Apples – Journal of Applied Language Studies
Vol. 20, 2, 2026, 64–80

Delayed, Accelerated, Racialized: Exploring Neoliberal Temporal Encounters in Language Learning across Institutional Boundaries

Samah Ibrahim, Gothenburg university

*Drawing on ethnographic data from eight adult learners partaking in a **Swedish for Immigrants** class, this article demonstrates that institutional practices are shaped by two neoliberal rationalities: market orientation and self-speakerism. The school's market-oriented logic is materialized through regulated and accelerated access to work. At the same time, the ideology of self-speakerism operates through the slowing down of learners' institutional time in the name of linguistic improvement. I argue that acceleration and slowing down both function as "technologies of temporal management" (Del Percio, 2021), governing not only migrants' learning trajectories, but also the regulation of the Swedish labor market. These neoliberal temporal logics produce lived experiences of uneven **temporal mobilities**, which are materialized in waiting and feelings of being stuck. Lastly, I argue that the learners' differential access to and navigation of these regimes produce lived experiences of **racial time** (Mills, 2020), through which racialized hierarchies of access, mobility, and belonging are reproduced.*

Keywords: *Neoliberalism, temporality, racial time, acceleration and slowing down, migration, SFI*

Corresponding author's email: samah.ibrahim@gu.se
eISSN: 1457-9863
Publisher: University of Jyväskylä, Language Campus
© 2026: The author
https://apples.journal.fi
https://doi.org/10.47862/apples.178122

VERTAISARVIOITU
KOLLEGIALT GRANSKAD
PEER-REVIEWED
www.tsv.fi/tunnus

1 Introduction

In Sweden, adult immigrants participate in a state-funded language program known as Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). SFI is regarded as a 'right': individuals who lack proficiency in the Swedish language are entitled to enroll in language instruction. Although participation is not mandatory in theory, it functions as a de facto requirement for certain groups. For individuals registered with the Swedish Public Employment Service or enrolled in the Establishment Programme, attendance in SFI is often a condition for receiving financial support, thereby rendering participation compulsory. SFI occupies a significant position within the Swedish integration discourse and is often associated with high expectations from the state due to the role of language in migrants' integration (Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020). Beyond this practical aim, SFI has also acquired a symbolic value relevant to the nation-state and to the migrants' need to show loyalty to their country of residence (Hyltenstam & Milani, 2012; Rydell, 2018; see also Blackledge, 2009, in a British context). Against this backdrop, migrants' language learning is often surrounded by discourses of responsibility. Dominant discourses on integration have claimed that migrants are unmotivated to learn Swedish (Lindberg & Sandwall, 2017, p. 124), which contributes to the framing of language not only as a right, but as an obligation. These representations have paved the way for an increasing 'demand logic' (see Milani, 2007), in which learning the national language is framed as a duty and migrants are positioned as individually responsible for successful (and timely) language learning. Failure to meet these expectations is often attributed to individuals rather than to institutional or structural conditions.

This demand logic intersects with broader political–economic transformations that came to impact SFI, particularly those associated with neoliberal forms of governance. Language becomes increasingly linked to speed, labor market integration, and linguistic effectiveness (Sandwall, 2013; Fejes, 2010; Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2019; see also Del Percio, 2021, for contexts outside Sweden). Swedish adult education, particularly SFI, has undergone extensive neoliberal restructuring. For example, Carlson and Jacobsson (2019) demonstrated how SFI has been reorganized as a work-oriented form of education, where migrants are expected to become employable as soon as possible. This shift has been accompanied by a *monitoring culture*, in which institutional excellence, performance, and effectiveness function as a key steering mechanism (Carlson & Jacobsson, 2019). As a result, measurable outcomes become prioritized, and SFI providers increasingly compete for funding and legitimacy (see Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2019). Other studies have explored how these neoliberal reforms affect the lived experiences of Swedish language learning. Ahlgren and Rydell (2020) illustrated how the neoliberalization of SFI education produces experiences of 'discontinuity', forcing learners to navigate institutional instability and search for the 'right' school. Similarly, Sandwall (2013) showed how the view of SFI education as a tool for meeting short-term objectives, such as work, has assigned an instrumental value to the Swedish language, in which the individuals' long-term language needs for active participation in the community are neglected. Beach and Dovemark (2019, p. 41) showed how language learners are "constantly prevented" from reaching their goals through testing practices, vocational training, or extended schooling time, practices that reflect neoliberal norms of betterment.

Most of the Swedish research has looked at neoliberalism from a macro, wider perspective: neoliberalism as a matter of organizational structure. However, neoliberalism is about much more than just policy making and institutional practices (Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020). As Martín Rojo and Del Percio (2019, p. 3) argued, neoliberal thinking "produces specific subjectivities, that is, specific ways of understanding the self". Within this perspective, little attention has been paid to how neoliberal norms shape the migrants' lived experiences of learning. Moreover, despite international research increasingly demonstrating that lived experiences of time shape language

learning trajectories (Del Percio, 2021; Pujolar, 2019), the literature has not systematically examined the relationship between neoliberalism and time in the Swedish context. I make the case that exploring this gap is significant because neoliberal discourses are deeply rooted in notions of mobility and progress; yet, many of the practices enacted in their name produce forms of control and immobility (Duchêne et al., 2013, p. 9). Therefore, exploring time as a relevant analytical concept is essential for understanding how neoliberal education operates in practice, and how it shapes migrants' opportunities for participation. Against this backdrop, this article aims to answer the following questions:

1) Which neoliberal norms and practices are enacted in everyday teaching and learning practices?
2) How do learners experience time and progress with relevance to these norms and practices?

By centering the analytical lens on migrants' lived experiences, the study responds to the special issue's aim of shifting the focus beyond narratives of individual responsibility, instead examining the sociopolitical and structural conditions shaping their educational trajectories. I also aim to contribute to new research in applied linguistics by expanding on the concept of time in an educational context, which has been shown to reflect neoliberal principles (Fejes & Holmquist, 2019). Through exploring these questions in the context of migrants' language learning, I intend to contribute to migration research by showing how systems intended to facilitate integration often create new forms of constraints, delaying migrants' full participation in society and reinforcing the very precarities they seek to escape.

2 Theoretical framework and earlier research

Previous migration research has analyzed how time impacts migrants' everyday lives in ways that create multiple inequalities. Migration scholars such as Mills (2020), Khosravi (2018, 2019, 2021), and Mulinari (2021) have examined how migrants' access to resources is both temporally and socially stratified, producing what Mills calls 'racial time', a temporal unequal access to available resources, shaped by racialized systems of value. Pujolar (2019) argued that the engagement with the concept of time in interpreting social meaning helps us understand how that meaning was produced. Similarly, Flubacher (2021, p. 1) argued that the politics of speed result in "a culture of confusion that, in the end, could serve a political purpose" and be a threat to democracy. In applied linguistics, little research has foregrounded time and temporality as analytical concepts for investigating language learners' experiences in migrant-related contexts. In his study of migrant employability programs in Italy, Del Percio (2021, p. 1) drew on migration scholarship to demonstrate how "the acceleration of movement and access to language, citizenship or work co-exist with experiences of waiting, elongation, withdrawal and delay processes". According to Del Percio, these processes "complicate our understanding of the *temporal regimes* migrants are subjected to" (Del Percio, 2021, p. 1, italics added; see also Flubacher & Yeung, 2016). Within the scope of this article, I use the term 'temporal regimes' to refer to the structured arrangements that organize how migrants temporally gain, or are denied, access to social, linguistic, and economic resources. These temporal regimes encompass both processes of acceleration (such as rapid access to a resource) and deceleration (for example, slow bureaucratic procedures, extended waiting). In language learning contexts, temporality produces, and is produced by, what Del Percio calls "differential inclusion" (2021, p. 1), allowing us to see how certain individuals are pushed forward while others are systematically delayed or even permanently marginalized. This discussion on temporality aligns with studies on language and neoliberalism that have highlighted temporal dimensions such as (de)acceleration of

access to resources, waiting, and the *constant* individual self-improvement (Del Percio & Flubacher, 2017; Martín Rojo & Del Percio, 2019). Neoliberalism is widely understood as a political-economic rationality that prioritizes market logic, competition, flexibility, and individual responsibility, even in spheres such as language education, which are not traditionally characterized by economic principles. Within this paradigm, *two facets of neoliberalism* are particularly relevant for understanding how temporality and temporal regimes emerge in language learning.

The first concerns the marketisation of language education. In migration contexts, migrants' learning of the national language is frequently represented as a means of accelerating their entry into the labor market; a view that reinforces the expectation that successful integration is contingent on *rapid* linguistic and professional adaptation (Bauer et. al., 2023). This neoliberal logic creates a specific temporal regime that accelerates the path to employment, often at the expense of meaningful forms of linguistic development. Political discourses on migrant integration amplify this acceleration logic, assuming that speed is desirable because it leads to faster integration. However, research shows that this work-oriented logic of acceleration generates temporal meanings, as in assigning language to 'quick' short-term objectives (Sandwall, 2013). Moreover, the increased focus on employability for adult migrants generates lived experiences of "temporal dispossession" caused by racialized divisions of the Swedish labor market and the flexibility that characterizes it (Philipson Isaac, 2024). However, the question of how these dynamics specifically shape the migrant's language learning experience remains underexplored. By investigating how the neoliberal market logic becomes operationalized and translated into language learning practices, we can better understand the temporal dynamics that neoliberal logic generates in language education.

The second relevant facet of neoliberalism is the construction of language learners as "self-made speakers" (Martín Rojo, 2019). As I mentioned in the introduction, neoliberal norms of betterment and effectiveness are not concepts unique to the organization or the structure. They also function at a more personal level. The self-made speaker is an analytical concept that helps us to see how this personalized functioning operates. Dardot and Lavel (2014, p. 295) defined the self-made speaker as one who "seeks to work on himself so as to constantly transform himself, improve himself and make himself ever more efficient". In an analysis of "success stories" of English language learning in the Korean context, Park (2010) argued that "the figure of the successful learner becomes a highly embodied articulation of the neoliberal subject". Park argued that the naturalization of competence, in terms of how well one speaks the language, underscores the complexity of learning and increases social inequality regarding language access. The present article investigates how the ideology of the self-made speaker is expressed in practice and what temporal implications arise when such ideology is no longer an autonomous personal choice; that is, when language learners are asked by the institution, using mechanisms of self-discipline and self-betterment, to 'do more'. The self-made speaker is not particularly specific to migrant groups; however, they are more subject to its principles through demand discourses framing them as responsible for their own integration. Even within migrant groups, individuals with different sociolinguistic backgrounds do not navigate language policies on equal terms. On a macro social level, the host community's linguistic attitudes and expectations differ depending on what language the migrants speak and which part of the world they come from (Bijvoet, 2024). These dynamics produce unequal, often racialized temporal experiences.

My main theoretical argument is that these two facets of neoliberalism can produce lived experiences of temporality related to mobility and movement through figures such as "the undeserving migrant and the undeserving unemployed" (Mulinari, 2021, p. 119). Here, I use the term mobility to refer to the possibility of converting language investments into movements. Immobility, by contrast, denotes 'to be stuck' and to 'not move forward' (Nuottaniemi, 2023). I do not use the term *mobility* to reference a

geographical transition; rather, I am more interested in institutional and professional mobility. Movement here can vary from a simple achievement, such as passing a national test, to a bigger one, like obtaining a job. Using this concept, I want to engage with the question of whether interlocutors are enabled to "arrive somewhere," or whether they remain confined within regimes that demand constant investment without meaningful return. (Not) moving forward is an experience of time that entails waiting, which together with uncertainty and instability, constitutes "key characteristics of asylum and immigration detention systems" (Mulinari, 2021, p. 123). Temporal mobility occurs when individuals are seen as 'ready'; only when the system needs them. An example is an individual who is granted access to a temporary job because his language is considered 'good', but never achieves a stable permanent position because his language skills are not 'good enough'. So, temporal mobility captures the situations where learners are deemed temporarily "ready" due to ever-shifting linguistic expectations.

These facets of neoliberalism and the temporal regimes they generate are not neutral; they are systematically produced through institutional arrangements. Hence, they can be seen as governing practices that strongly shape learning trajectories. Accordingly, Foucault's concept of governmentality (2000) will be used as an overarching theoretical lens through which these *neoliberal temporalities*, produced through certain institutional practices, are seen as forms of power that "conduct the conduct" of learners (Martín Rojo, 2019, p. 178). A governing practice refers to how the individuals are forced to accept certain practices or situations, and possibly face their negative repercussions, because the system is built upon these norms. Temporal (neoliberal) dynamics, as governing practices, create forms of control that restrict alternative ways of learning or engaging with the broader society. They also impact the learners' individual attitudes, actions, and behaviors (Foucault, 1980, p. 39; Martín Rojo, 2018), including their desire to invest in the language (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Yet, governance will not be used as an analytical concept to interpret the data as much as a concept to make sense of it.

3 Methodology and data

This article is the result of a broader doctoral project on multilingualism, which examines *the constraints and possibilities for Swedish language learning among adult migrants in SFI.* Within this wider framework, this article conceptualizes SFI neoliberal practices and the temporal regimes they generate as key constraints on learners' linguistic and social trajectories. The primary analytical focus is on Arabic-speaking migrants, which aligns with the methodological and theoretical focus of this special issue. While Arabic is the second-most spoken language in Sweden after Swedish (Parkvall, 2019), it continues to occupy a racialized position, associated with processes of othering (Larsson, 2005; Yeshalem & Milani, 2023, p. 1). At the same time, racialized languages produce, and are produced by, racialized bodies (Flores & Rosa, 2019), where linguistic identities intersect with broader experiences of inequality that extend beyond educational settings. Exploring the lived experiences of this group is a way of recognizing the possible disadvantages arising from these intersections (Piller, 2016, p. 5).

The participants of this study are registered in the so-called Establishment Programme, a state-funded initiative administered by the Swedish Public Employment Service and designed to facilitate the integration of newly arrived migrants in Sweden. Most participants in this program are migrants with asylum or refugee backgrounds, primarily from non-EU countries. The Establishment Programme requires the individuals registered in it to participate in various activities, including SFI classes, civic orientation courses, and professional development programs. Participation in these activities is required for the migrant to gain access to the state's financial benefits. Hence, participation in the program is effectively mandatory due to economic precarity and the need for economic support from the state (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, 2022, pp. 22–23; see also Bauer et. al., 2023).

While the focus is on the experiences of the Arabic-speaking group, the analysis incorporates, for methodological and comparative purposes, limited data from two non-Arabic-speaking learners. Those learners, unlike the Arabic-speaking learners, are not registered in the Establishment Programme, and they are not dependent on the state's financial benefits for their living. The motivation for including those learners is to enable the identification of contradictions, variations, and structural inequalities in how neoliberal temporal demands are experienced by learners with different social, economic, and linguistic statuses. Rather than losing focus, this contrast strengthens the analysis by revealing how experiences of progress and mobility can be differentially distributed and, in some cases, racialized within a neoliberal educational framework.

Data collection started in early 2022 at an SFI school in a small town near Gothenburg. I adopted an ethnographic approach, combining fieldnotes and semi-structured interviews. A "sociable research dialogue" was maintained (Back & Sinha, 2019, p. 175), where ethnographic engagement extended beyond formal methods of data collection to include informal interactions during breaks, walks, and home visits. These settings were analytically important because they enabled the co-construction of data and allowed participants to shape the research focus by foregrounding issues they considered important. Approximately 15 participants took part in the broader study. This article draws on a subset of participants whose experiences were most relevant to its analytical focus. I use data from eight participants: Afraa, Eleen, Ayla, Faten, Nour, Maria, Clover, and teacher Selma (pseudonymized names). The participants were informed about the study's focus and aims at different stages, both verbally and through an information letter. A consent form was also obtained. I kept the participants informed throughout the data collection, data analysis, and interpretation phases.

Data were transcribed manually and coded using NVivo (release 1.7.1). NVivo's coding function was used to create codes and sub-codes, as a representative for a particular theme or issue. Examples of my codes are *language and the work line*, *establishment programme*, and *national tests*. Sub-codes such as *acceleration, slowdown,* and *practical placements* were also developed. These codes were analyzed to generate themes, such as *practical placement as a constraint to language learning continuity*. I employed an abductive thematic analysis (Thompson, 2022), defined as the iterative movement between empirical data and theory. I frequently moved back and forward between emerging themes and relevant theoretical frameworks. For instance, the recurring data about language, work and the market inspired engagement with neoliberal theories. Moreover, working abductively with the data allowed the emergence of patterns in participants' lived experiences of time and temporality to inform and add to theoretical engagement with neoliberalism, rather than imposing a fixed analytical framework from the beginning. Attention to **variation across participants** was a further abductive step. Finally, differences in how learners experienced continuity or delay (such as participants in the Establishment Programme and others outside it) highlighted the role of economic institutional positioning in shaping temporal experiences. These contrasts informed both theme development and the decision to include comparative data, reinforcing my central argument that neoliberal temporal regimes are unevenly experienced and structurally mediated.

4 Findings and analysis

In the next section, I present an analysis of two neoliberal temporal regimes that characterize the lived experiences of adult migrants in SFI. The first regime is the *neoliberal acceleration of learners' access to work*, while the other regime is the *slowing down of learners' time in school*. I argue that these two regimes produce experiences of temporal institutional and professional mobility. In the last analysis part, I argue that the school's neoliberal practices and their temporal aspects intersect with racialized hierarchies of belonging to the Swedish community. Due to temporal dynamics and mechanisms

of control that target specific groups of migrants, time becomes 'racial' (Mills, 2020; Khosravi, 2019).

4.1 "You have to work for 8 hours like all people in Sweden do": speeding up 'temporal' access to work

SFI has a strong focus on language as an instrument for employability. The learners' lived experiences show that employability is 'sped up' and often prioritized over language learning, which translates into a policy requiring all SFI learners within the Establishment Programme to participate in the so-called work-based placements. Work-based placements are meant to serve two main objectives: (1) professional development and (2) language support. The next analysis shows that the implementation of these placements rather reflects a neoliberal governmental logic in which acceleration becomes an institutional norm, while the real objective shifts from language development to the governance of migrants' trajectories in relation to labor market needs. However, the real tension is in how this maintained access to work plays out in the migrants' everyday life in a way that creates delay, control, and despair. The tensions between this speed policy and the interlocutors' language learning trajectories in SFI are crucial to the analysis.

Eleen is a Syrian woman with a refugee background who is registered in EP. Eleen was assigned to a work-based placement at a café in February 2020, lasting for two months. After the placement ended, she had a temporary job there for a year. Later in August 2022, Eleen started another placement in a kindergarten. In the kindergarten, she had two months of practical placement, and then temporary work again. It was a five-month contract. Eleen had support from the Establishment Program at that time. Eleen returned to school after the temporary contract ended. Eleen's attendance in SFI during these years was low, as she moved iteratively *in and out* of school. Eleen's experience of *moving in and out* through time reflects a temporal regime connected to the neoliberal marketization of adult language education, resulting in temporal professional participation and delayed linguistic progress. While Eleen did not progress with her Swedish language, she told me that her Swedish became worse because she did not attend school regularly. The work placements did not provide a rich communicative context due to experiences of being excluded in the workplace. Her opportunities to speak Swedish were limited because her tasks were restricted to kitchen work, such as cleaning and washing dishes (see Walldén, 2023). Similarly, Eleen could not secure a job despite attending many work placements.

In theory, the neoliberal objective behind these work placements was met: *rapid, maintained access* to the labor market. However, in Eleen's case, this access remained *temporal* and controlled. From here, I argue that the work-oriented policy enacted by the Swedish Public Employment Service through SFI produces a temporal regime of two layers: (1) a temporal professional mobility where Eleen, although working respectively in multiple placements in one year, remained in the unemployed category and (2) a temporal discontinuous language learning experience in the school. This *temporal precarious access to work and language* means that Eleen maintains a marginal position in the community; her body is stopped from moving forward (Ahmed, 2007).

Eleen's trajectory closely mirrors that of another participant, Ayla, a middle-aged woman from Turkey. Ayla also navigated multiple practical placements while taking her SFI classes. For Ayla, it is obvious to everyone in the school that these work placements served broader economic agendas, an outcome shaped by the integration of SFI within a network of national institutions, including the Swedish Public Employment Service.

> Ayla: Those who are members of the Establishment Programme are desirable for employers who tend to offer them short-term work contracts because the employers pay less money for the migrants receiving financial support from the state; they find it better to hire them than to hire people with academic and professional merits. (Fieldnotes)

Ayla's observation highlights how the precarious position of some migrants can be utilized as a tool for labor market management (Del Percio, 2021, p. 5). At the same time, the migrants' linguistic and professional development is invoked to legitimize the implementation of neoliberal market practices. These include the work-based placements discussed in this section. Such placements operate as technologies of temporal management and control (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Duchêne et al., 2013), as they form part of the state's broader regulation of the labour market (Fraser, 1995). Several participants provided evidence of this function, indicating that most of the positions they were asked to fill were temporarily vacant, where an employee had been on longer holidays or parental leave. The fact that adult migrants in SFI are forced to accept certain work placements, and subsequent short-term work contracts lock some of them into 'survival employment' (see Piller, 2016, on linguistic diversity and social justice in the European context) leads to further deskilling and limited language learning opportunities in social life generally and on the job specifically.

Another example shows, in more depth, how the neoliberal work-oriented language policies for migrants are motivated and justified by the agencies that offer them. Afraa is a young Palestinian woman with a refugee background. Like Eleen and Ayla, Afraa is registered in EP, which means she is dependent on the state's financial support to live. Afraa *was offered* a work placement as a 'student assistant' in a Swedish secondary school, intending to (1) develop her Swedish language and (2) get her acquainted with the Swedish labor market. Afraa was not treated appropriately by the students, who underestimated her due to her limited proficiency in Swedish, as she was still studying Swedish at a primary level in SFI. Afraa told me how the work placement was intensive and demanding, where she had to attend the placement for long hours, reducing her attendance in language courses to one day a week and prolonging the time needed to finish her SFI studies.

Subsequently, Afraa told her case manager at EP that she would like to quit the work placement and concentrate on her language studies instead, to which the case manager responded, "*if you quit the placement, you would be deregistered from EP*" (Afraa, fieldnotes). For Afraa, deregistration from EP would mean she risked losing the benefits she was receiving during her establishment period. The case manager justified the Swedish Public Employment Service's policy by saying, "*you have to work and do something for eight hours like all people in Sweden do*" (Afraa, fieldnotes). First, Afraa's case manager at the Swedish Public Employment Service drew on a collective Swedish self-image that valorizes 'hard work' (Gren, 2020, p. 168), using it as a disciplinary norm against which Afraa's progress is assessed. Second, the manager's statement indexes a request to Afraa to be active, to show activation through work. The concept of activation and speeding access to work has long characterized the policy and implementation of employment programs in Sweden and Europe (Del Percio, 2021). What characterizes this practice as neoliberal is the conditional linking of welfare, language learning, and market participation. More specifically, it is how, in language education, accelerated entry into work is prioritized over language learning continuity.

Afraa's experience is in line with what Duchêne et al. (2013) wrote on language and institutional challenges in different European contexts. The authors argue that 'institutions' function as *sites of control*, through which the state regulates how migrants live. Afraa's encounter with the Swedish Public Employment Service embodies an example of these sites; Afraa was not actually 'offered' a work-based placement; she was 'forced' to go to that placement. The case manager's statement – "*you will be deregistered from the EP*" – demonstrates how Afraa's reliance on the state's funds is used as a mechanism of control that made her subject to governmental and institutional governance (see Abdulla, 2017). This would also imply that migrants' participation in work-based activities is framed as an obligation exchanged for state-provided financial support, thereby positioning participation as a form of conditional compliance rather than a choice.

Finally, the case manager described immediate and regulated market participation as a marker of Afraa's activeness and a sign of being integrated. Hence, refusing to participate would indicate being inactive, even when refusing the placement would result in more active and continuous language learning in school. Therefore, Afraa's act of resistance constructs her as a 'burden' on the Swedish community, and her encounter with the Swedish Public Employment Service shifts her from a person who is trying to solve her problems to a person who is a problem. However, Afraa pointed out during our talk that it is unfair to compare her, a migrant woman, with Swedes who are not in the same precarious position as her (Fraser, 1995; Milani et al., 2023). For example, Afraa stated that despite engaging in long working hours and intensive assignments while attending the work placement, she was not recognized as an employee and only received a state-established allowance. The work placement is enacted in a way that positions her labor as a means to fulfill a structured temporal plan rather than as compensated work.

I present this discussion as a criticism of the neoliberal logic behind implementing these placements in a context that is supposed to concentrate on authentic language learning. However, even if we accept that such neoliberal focus on 'work' has promise, the experiences of Afraa and Eleen show the gap between the aims of this policy and its practical outcomes.

In sum, while work-based placements within the SFI are framed as opportunities for language learning and professional development, they actually operate as instruments of neoliberal governance, producing temporal mobility, limited linguistic progress, and controlled labor market participation for migrants. These practices are not merely a matter of policy enactment; they are expressions of a neoliberal rationality that organizes time, value, and responsibility in migrant language education.

4.2 "The longer the better": slowing down institutional time and the self-making of language speakers

I now turn to the second neoliberal temporal regime examined in this article: the *slowing down of learners' time in school.* Within this regime, in which learners are constructed as self-made speakers, (long) institutional time[1] and continuous self-improvement become naturalized norms. As an ideology that essentializes the "persistent search for personal improvement" (Martín Rojo, 2019, p. 163), self-speakerism produces experiences of bureaucratic waiting across the school. As I show below, the migrants in my study are seen as "under construction" (Martín Rojo, 2019, p. 163) and not yet ready to pass the language national test. Learners are told to remain in school to accumulate better skills. I show that this practice resonates with idealized figures of what it means to know a language well and argue that these dynamics have the potential to underscore the complexities embedded in migrants' language learning and generate inequalities in how language learning is experienced in the school.

When I first entered the field, complaints about *time* and national testing were pervasive. Learners repeatedly expressed frustration about spending a 'long time' in school, without being allowed to be admitted to the national test. The data indexes a shared lived experience of 'waiting' that cannot simply be reduced to difficulty in the language itself or bad language skills. Rather, this waiting is produced through a neoliberal *self-made speakerism*. To illustrate how the dynamics of this ideology work in practice, I start with Ola, a young girl from Syria. At the end of an SFI class, teacher Selma moved around the classroom speaking with learners. She and Ola started discussing when Ola would be allowed to take the national test and graduate from SFI. Ola expressed frustration about having spent what she perceived as a 'long time' in the program, believing that

1. 'Institutional time' is used interchangeably with the expression 'time in school'. Yet, 'institutional time' underscores delay or acceleration as constructs related to institutional practices such as passing a language level, graduating from the school or joining a practical work placement.

her Swedish was already good enough for her to take the national test. Ola felt that this long time in school was delaying her other opportunities, such as her plans for other studies. Selma agreed to let Ola take a small writing test, after which she would decide whether she was ready for the national test. Selma then told Ola, "*it is important that you know that I do not collect students here*" (Selma, fieldnotes). Selma admitted that Ola is a hard-working student with good Swedish, but added that this was not enough:

> Writing is important! You should be able to use words and write paragraphs. It is also important that one shows they have a *rich word repertoire*. Otherwise, one cannot speak with the people outside. One does not find the words, and then one becomes angry about that. (fieldnotes)

In this account, prolonged waiting in school is justified by a perceived lack of a specific type of linguistic adequacy: a rich word repertoire and paragraph-level writing. A naturalized image of the 'successful' learner (Park, 2010), with a rich repertoire and paragraph writing skills, becomes the moral explanation for temporal delay: those who wait in school do so because they are not yet good enough to move forward. This raises a critical question: *Are learners who lack such a 'rich repertoire' necessarily unsuccessful?* If we want to detach the argument from naturalized images of success, which are "highly embodied articulations of the neoliberal subject" (Park, 2010, p. 34), the answer is clearly 'no', they are not. According to Selma's account, Ola is responsible for the emotional consequences arising from not having such a 'rich repertoire', which leads to misunderstanding the other, and hence to feelings of anger. It is within this line of self-speakerism ideology that learners become responsible for seeking better idealized language skills.[2]

A similar experience emerges in the case of Faten, a woman from Iraq. After failing the writing test multiple times, Faten was told by her teacher that although her writing was intelligible to the teacher herself (because she was her teacher), it would not be understandable to other "native Swedish speakers," such as the teacher's mother. The teacher told Faten that she has to *remain longer in school* to further develop her writing skills (Faten, individual interview). Faten's encounter illustrates that there is an ideal self-made speaker aligned with a native-speaker norm. The quality of a piece of writing is measured by its intelligibility to a native speaker. One day, while we were waiting for the teacher to arrive in class, Faten was telling me that she was tired of having to wait there too much. She told me that, after years in SFI, she does not think that she can improve her writing skills. Faten also connected this to her age and to the differences between the Swedish and Arabic languages and felt that the system does not recognize these factors sufficiently.

A third relevant experience is that encountered by Ayla, who has continuously asked her teacher to nominate her for the national test. What is striking in Ayla's experience is that the reason why the teacher asked her to 'stay longer' in school is not because her language does not qualify her to pass[3] the test, but because Ayla has not spent a long time in school. Spending a longer time in school, rather than language proficiency, becomes an indicator of 'readiness'. These three experiences from Ola, Faten, and Ayla show how neoliberal notions embedded in ideologies of self-speakerism, such as persistent striving for an ideal speaker position, have produced experiences of temporality and institutional immobility, exemplified in not being able to pass the national test and move

2. In a Chinese context, Gao and Park (2015) showed a connection between affective dimensions of distrust and doubt, neoliberalism, and geographical mobility. People are encouraged to make a dedicated investment in self-development, through geographical mobility, in the hope of a better self and better future.
3. The students are nominated by the teacher if the teacher finds them eligible to do the final national test. If a teacher finds that the students' language level is not yet enough, they are not admitted to the test, even if the student wants that.

on. Readiness seems to be mediated by the *longer the better* rule. Spending a long time in school becomes the 'means' and the 'justification' for improvement. This allows me to argue that temporality is produced through neoliberal calls of betterment.

While most of the participants, such as Ola and Faten, are seen as requiring further self-improvement, their Swedish language skills were praised by the teacher. For instance, after a class on Swedish sentence structure, the teacher highlighted that the participants could solve the Swedish grammar better than many Swedes, describing them as "experts" (Fieldnotes). Although this comment was intended as encouragement, it also produced confusion and contradiction among the learners. Ayla reflected on this statement, noting that it is difficult to understand how a student can be seen as better in Swedish than Swedes, yet still be told it is too early for them to graduate from the school. This draws attention to a central neoliberal paradox: learners' skills may be acknowledged and validated in practice; yet formal progression remains delayed despite demonstrated competence.

Before I further problematize these experiences, I want to present Nour, a young woman from Eritrea whose experience shows how neoliberal discourses of betterment through waiting are connected to affective outcomes and possible disinvestment. Nour has spent two years in school, but the teachers continue to frame her language as insufficient, citing inadequate writing skills as the reason for her prolonged stay in school. My intention in sharing Nour's experience is to underscore the negative impacts of her waiting in school regardless of her demonstrated competence. Nour contrasted the school's assessment of her Swedish with how her Swedish is valued by people in daily interaction. Nour's neighbors and the Swedish people she meets often praised her Swedish and expressed surprise that she had not yet graduated from SFI, which brought her feelings of shame and lateness (Nour, Fieldwork). Nour aspires to be a nurse, but access to the nurse program was contingent upon obtaining the SFI certificate. A few weeks after we spoke, I learned that Nour had left the school altogether, which shows how 'waiting', often justified through discourses of improvement and readiness, can lead to disinvestment, not willing to do more. Nour showed ambition and was goal-oriented, but the constant delays led Nour to leave the school, a practice that evidenced a decreased desire to invest in learning Swedish through SFI.

The cases I have shown above exemplify what Martín Rojo (2019) described as a neoliberal mode of governmentality centered on self-made speaker identities. Ola, Faten, Ayla, and Nour have been encouraged to stay longer in school to get their Swedish to an idealized level. However, I argue that much of this neoliberal demand operates alongside structural contradictions. Teacher Selma emphasizes the need to develop a "rich vocabulary" as a prerequisite for moving on. Her demand intersects interestingly with a key finding in the broader study, which shows that opportunities for linguistic participation, which are essential for developing such repertoires, are constrained by encounters of invisibilization and non-recognition (forthcoming dissertation). Quite relevant to this, an analysis of success stories of English language learning in the Korean context by Park (2011) shows that the social inequality of language access becomes erased when the contradictions embedded in certain language ideologies (and requirements) are overlooked. I have shown how Afraa's and Eleen's work placements offered rare access to meaningful linguistic interaction resulting from experiences of exclusion, and the kind of tasks they were assigned. This reveals a gap between neoliberal demands of betterment and actual possibilities for meeting them.

In conclusion, self-made speakerism operates as a neoliberal temporal regime in which waiting and delay become normalized outcomes in SFI. The neoliberal demand of having to stay longer in school to "accumulate ever greater language skills" (Martín Rojo, 2019, p. 172) reproduces linguistic success as a matter of individual effort, while obscuring the structural conditions that constrain such accumulation. Learners are seen as 'not yet ready' because they have not mastered Swedish properly. The examples I have

shown also demonstrate that demands to meet a specific level of linguistic adequacy are driven by normative representations of success and of language competence: a good language learner has a rich word repertoire, while learners lacking this repertoire are automatically constructed as not good enough, even when they are not responsible for the shortcoming. Finally, the analysis shows that time becomes a 'disciplinary mechanism' that postpones mobility, individualizes responsibility, and reproduces inequality. Hence, it can be seen as a means of experiencing the effects of power through waiting.

4.3 Racial temporality

The previous two sections have shown how the neoliberal regimes of self-speakerism and work acceleration produced lived experiences of extended waiting. Yet, some interlocutors in this study had contradictory experiences, describing their time in school as fast and less governed by the neoliberal demands of work and linguistic betterment. In this final analytical section, I show how these contradictory experiences of slowing down and acceleration produce lived experiences of "racial time", defined as the temporally unequal access to resources (Mills, 2020; Khosravi, 2021). I also show how neoliberal calls for 'self-made speakerism' alongside the symbolic value of learning Swedish reifies racialized hierarchies of belonging to the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006) of Sweden.

In order to unveil racialized temporalities, I will need to compare Arabic speakers with SFI participants from other contexts: Maria and Clover. Maria, originally from Poland, and Clover, from the United States, are both married to Swedish men. Maria speaks English fluently, having completed her Master's in English when she was in Poland, while Clover is a native speaker of English. Neither of them is registered in EP, as they do not belong to the refugee category and are not dependent on state financial support. Hence, Maria and Clover differ from the participants I have already presented in this study in terms of migration status and linguistic capital. Their migration trajectories can also be seen as less precarious than those of other participants, particularly when it comes to access to and navigation of Swedish society. Maria told me that being married to a Swedish person exposes her to the language and culture through her husband's family. Maria also perceives what she names "her European culture" (Maria, individual interview) as a facilitating factor when it comes to communication with the Swedes.

Unlike the interlocutors who have a negative experience of 'waiting' in school, Maria and Clover think they 'moved fast' between the language levels. Interestingly, Maria and Clover did not perceive this acceleration as good. For instance, Maria felt she should have spent more time at the introductory level and described herself as "not good enough" to be at the C/D level, particularly in relation to grammar. Similarly, Clover believed she quickly moved from one level to another. She told me that she did not have the language skills to communicate with her Swedish neighbors, whom she described as "not good enough in English" (Clover, fieldnotes). For Clover and Maria, the cost of rapid movement between language levels came at the cost of their language skills and, hence, their confidence to speak the language. Before I proceed with my argument, I will present a relevant encounter between another participant, Ayla, and her teacher, where she asks her teacher why some people move fast while others experience more institutional waiting:

> I ask why some are very fast. My friend finished, she did not understand Swedish, and she did not speak. Selma says this is not good, Ayla! Think positive! Do not compare with others. They are different! They speak English! They can handle things later. What can I do? In my country, one does not need English and does not study it. Clover speaks English. But all need to learn Swedish, not English in SFI. She then tells me they work Ayla they work. I work too. When the internship ended, I got a short-time work contract.

> I told Selma that I have to work. Selma says You do not need to work Ayla, sit at home and study a lot and finish your SFI; otherwise, you will not be done with your language classes. (Ayla, Individual interview)

The teacher attributes some learners' speed in passing through the language levels to English proficiency, reproducing English as a "cultural emblem" (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p. 152). People who speak English can be more easily mobilized than those who do not; hence, they may not be subject to disciplinary demands of improving their Swedish because they know English. This also entails that the demand for speaking Swedish may be less important for English-speaking migrants than for non-English-speaking migrants. Ayla challenged this logic, stating that, in SFI, everyone needs to learn Swedish, not English. Ayla's response shows how, within the language school, different linguistic resources are valued differently. Ayla's first language, Turkish, is automatically constructed as being less important in this context. Ayla is also constructed as less mobile due to her lack of English skills. The teacher's request – "Do not compare! Think positive" – entails a neoliberal disciplinary response to Ayla's concerns, with evidence of how neoliberal discourses of positivity and self-responsibility can deflect the critique of possible structural inequalities. Moreover, the teacher's statement "they work" has constructed Ayla as 'not working', despite her active participation in the Swedish labor market through work-based placements. Selma went further by asking Ayla to focus on her language skills, which both contradicts and deflects the fact that Ayla *must*, due to the Employment Agency's policy, attend work placements, a requirement that reduces attendance on language courses.

Clover and Maria's accounts and Ayla's encounter with the teacher show how neoliberal demands of learners' self-improvement in the Swedish language are unevenly distributed. It is also possible to understand the experiences of Ayla, Maria, and Clover in terms of "racial time" (Mills, 2014, 2020): time is unevenly experienced, producing different effects depending on learners' social, economic, and linguistic positioning. Migrants with refugee backgrounds who are registered in EP experience increased control in their language learning trajectory compared to those outside the program. Their language learning practices are "more heavily policed than those of their white counterparts" (Flores & Rosa, 2019, p. 147). For instance, in an individual interview, Maria stated that she did not participate in the work placements provided by the Employment Agency through SFI because they offer "simple professions". Maria can simply choose not to participate in these placements because she is not registered in the Establishment Programme. Participation in these placements is not obligatory for Maria since she does not receive any financial support from the state.

The demands for self-betterment and the accumulation of linguistic skills through prolonged time in language school are not neutral educational requirements; rather, they constitute neoliberal practices that reflect the economic and political incentives shaping language education. These demands are unevenly distributed and acquire an increased value for racialized migrant groups, producing lived experiences of *racial time*. *Racial time* affects all learners, albeit in different ways: some, such as Ayla, experience prolonged waiting and constrained mobility, while others, such as Maria and Clover, move through the system more quickly, often at the expense of linguistic development. However, the symbolic value of linguistic and professional participation is far higher for learners like Ayla than for Maria and Clover. Thus, experiences of acceleration and slowing down institutional time reify racialized hierarchies of belonging to the imagined community of Sweden, as certain language groups are required to 'linguistically and professionally belong' more than others.

5 Conclusion

In this article, I have examined how neoliberalism operates through rationalities of temporality. First, I demonstrated that work-based placements–officially framed as opportunities for linguistic and professional development – operate as a technology of accelerating the path to work. The implementation of these placements shifts the focus away from language learning towards the governance of migrants' trajectories in relation to labor market needs. Crucially, accelerating the participants' path to work through forced participation in work placements does not translate into professional or language progress; instead, it produces forms of delay, control, and discontinuity. Language learning time in the school is interrupted, while professional participation remains temporary and precarious. Second, I have argued that the school's demand for better skills in Swedish can be seen within a self-speakerism ideology, in which learners are constructed as responsible for their own linguistic success through long-term investment and continuous self-improvement. Within this regime, time, in terms of prolonged waiting, becomes the means and justification of improvement: *the longer the better*. I have argued that this practice is problematic because of the obscurity of the structural constraints that stand between required skills and the interlocutors' ability to meet them. Central to the analysis was how these dynamics produced lived experiences of 'temporal mobility', exemplified in delayed or accelerated access to language or work. Moreover, I have argued that the participants' contradictory experiences of acceleration and slowing down access to language and work produce lived experiences of *racial time*. Thus, the participants' learning trajectories are not only shaped by pedagogical structures, but also by larger sociopolitical forces that 'govern' their access to resources and recognition. Certain learners are required to linguistically and professionally participate more than others. I have built on this to further argue that neoliberal demands for self-betterment intersect with the symbolic value of learning Swedish, which reifies racialized hierarchies of belonging to the imagined community of Sweden (Anderson, 2006).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Tommaso Milani for his constructive feedback on earlier drafts of this article. I am also grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their critical comments.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Bibliography

Abdulla, A. (2017). *Readiness or resistance? Newly arrived adult migrants' experiences, meaning-making, and learning in Sweden* [Doctoral dissertation, Linköping University]. Linköping University Electronic Press.

Ahlgren, K., & Rydell, M. (2020). Continuity and change: Migrants' experiences of adult language education in Sweden. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, *11*(3), 399–414. https://doi.org/10.3384/rela.2000-7426.ojs1680

Ahmed, S. (2007). A phenomenology of whiteness. *Feminist Theory*, *8*(2), 149–168. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700107078139

Anderson, B. R. O. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Revised ed.). Verso.

Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet. (2022). Uppföljning av nyanländas etablering – Arbetsmarknadsstatus med särskilt fokus på kvinnorna [Follow-up of newly arrived's establishment – Labour market status with special focus on the women]. Riksdagstryckeriet. https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/rapport-fran-riksdagen/uppfoljning-av-nyanlandas-etablering-_h90wrfr7/

Back, L., & Sinha, S. (2019). *Migrant city*. Routledge.

Bauer, S., Milani, T. M., Von Brömssen, K., & Spehar, A. (2023). Constructing the "good citizen": Discourses of social inclusion in Swedish civic orientation. *Social Inclusion*, 11(4), Article 7060. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v11i4.7060

Beach, D., & Dovemark, M. (2019). Equity and choice for newly arrived migrants. In M. Dahlstedt & A. Fejes (Eds.), *Neoliberalism and market forces in education: Lessons from Sweden* (pp. 33–48). Routledge.

Blackledge, A. (2009). Being English, speaking English: Extension to English language testing legislation and the future of multicultural Britain. In G. Hogan-Brun, C. Mar-Molinero, & P. Stevenson (Eds.), *Discourses on language and integration* (pp. 83–107). John Benjamins.

Bijvoet, E. (2024). Uppfattningar och uppskattningar av "svenska med något utländskt": En studie om attityder till brytning och förortsklang i Sverige. Institutet för språk och folkminnen (Isof).

Carlson, M., & Jacobsson, B. (2019). Neoliberalism in adult education. In M. Dahlstedt & A. Fejes (Eds.), *Neoliberalism and Market Forces in Education. Lessons from Sweden* (pp. 123–137). Routledge.

Dahlstedt, M., & Fejes, A. (Eds.). (2019). *Neoliberalism and Market Forces in Education: Lessons from Sweden* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429470530

Dardot, P., & Laval, C. (2014). *The new way of the world: On neoliberal society*. Verso Books.

Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2015). Identity and a Model of Investment in Applied Linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *35*, 36–56. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190514000191

Del Percio, A. & Flubacher, M. (2017). Language, education and neoliberalism: Introduction. In M. Flubacher & A. Del Percio (Eds.), *Language, Education and Neoliberalism: Critical Studies in Sociolinguistics* (pp. 1–18). Multilingual Matters.

Del Percio, A. (2021). Speeding up, slowing down. Language, temporality and the constitution of migrant workers as labour force. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *26*(10), 1197–1209. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2021.1954386

Duchêne, A., Moyer, M., & Roberts, C. (Eds.). (2013). *Language, migration and social inequalities: A critical sociolinguistic perspective on institutions and work*. Multilingual Matters.

Fejes, A. (2010). Discourse on employability: Constituting the responsible citizen. *Studies in Continuing Education*, *32*(2), 89–102

Fejes, A., & Holmqvist, D. (2019). Procurement as a market in adult education. In M. Dahlstedt & A. Fejes (Eds.), *Neoliberalism and Market Forces in Education: Lessons from Sweden*. Routledge.

Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing Appropriateness: Raciolinguistic Ideologies and Language Diversity in Education. *Harvard Educational Review*, *85*(2), 149–171.

Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2019). Bringing Race Into Second Language Acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal*, *103*, 145–151. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12523

Flubacher, M.-C. & Yeung, S. (2016). Discourses of integration: Language, skills, and the politics of difference. *Multilingua, 35*(6), 599–616.

Flubacher, M.-C. (2021). The "politics of speed" and language integration policies: on recent developments in Austria. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *26*(10), 1159–1169. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2021.1954387
Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977.* Pantheon.
Foucault, M. (2000). Governmentality. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Essential works of Foucault, Vol. 3: Power* (pp. 201–222). Norton.
Fraser, N. (1995). From redistribution to recognition? Dilemmas of justice in a 'post-socialist' age. *New Left Review*, *212*, 68–93.
Gao, S., & Park, J. S. Y. (2015). Space and language learning under the neoliberal economy. *L2 Journal*, *7*(3), 78–96.
Gren, N. (2020). Living Bureaucratization: Young Palestinian Men Encountering a Swedish Introductory Programme for Refugees. In D. Abdelhady, N. Gren & M. Joormann (Eds.), *Refugees and the Violence of Welfare Bureaucracies in Northern Europe* (pp. 161–179). Manchester University Press.
Hyltenstam, & Milani, T. (2012) Flerspråkighetens sociopolitiska och sociokulturella ramar. In K. Hyltenstam, M. Axelsson & I. Lindberg (Eds.), *Flerspråkighet – en forskningsöversikt* (pp. 17–134). Vetenskapsrådet.
Khosravi, S. (2018). Stolen Time. *Radical Philosophy*, *2*(3), 38–41.
Khosravi, S. (2019). What do we see if we look at the border from the other side? *Social Anthropology*, *27*(3), 409–424. https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12685
Khosravi, S. (Ed.). (2021). *Waiting – A Project in Conversation* (1st ed.). transcript Verlag. https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839454589
Larsson, G. (2005). The impact of global conflicts on local contexts: Muslims in Sweden after 9/11 – the rise of islamophobia, or new possibilities? *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, *16*(1), 29–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/0959641052000313228
Lindberg, I., & Sandwall, K. (2017). Conflicting Agendas in Swedish Adult Second Language Education. In C. Kerfoot, & K. Hyltenstam (Eds.), *Entangled Discourses: South-North Orders of Visibility* (pp. 119–136). Routledge.
Martín Rojo, L. (2018). Neoliberalism and Linguistic Governmentality. In J. W. Tollefson & M. Pérez-Milans (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Language Policy and Planning* (p. 544–567). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190458898.013.28
Martín Rojo, L., & Del Percio, A. (2019). Neoliberalism, language and governmentality. In L. Martín Rojo & A. Del Percio (Eds.), *Language and Neoliberal Governmentality* (pp. 1–25). Routledge.
Martín Rojo, L. (2019). The "self-made speaker": The neoliberal governance of speakers. In L. Martín Rojo & A. Del Percio (Eds.), *Language and Neoliberal Governmentality* (pp. 162–190). Routledge.
Milani, T. M. (2007). A language ideology in print: The case of Sweden. In S. Johnson, A. Ensslin & T. M. Milani (Eds.), *Language in the Media: Representations, Identities, Ideologies* (pp. 111–129). Continuum.
Milani, T. M., Bauer, S., Von Brömssen, K., & Spehar, A. (2023). Participation on whose terms? Applied linguistics, politics and social justice. In N. Hynninen, I. Herneaho, E. Sippola, J. Isosävi & M. Yang (Eds.), *Kieli ja osallisuus – Språk och delaktighet – Language and participation* (pp. 286–299). AFinLA Yearbook 2023. Finnish association of Applied Linguistics AFinLA. https://doi.org/10.30661/afinlavk.127858
Mills, C. W. (2014). White Time: The Chronic Injustice of Ideal Theory. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, *11*(1), 27–42. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X14000022
Mills, C. W. (2020). The chronopolitics of racial time. *Time & Society*, *29*(2), 297–317. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X20903650

Mulinari, P. (2021). Policing time – creating labour: the temporal control of the unemployed. *Nordic Social Work Research*, *11*(2), 117–128. https://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2020.1861069

Nuottaniemi, A. (2023). *Flerspråkighetens gränser: språkdidaktik på (o)jämlik grund i migrationernas tid* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Umeå].

Park, J. S.-Y. (2010). Naturalization of competence and the neoliberal subject: Success stories of English language learning in the Korean conservative press. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 20*(1), 22–38.

Park, J. S.-Y. (2011). The promise of English: Linguistic capital and the neoliberal worker in the South Korean job market. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *14*(4), 443–455. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2011.573067

Parkvall, M. (2019). *Den nya mångfalden [The new diversity].* Riksbankens jubileumsfond.

Philipson Isaac, S. (2024). *Temporal dispossession: The politics of asylum and the remaking of racial capitalism in and beyond the borders of the Swedish welfare state* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Gothenburg].

Piller. I. (2016). *Linguistic Diversity and Social Justice: An Introduction to Applied Linguistics*. Oxford University Press

Pujolar, J. (2019). Linguistic mudes: an exploration over the linguistic constitution of subjects. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language,* 257, 165–189.

Rydell, M. (2018). *Constructions of Language Competence. Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Assessing Second Language Interactions in Basic Adult Education* [Doctoral dissertation, Stockholm University].

Sandwall, K. (2013). *Att hantera praktiken: om sfi-studerandes möjligheter till interaktion och lärande på praktikplatser* [Doctoral dissertation, Göteborg University]. http://hdl.handle.net/2077/32029

Thompson, J. (2022). A Guide to Abductive Thematic Analysis. *The Qualitative Report, 27*(5), 1410–1421. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5340

Walldén, R. (2023). Adult migrants' voices about learning and using Swedish at work placements in basic language education. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, *56*(1), 43–65. https://doi.org/10.1080/02660830.2023.2246763

Yeshalem, A. D., & Milani, T. M. (2023). Family language policy in the public eye: Raciolinguistic ideologies at play. *Journal of Home Language Research*, *6*(1): 1, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.16993/jhlr.49

Received December 8, 2025
Revision received February 13, 2026
Accepted February 20, 2026