

Language investment and dispositions among young adolescents in multilingual urban settings in Sweden

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Drawing on data generated within a PhD-study (Bylund, 2022), this presentation explores the intricacies of language investment among young adolescents (aged 11-14) in multilingual and socioeconomically disadvantaged areas across Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö. The aim of the present study is to investigate the language investment of these young adolescents by specifically examining their dispositions towards Heritage Language(s), Swedish, and English, and how these ideological positions are reflected in their reported language investment.

The study was carried out between 2019 and 2021 and employed an explanatory mixed methods design, in which data was generated using a survey ($N=92$), language diaries ($n=50$) and interviews ($n=16$), yet this presentation engages with the survey and interview data. Adopting a Bourdieusian approach, the integrated analysis of adolescents' dispositions was guided by Bourdieu's conceptual thinking tools (Bourdieu, 1977), supplemented by Norton's investment and identity theory (Norton, 2000), along with considerations of language ideologies (Kroskrity, 2000).

The findings shed light on how the young adolescents perceived Heritage Languages, Swedish, and English as valuable and significant, albeit with differing connotations and implications regarding their capital value in local, national, and global contexts. The young adolescents expressed ambivalent investments, reflecting the linguistic hierarchy in Sweden while also indicating the intricate complexities at play as they navigate between conflicting aspirations, values and dominating power structures. Additionally, findings illustrate how the young adolescents' dispositions seemed rooted in notions of named languages as linked to national, geographical, and cultural identities. The presentation highlights the intersection between language and education by discussing educational implications of young adolescents' valorizations and investment in Heritage Languages, Swedish and English.

References

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