

Invested in Swedish? Participants' perspectives on language learning at the labour market programme “Korta vägen”.

Elisabeth Zetterholm, Linköping University

Per Simfors¹

¹Linköping University

This presentation is part of a larger longitudinal investigation of adult second language learners of Swedish participating in the training programme, “Korta vägen”, organised as a cooperation between higher education institutions and the Swedish Public Employment Service. “Korta vägen” is intended as a short track to employment and includes four parts:

1. Identification and assessment of academic background and skills
2. A qualified Internship
3. Intensive language learning
4. Professional coaching

The aim of the larger investigation is to determine participants' perception of their own communicative abilities in Swedish as well as their need for further linguistic competences, and how they develop and reflect upon their interactional skills during the programme. This particular study addresses the research question how the participants reflect upon their own language learning in relation to linguistic, social and professional practices.

In order to answer the research question individual semi-structured interviews with 20 participants have been conducted. Relevant parts have been transcribed and are now being used for a qualitative content analysis (in progress). Based on thus identified themes, the concept of personal investment will be used to analyse the results.

The participants have in common that they have studied at a university in another country and they all express high motivation for learning Swedish. They comprise a highly heterogeneous group with regard to factors such as first language, country of origin, Swedish language abilities, academic disciplines and careers pursued, as well as amount of time spent in Sweden. The participants' self-reflections expressed in the interviews differ strongly in quantity and quality, mirroring the heterogeneity of the group. The various levels of insightfulness and ability to verbalise those insights, however, do not seem to be significantly connected to differences in any one factor mentioned above, least of all the duration of stay in Sweden. Instead, our preliminary findings indicate a high degree of correlation between the level and type of personal investment and differences not only in the language learning process but also in the ability to reflect upon this process.