contemporary Swedish language policy, syllabi, and interaction in language focused classrooms. Taking nexus analysis as a point of departure, our interest here is not in the implementation of policy, but rather on how cycles of discourses are constituted and used in classroom spaces. Furthermore we use the concept *linguaging* to highlight human beings mundane language-use, which encompasses use of different language varieties, modalities and tools, in situated distributed communities of practices (see e.g. Bagga-Gupta, 2014a, 2014b; Gynne & Bagga-Gupta, 2013; Makoni & Pennycook, 2005). We recognize the transformatory dimensions of linguaging as explicated by Garcia (2009) and Garcia and Wei (2014) as “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual world” (Garcia, 2009:45).

We bring into play a multidimensional analysis of relationships between language varieties, social contexts and individual speakers, analyzing talk-in-interaction in the Swedish language learning classes for adult immigrants against the backdrop of contemporary language policy documents (compare with Hult & Hornberger, 2008). The point of departure in this article is that since language varieties in human communication are not marked by fixed borders but rather are fluid, open and continuously evolving (Bagga-Gupta, 2012a, 2013), studies of language policy need to go beyond the formal and declared policies and examine the situated contexts where the “de facto” language policies and practices are constituted and negotiated (Bagga-Gupta, 2010; Bagga-Gupta, 2012a, 2012b; Blommaert, 2010). In other words, we are interested in “practiced language policy” (Bonacina, 2011) taking both a bottom-up perspective and a nexus analytical framework rather than examining the implementation of policies from a top-down perspective (Menken & Garcia, 2010).

For many individuals and communities, life in late modern society is shaped by globalization and an expansion of information technology, where people, goods and information can travel more easily, both through “cyber space” as well as across physical borders (Messina Dahlberg & Bagga-Gupta, 2013); frontiers constructed through national, regional and global political decisions. As noted by Gubbins and Holt (2002), the new electronic media offers the possibility of a so called multilingual nation in ways that are similar to the role that the railway and printing press played in constructing an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991) as well as the “homogeneous nation-state”. Yet, in an era of globalization, language policy in many European nation-states (including the Swedish policy described above) as well as in the US, continues to be centred on a monolingual and Eurocentric understanding of language varieties. Shohamy (2006, p. 39) notes that:

On the one hand, there is the abolishment of passports in the European Union as well as state borders, but on the other hand, strict nationalistic policies are imposed, especially against immigrants, such as new citizenship tests requiring immigrants to become proficient in national hegemonic languages in a most homogeneous form as a condition for becoming a citizen. Thus, language continues to serve as a symbol of loyalty, as was the case in the early days of nationalism.

After presenting the theoretical framework that guides our work, empirical materials used in the study presented here are described. The four themes that emerge in the analysis are elaborated under the following sections: (i) discourses of multilingualism in Sweden, (ii) organization of space and time in the language focused classroom, (iii) a Swedish only interaction order and (iv) a multilingual interaction order. The final section of the article brings together and discusses the main findings of this study.

Theoretical framework

Through the nationalistic myth of “one people – one language – one nation”, language varieties become important makers of identity and inclusion or exclusion from an imagined community (Bagga-Gupta, 2011, 2013; Blommaert, 2010). Gal questions the concept of language, arguing that it is a construction in which language varieties are perceived as specific objects with labels (i.e. Swedish, German, Arabic), with identified boundaries separating them from one another but also making translations between them possible (Gal, 2006; Woolard & Shieffelin, 1994). The production of this construction of language varieties bounded to specific cultural communities can be seen as closely related to the development of nationalism and the creation of national states and a new (post)colonial Europe perceived as superior to other parts of the world (Gal & Irvine, 1995; Shohamy, 2006). Through language policy, perceptions of nations, modernization, language varieties and belonging are transferred and transformed through (post)colonial relations. The academic field of language planning and later language policy has at least previously been closely intertwined with the paradigms of modernization and nationalism.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/366094>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/366094>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)