Debating Swedish

Language Politics and Ideology
in Contemporary Sweden

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with three language debates that reached their most crucial peaks in Sweden at the beginning of the twenty-first century: (i) the debate on the promotion of the Swedish language, (ii) the debate on language testing for citizenship, and (iii) the debate on mother tongue instruction. The main scope of the thesis is to take a theoretically multi-pronged approach to these debates trying to shed light on the following aspects: Why did such debates emerge when they did? Which discourses were available in those specific historical moments? Who are the social actors that intervened in these debates? What is at stake for them? What do they claim? What systems of values, ideas and beliefs – i.e. ideologies – underlie such claims? What are the effects in terms of identities, objects of political intervention, commonsensical knowledge and authority that these discourses and ideologies produce?

Taking Sweden as a case in point, the thesis adds to the existing literature another example of how language debates are the manifestation of conflicts between different language ideologies that struggle for hegemony, thus attempting to impose one specific way of envisaging the management of a nation-state in a time of globalisation. In their outer and most patent facets, these struggles deal with the relationships between languages in today's Sweden, and how the state, through legislation, should – or should not – regulate such relationships in order to (re)produce some kind of linguistic order. However, the thesis also illustrates that when social actors appeal to a linguistic order, they not only draw boundaries between different languages in a given society, but they also bring into existence a social world in which the speakers of those languages come to occupy specific social positions. These linguistic and social hierarchies, in turn, are imbricated in an often implicit moral regime of what counts as good or bad, acceptable or taboo in that society.
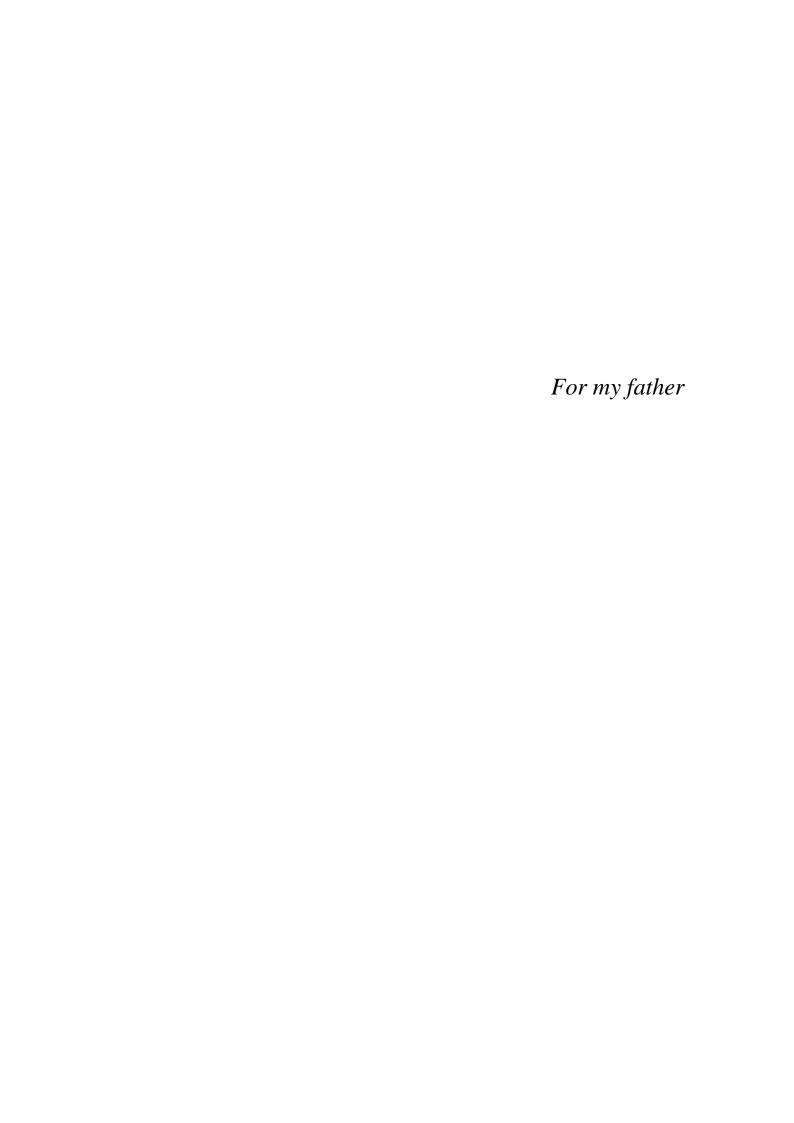
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For my father

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The present thesis is based on the following studies:

I.   Milani, Tommaso M. (2007). Voices of endangerment: a language ideological debate on the Swedish language. In Alexandre Duchêne & Monica Heller (eds.), *Discourses of Endangerment: Ideology and Interest in the Defence of Languages*. London: Continuum, pp. 169-196.

II.   Milani, Tommaso M. & Johnson, Sally (under review). To legislate or not to legislate? Language politics and legitimations crises in Germany and Sweden.

III.   Milani, Tommaso M. (in press). Language testing and citizenship: a language ideological debate in Sweden. *Language in Society*, 37 (1) (To appear in 2008).

IV.   Milani, Tommaso M. (in press). A language ideology in print: the case of Sweden. In Sally Johnson & Astrid Ensslin (eds.), *Language in the Media: Representations, Identities, Ideologies*. London: Continuum, pp. 111-129 (Forthcoming in 2007).

V.   Milani, Tommaso M. (under review). Power, knowledge and governmentality: the recontextualisation of academic discourse in a Swedish policy document.

VI.   Milani, Tommaso M. (under review). Voices of authority in conflict: the making of the expert in a Swedish language debate.

Debating Swedish

Language politics and ideology in contemporary Sweden

Regeringsutredning räds engelskans dominans:
"Ny lag ska rädda svenska språket"
[A governmental inquiry fears the dominance of
English: "A new law will save the Swedish language"]
(*Dagens Nyheter*, 2 April 2002)

Forskare kritisk till språktest
[Researcher critical about language test]
(*Göteborgs Posten*, 7 September 2002)

Hemspråk var en svinbra idé
[Home languages were a damn good idea]
(*Aftonbladet*, 3 April 2006)

"Avskaffa svenskan".
Professor vill att svenska språket ersätts med engelska
["Abolish Swedish". A professor wants the Swedish
language to be replaced by English]
(*Aftonbladet*, 2 February 2006)

Leijonborgs språktest – ett bra första steg
[Leijonborg's language test: a good first step]
(*Aftonbladet*, 19 September 2002)

Stärk svenskämnet nu!
[Strengthen Swedish as a school subject now!]
(*Dagens Nyheter*, 20 May 2006)

1 Debating Swedish at the opening of the 21st century

It is a sociolinguistic truism that people have strong opinions about language(s). As an example one can adduce the constant emergence and unfolding of conflicts around the world where language is often a key motive of struggle (see e.g. Carmichael, 2000 and Tollefson, 2002a for analyses of the sociolinguistic situation in the wake of the dismantling of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, respectively). That language also crucially matters to people in apparently more trivial and less cruel everyday circumstances emerges from a quick review of articles in the daily press. In this respect, it is not uncommon to witness in British and American newspapers the bemoaning of an alleged incorrect use of lexical, syntactic, or semantic features, which would ultimately lead to the 'degradation' of standard English (see e.g. Cameron, 1995; Ensslin & Johnson, 2007; Thurlow, 2005, in press). Likewise, the headlines taken from some Swedish dailies in the quotes above give a glimpse of the fact that it is not exceptional for newspapers to report on and also provide an important contextual space for heated exchanges about different aspects of language legislation in a given polity, such as in the cases of (i) sanctioning (or not) the official, national or principal language(s), (ii) introducing (or not) a language test as a compulsory part of naturalisation procedures, and (iii) recognising (or not) minority languages as media of instruction and/or subjects of the curriculum in the national educational system. It is precisely these three instances of what could be broadly called *language politics in Sweden* that will be brought under investigation in this thesis.

At this juncture, however, it is essential to first qualify the reasons for choosing Sweden as the macro-socio-political object of inquiry. This is certainly related to the fact that Sweden is the country where I moved in 1999, and Swedish is one of the main languages, together with Italian, English, Russian and Norwegian, in my

linguistic repertoire – I will return later on to discuss in more detail the links between the researcher and the selection of a specific research topic. Most crucially, however, the choice of Sweden was dictated by the fact that the Swedish language has been a recurrent object of public discussions over the last few years. An example of such interest in linguistic matters amongst the general public is the popularity in 2002-2003 of the TV-programme *Värsta språket*[1] on SVT2[2], which reached an audience peak of more than one million people every week. Of course, part of the success can be explained by the wit and humour of one of the authors and presenter of the programme, Fredrik Lindström, in addressing different features of the uses of, and attitudes to, the Swedish language, such as in the cases of so-called 'immigrant Swedish', orthographical rules, political correctness, gender and language. Another instance of public concern about language was the creation in 2002 of a webpage called *Språkförsvaret* ('Language Defence'), which later became a "non-governmental organisation free from political parties" bringing together all those who "share the idea that the Swedish language has a value in itself, and needs to be defended among other things against the encroachment of English" (Språkförsvaret, 2007)[3]. Nonetheless, the significance of these two events can be better understood if positioned in the broader context of a general public concern about the Swedish language, as witnessed by two language-related debates that took place, or at least had their most crucial peaks, in those years. First, in April 2002, the parliamentary Committee on the Swedish Language (*Kommittén för svenska språket*) published an ambitious policy report entitled *Mål i mun*[4] (SOU, 2002) consisting of nearly six hundred pages of proposals related to the promotion of the Swedish language. Admittedly, indigenous minority languages (i.e. Finnish, Meänkieli, Romani, Sámi, and Yiddish)[5], migrants' languages, and other foreign languages (i.e. English, French, German, etc.) were also taken into account in the report. However, Swedish was the main object of concern in this policy document, in which one of the key suggestions was to legislate Swedish as the 'principal language' (*huvudspråk,* lit. 'head language') in Sweden (see Studies I and II). Second, in August-September 2002,

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[1] *Värsta språket* literally means 'worst language'. However, the superlative *värst* ('worst') can actually be used to mean 'damn good', 'full-blown', 'fully-fledged'.

[2] SVT2 is one of the channels of the Swedish public service television company *Sveriges Television (SVT).*

[3] *Språkförsvaret* undoubtedly puts great emphasis on the importance of Swedish. Nonetheless, it is also explicitly stated on the webpage that "we do not think that the Swedish language should be used to discriminate. Therefore, we do not publish racist, chauvinist or sexist texts" (Språkförsvaret, 2007).

[4] *Mål i mun* is an idiomatic expression that corresponds to the English 'the gift of the gab', that is, "an ability to speak easily and confidently and to persuade people to do what you want" (the Free Dictionary, 2007).

[5] Since 2000, these five languages have been officially recognised the status of 'national minority languages' (*nationella minoritetsspråk*), thus enjoying the benefits and protection accorded in line with the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (see also Hult, 2004, and Hyltenstam & Milani, 2005).

the campaign preceding the parliamentary election was marked by the presentation of a policy report in which the Swedish Liberal Party (*Folkpartiet – Liberalerna*) suggested the introduction of a Swedish language test as a pre-requisite for the granting of Swedish citizenship. This proposal was envisaged by the Liberal Party as a political measure in the interest of both migrants and Swedish society more generally because it was said to enhance 'integration' between migrants and Swedes (see Studies III, IV and V). Interestingly, while the publication of *Mål i mun* had little resonance in the national media, and the discussions related to it took place primarily in academic and political circles, the exchanges on the issue of language testing for citizenship, by contrast, were facilitated and indeed shored up by substantial media involvement.

That the Swedish language was in the spotlight of popular, political and media discourses in 2002 is not extraordinary as such. Rather, its significance lies in the fact that it has been *perceived* by a few commentators as a *new* phenomenon. Not only did the authors of *Värsta språket*, Fredrik Lindström and Karin af Klintberg, react with surprise to the success of their programme, revealing to the daily *Aftonbladet* that "they had thought their public would consist of a few language teachers" (*Aftonbladet*, 30 October 2003), but also sociolinguistic work to date has highlighted the novelty of the public awareness of the Swedish language in 2002-2003. Leigh Oakes (2001, 2004, 2005), for example, draws upon the work of a number of Scandinavian scholars (Dahlstedt, 1974; Teleman, 1993; Teleman & Westman, 1997) who more or less explicitly share the conviction that Sweden has been characterised during the second half of the 20th century by what Jørn Lund (1986) defines as a low level of linguistic consciousness. The existence of such low awareness about language is corroborated *inter alia* by way of reference to the lack of a law that sanctions the status of Swedish as the official/national language, coupled with the observation that "Swedish authorities, unlike their Nordic or French counterparts, [do not] appear to show an overwhelming interest in their national culture or language" (Oakes, 2001: 70; see also Teleman & Westman, 1997: 5). Against the backdrop of this purported societal linguistic indifference, Oakes argues that the concerns about language-related issues emerging in political and academic circles since the mid-1990s "are […] signs of a *new* awareness of the importance of the Swedish language for Swedish national identity" (2004: 8, my emphasis).

Although the Swedish language *may appear* not to have been a key topic in the political agenda until the mid-1990s, the low level of linguistic consciousness attributed to Sweden is nonetheless an oversimplification of a more complex phenomenon – a point that Oakes also acknowledges to some extent[6]. This is

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[6] Oakes does not employ the term linguistic consciousness, but argues that "traditional national identity was never too far away. […] This identity went underground especially from the 1960s, but is now resurfacing to fill the identity vacuum caused by the challenges of a changing world" (2001: 70-71). Here Oakes refers to traditional national identity as specific form of identity in which language plays a key role as a symbolic marker.

insofar as the analytical focus is restricted to *explicit signs* of linguistic awareness, as in the case of *overt* legislation related to the Swedish language, thus failing to acknowledge the more *covert* and *implicit* ways in which a polity manages its majority language (cf. Milani, 2006a; Schiffman, 1996; Shohamy, 2006; Watts, 2001). These are covert not just because they are "informal, unstated, de facto, grass-roots and latent" (Shohamy, 2006: 50), but also because decisions about a majority language are often *embedded* in the "mechanisms" or "devices" (ibid.: 54) through which a polity regulates the other languages present (or not) on its territory (I refer here not only to indigenous or migrant minority languages, but also high-status foreign languages such as English, French, etc.). Put simply, Swedish may not have been explicitly at the core of debates before the 1990s. Nonetheless, Swedish was more or less implicitly invoked in a range of discussions that dealt with the principles and practices of the official management of an increasing immigration (see also Oakes, 2001: 113-114). In this respect, it is worth recalling the debates preceding the Home Language Reform (*hemspråks-reform*) (1977) that granted the children of linguistic minorities the *right* to receive some instruction in (one of) their home languages throughout primary and secondary education (Hyltenstam, 2005: 2122; see also Hyltenstam & Tuomela, 1996). No less important were the discussions about the *effectiveness* (or not) of home language instruction (though the term 'home language' was replaced by mother tongue in 1997). This is a topic that was fiercely argued in relation to the controversial notion of *semilingualism* in the 1970s (see e.g. Hyltenstam & Tuomela, 1996; Martin-Jones & Romaine, 1986; Stroud, 1978, 2004; Stroud & Wingstedt, 1989), and was raised again in April-May 2006 in a fiery exchange between academics in relation to the decision of the Swedish Government to increase financial support to this type of educational provision (see Study VI).

As Study III shows, the *covert presence*, rather than absence, of Swedish as a topic of political discourse can be further substantiated by a review of Swedish citizenship legislation, in which no mention is made of proficiency in the Swedish language as a pre-requisite for the granting of Swedish citizenship. However, the Government bill (Prop. 1950) preceding the parliamentary ratification of the Citizenship Act in 1950 (*lag* 1950) stated that "the applicant's knowledge of the Swedish language should be given great importance in the naturalisation process" (cited in SOU 1999: 307). Moreover, the promulgation (*kungörelse*) of the 1950 Citizenship Act made clear that every application for naturalisation should be accompanied by a certificate of Swedish language proficiency released by "a teacher, a priest or other competent person" (ibid.). Although this practice was abolished at the beginning of the 1980s, the relationship between knowledge of Swedish and citizenship was never far from the political agenda. As a matter of fact, *Moderaterna* (the Moderate Party) proposed the introduction of a language test for citizenship during the electoral campaign in 1994 (cf. Boreus, 2006). This was followed in 1997 by the appointment of a parliamentary committee with the aim of evaluating whether the citizenship legislation needed amending. The

committee proposed that "requirements concerning language knowledge or knowledge of the Swedish society should not be linked to citizenship" (SOU 1999: 313) for "reasons of justice" (*av rättviseskäl*), given that "the conditions to learn Swedish vary to a great extent from immigrant to immigrant, and this depends on factors which are beyond any immigrant's control" (ibid.: 316). This standpoint was finally embodied in the new Citizenship Act ratified in 2001 (*lag* 2001), which does *not* contain references to any form of language requirement as a pre-requisite for citizenship. Notably, whereas there were no significant reactions in 1994 and 1997-2001, language requirements for citizenship did become a topic of considerable public interest in the context of the electoral campaign in 2002 (see also Studies IV and V).

The question that remains to be answered then is *why* the Swedish language has become more *overtly thematised* over the last few years. It is worth noting in this context that the Swedish debates were not exceptional in relation to the wider European political landscape. As a matter of fact, similar debates emerged over the same years in several other European countries, e.g. Germany (Piller, 2001; Stevenson, 2006), Great Britain (Blackledge, 2005), Latvia (Hogan-Brun, 2006), and Spain (del Valle, 2007), to name just a few. This public concern about language-related issues has been interpreted as symptomatic of nation-state dynamics related to the processes of transformation that are often referred to in the concomitant literature under the term of globalisation (see for example the studies in Mar-Molinero & Stevenson, 2006 and Duchêne & Heller, 2007). Specifically with regard to Sweden, it has been argued that we are witnessing the manifestation of "the increasing importance of national identity amongst the general public in Sweden" (Oakes 2005: 169) produced by a budding ethno-nationalist revival reacting against globalisation. Nonetheless, according to a social-constructionist and poststructuralist perspective[7], "identity cannot and should not be used as an explanatory concept in the study of linguistic practices, as it is itself in need of explanation" (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004: 9; see also Cameron, 1990).

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[7] It lies beyond the scope of this thesis to provide the reader with a comprehensive overview over social contructionism (see Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002 for a detailed outline), and poststructural-ism (see Kvale, 1992; Sim, 2001), and their mutual relationships. Suffice it to say here that social constructionism is "an umbrella term for a range of […] theories about culture and society" (Philips & Jørgensen, 2002: 4) that share the common denominator to seek to question what appears to be taken for granted knowledge. That is, social constructionism aims to tease out the ways in which what counts as knowledge is the result of social processes that are historically and culturally *specific* (ibid.: 4ff). It is important to highlight that social constructionism does *not* negate the existence of a tangible, material reality 'out there'. Instead, social constructionism emphasises that the *meaning* of such reality is the outcome of historically and culturally situated acts of social interaction. Although there is to date no common agreement about the links between social constructionism and poststructuralism, I follow Phillips and Jørgensen (ibid.) who understand social constructionism as a broader category under which poststructuralism is subsumed. Specifically, poststructuralism focuses on the notions of discourse and power in the processes that constitute social reality. I will return to these two contentious notions later on in this introduction.

Taking such a social-constructionist and post-structuralist stance, the present collection of studies will focus on the three language debates mentioned above, that is, (i) the debate on the promotion and legislation of Swedish as the principal language, (ii) the debate on the introduction of a Swedish language test for citizenship, and (iii) the debate on the effectiveness of mother tongue instruction for linguistic minorities. Each study will address some of the following questions: Why did such debates emerge when they did? Which semiotic resources – i.e. discourses – were available in those specific historical moments? Who are the social actors that intervened in these debates? What is at stake for them? What do they claim? What systems of values, ideas and beliefs – i.e. ideologies – underlie such claims? What are the effects in terms of identities, objects of political intervention, commonsensical knowledge and authority that these discourses and ideologies produce? In the next sections I will argue that these questions can be answered with the aid of a broad conceptual apparatus that allows us to theorise the intricate relationships between texts, discourses, ideologies and social actors. However, before presenting an overview over the theoretical framework underpinning the studies, I want first to address a terminological issue.

2 From language policy and planning to language politics

Language policy and/or language planning are not only the most common notions employed in sociolinguistic literature to conceptualise governmental and/or non-governmental activities which have language(s) as their target, such as codification, standardisation, language legislation and so forth, but they are also established headings through which to define the academic field of inquiry that studies these very activities in different socio-political contexts (see Blommaert, 1996; Lo Bianco, 2003; Ricento, 2000, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c). However, there is still no consensus among scholars regarding a precise definition of language policy and language planning respectively. Nor is it unequivocal whether there is, or indeed needs to be, a distinction, and if so, of what kind, between them (Lo Bianco, 2003; Hornberger, 2006; Ricento, 2000; Shohamy, 2006; see also Wingstedt, 1998 for an overview).

On the one hand, *language planning* has been characterised as a range of "deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes" (Cooper 1989: 45) – a definition that accounts for the well-known tripartite division between *status*, *corpus*, and *acquisition* planning. On the other hand, according to Tollefson (1991: 16), the most common definition of *language policy* is that of language planning pursued by governments. Albeit relevant for analytical purposes, the separation between status, corpus and acquisition planning is problematic because it may fail to recognise the significant interrelations between them (Shohamy, 2006: 48ff). But even more contentious is the distinction between language planning and language policy because, as Tollefson (1991) observes, keeping separate governmental and non-governmental activities about language "reflects an uncritical

social-theory perspective that ignores the close relationship between 'public' and 'private' sectors", thus "provid[ing] no insight into the ideological or structural basis of language planning/policy" (1991: 16). We could also add that such a separation may sideline the importance of what Fishman (1994) calls "language planning theory" in informing "language planning practice", that is, the explicit or tacit, but nonetheless crucial, role played by academics and their writings in directly or indirectly shaping and/or contesting language policies and the discourses surrounding them (cf. Heller, 1999; Heller & Duchêne, 2007; Johnson, 2005a). As Cibulka (1995: 118, cited in Ricento, 2000: 197) suggestively puts it, "the borderline between policy *research* and policy *argument* is razor thin" (emphasis in original) (see also Johnson, 2001; Meyer, 2001; van Dijk, 2001a, and Studies I, V and VI for detailed examples). As a solution to this terminological conundrum, recent theoretical reflections call for *language policy and planning (LPP)* as "a unified conceptual rubric under which to pursue fuller understanding of the complexity of the policy-planning relationship and in turn of its insertion in processes of social change" (Hornberger, 2006: 25; see also Ricento, 2000).

Without understating the importance of Hornberger's observation, I prefer to employ here the less current term *language politics* (cf. Blommaert & Bulcaen, 1997). This is insofar as politics is not necessarily limited to the acts of politicians only, but, in a broader sense, also encompasses the totality of the often conflicting discourses – i.e. those of private persons, academics, journalists, etc. – that, when uttered publicly, may potentially have a bearing on decisions of common concern for a polity (cf. Blommaert, 1999b; Chilton & Schäffner, 1997; Wodak, 2002). Accordingly, *language politics* can be used as an overarching notion that helps us to capture the *dynamics*, *heterogeneity* and *dissonance* of the diverse overt and covert processes of regimentation of languages in society[8]. These, in turn, have their most palpable and visible manifestation in what Blommaert (1999b: 9) calls *language ideological debates*, that is, historically definable moments of struggle on the field of language generating a multiplicity of interrelated texts and metatexts, that quote, echo, or contest each other. It is important to underscore here that language ideological debates should not be viewed as a pure outcome of language politics. Rather, language politics and language ideological debates are linked to each other in a dialectical relationship whereby the former takes tangible form in, and is at the same time potentially shaped by the latter.

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[8] The importance of adopting language politics, rather than policy and/or planning, has matured as a result of my reflections on sociolinguistic literature on this topic over the five years of my Ph.D. Given that the studies on which this thesis is based have been finalised at different stages of those years, they are not fully consistent with regard to the use of the terms language policy, planning, and politics. Another terminological inconsistency pertains to the use of immigrant vs. migrant. I employ 'immigrant' in earlier studies (I and III). However, after becoming aware of the negative connotations that the term 'immigrant' might have in English, in later studies I opted for using 'migrant', with the exception of my own English translations of Swedish texts where I kept 'immigrant' in order to be textually faithful to the Swedish '*invandrare*'. Finally, the studies are also inconsistent with regard to bibliographical conventions because they follow the different guidelines of the journals and volumes to which they have been submitted.

If we now turn to the ways in which language politics and language ideological debates can be theorised and investigated, I concur with Richard Watts's observation that much of the existing scholarly work "has been written from a static, structuralist perspective on society" (2001: 297), that has treated language as if it were an objective mirror of a pre-existing social structure, thus failing to recognise the *constitutive* role of language in shaping the social order (see also Cameron, 1990 and Tollefson, 2002b). One should also bear in mind that in the specific case of language politics "language […] is both the *means* and the *object* of itself" (Lo Bianco 2004: 757, my emphasis). Or to use Bauman and Briggs's (2003) terminology, language politics essentially deals with the construction and enactment of specific *meta-discursive regimes* (cf. Makoni & Pennycook, 2006b). This means that language is the *object* of analysis, reflection and, political intervention. At the same time, language is also the *medium* through which language practices or varieties and their relationships are conceptualised as, say, an 'object' to be codified, a 'problem' to be solved, or a 'resource' to be promoted, and thereby gain precise social meanings and values. As this thesis will show, however, these (meta)discursive processes are fraught with values, conceptions and beliefs which are *not* about language(s) alone (see also Woolard, 1998). Rather, any conceptualisation of language is deeply entrenched in, and accurately tied to, broader cultural images of the people who factually or purportedly speak them (Irvine & Gal, 2000; see also Cameron, 1995; Duchêne & Heller, 2007; Gal & Woolard, 2001a; Jaworski, Coupland & Galasiński, 2005; Johnson & Ensslin, in press a; Kroskrity, 2000a; Makoni & Pennycook, 2006a; Mar-Molinero & Stevenson, 2006; Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity 1998).

In the light of these observations, I will argue that the twofold role played by language as both the *medium* and *object* of language politics, on the one hand, and the relationships between language politics and socio-cultural developments, on the other, cannot be grasped by *one* all-encompassing social and/or linguistic theory. By contrast, the studies in this thesis are based on the epistemological approach of "conceptual pragmatism" (Mouzelis, 1995; see also Wodak, 2001b), according to which social theory "has as its major task to clarify conceptual tools and to construct new ones by criteria of utility rather than truth" (Wodak, 2001b: 9). Methodologically, such an approach is analogous to ethnography in that it implies starting from the observation of specific phenomena that will be later analysed, and then move on to the question of which theories can be most apt to shed light on some aspects of these phenomena. The most important assumption underlying this epistemology is that the researcher, albeit never free from pre-given categories, does not start with a clear idea about which specific theory will be then applied to a set of empirical data. Instead, research is an ongoing "abductive" (Wodak, 2001b: 70) process of meaning-making, that is, a "constant movement back and forth" (ibid.) from data collection to theory and vice versa. As a result, this thesis can be described *pace* Bakhtin (1981) as highly *heteroglossic* because it embodies concepts borrowed from a wide spectrum of theories:

Bourdieu's (1991, 2000) conceptualisation of the social order (Studies III and IV), Butler's (1997) performativity theory (Studies I and VI), Foucault's (1991) notions of power, knowledge and governmentality (Study V), Habermas's (1979) concept of legitimation crisis (Study II), and Irvine and Gal's (2000) model of linguistic ideologisation (Study III). Despite this heterogeneity, however, the different studies share the theoretical aim of pursuing some form of critical discourse analysis of the three language ideological debates in question. Given that each study gives a detailed account of a concept whenever it is used to shed light on a sample of data, in the following section I will concentrate exclusively on the broader theoretical issue of *how* critical discourse analys*es* of language ideological debates can be undertaken. This leads us to address the question of bringing into dialogue two existing paradigms of the study of language in society: namely the European-based 'school' of Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA), and the field of Language Ideology developed within North American linguistic anthropology. As I have already said before, I do *not* want to suggest that CDA and Language Ideology together provide us with *one* grand theory for the analysis of language ideological debates. Rather, in what follows I will foreground the challenges and possibilities that ensue from borrowing different conceptual tools from these two paradigms.[9]

3 Bringing into dialogue CDA and Language Ideology: challenges and possibilities

As I point out in Study III (see also Milani, 2006b), during the last twenty years Language Ideology and CDA have developed as two separate strands of research that share the concern of employing social theory with the aim of unravelling the relationships between language, ideology and power in contemporary societies. However, while language and social theory constitute the 'common ground' that unites Language Ideology and CDA, the different focus on the role played by language in social processes, coupled with a different view of the explanatory potential of social theory, may explain the existence of a relatively clear-cut divide between these two scholarly traditions (for an exception see the work of Adrian Blackledge; in particular Blackledge, 2004, 2005, 2006).

3.1 Differences

To begin with, it is a difficult, not to say impossible, task to summarise CDA. This is to some extent because there is not *one* unitary and homogeneous theory and method behind the work conducted under the heading of CDA (Meyer, 2001; van Dijk, 2001a, 2001b; Weiss & Wodak, 2003b). Rather, CDA consists of a range of often diverse theoretical and methodological strands: e.g. Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model of text, discursive practice and social practice, Wodak's

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[9] The theoretical aim of bringing into dialogue CDA and Language Ideology is made perhaps most explicit in Studies I, III, IV and V.

(2001b) discourse-historical approach, and van Dijk's (2001b) socio-cognitive approach. Nevertheless, CDA practitioners have been keen to describe themselves as committed to a shared *interdisciplinary*[10] project whereby theoretical and methodological tools from different scholarly traditions (ethnography, gender studies, linguistics, sociology, etc.) are "put to work" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999: 16) to inform each other in order to generate new theory. The focus of this enterprise is on language or discourse as the *medium* through which social inequality and domination are produced, reproduced and/or contested in a variety of contexts in specific historical moments (see for example Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 1993, 2001a, 2001b; Weiss & Wodak, 2003b; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Here discourse can be defined as a form of social practice in which individuals more or less creatively deploy existing semiotic resources (i.e. verbal and non-verbal means or signs) in mutual interactions in order to make sense of – that is, represent and signify – reality (see Fairclough, 2003: 124, and Studies I and III).

By contrast, the no-less heterogeneous field of Language Ideology has drawn attention to the fact that "not everyone is able to make statements, or to have statements taken seriously by others" (Mills, 2003: 65), often because those statements have been uttered in an allegedly 'wrong', 'bad' or 'inappropriate' spoken or written language variety (cf. Blommaert, 2005; Blommaert, Creve & Willaert, 2006; Lippi-Green, 1997). Hence research should not just try to unpack the ways in which domination is enacted or contested *through* language, but also carefully attend to the ways in which social divisions and inequalities are (re)produced and challenged *on the basis of* perceived or presumed linguistic practices – these in turn are processes whereby images of languages are tied to other categorisations such as group identities, aesthetics, morality, and so forth (cf. Gal & Woolard, 2001b: 3; Stroud, 2004: 199). It is precisely in this endeavour to grasp the links between "social forms and forms of talk" (Woolard, 1998: 3) that a few linguistic anthropologists have formulated the notion of language ideology as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein, 1979: 193), which are typically "constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group" (Kroskrity, 2000b: 8). In this sense, language ideologies "underlie attempts to use language as the site at which to promote, protect, and legitimate those interests" (ibid.).

Besides their different focus on the function of language in constituting social differentiation, Language Ideology and CDA also differ from each other in the ways in which social theory is operationalised to inform linguistic analyses. Given

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[10] van Dijk (2001a, 2001b) employs the term *multidisciplinary*, whereas Wodak (2001a; see also Weiss & Wodak, 2003b) choose *interdisciplinary*. However, Fairclough (2001a, 2001b, 2003; see also Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999) proposes more recently the use of *transdisciplinary*, while Graham (2003) calls for a *post-disciplinary* approach – here transdisciplinary and post-disciplinary are presented as an urge to overcome the boundaries between existing scholarly traditions.

the inherent diversity of the different approaches subsumed under the acronym of CDA, I agree with Weiss and Wodak (2003b: 12) that "any criticism of CDA should always specify which research or researcher they relate to because CDA as such cannot be viewed as a holistic or closed paradigm". That said, much of the groundbreaking and programmatic work of CDA (e.g. Fairclough, 2001c [1989]; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Wodak, 2001a, 2001b), is built on the shared belief that, by bringing together social and linguistic theories, the researcher will be endowed with an adequate instrument through which to uncover the ideological work of language in maintaining social hierarchies, and in this way the researcher will ultimately produce social emancipation.

In this respect, it is in the emancipatory power of research that resides the element of critique so central to CDA. For Fairclough (1992, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c [1989], 2003), the critical loading of a research enterprise lies in its ability to make transparent the *opaque*, i.e. non-obvious, ways in which discourse is used to maintain social inequality. As Fairclough (2001c [1989]: 4) puts it, "'[*c*]*ritical*' is used in the special sense of aiming to show up connections which may be hidden from people – such as the connections between language, power and ideology" (emphasis in original). Against this backdrop, Fairclough argues elsewhere that CDA is critical "in the sense that it is committed to progressive social change" (2001a: 230). By the same token, van Dijk (2001b: 96) claims that "CDA is a – critical – perspective on doing scholarship: it is, so to speak, discourse analysis 'with an attitude'. It focuses on social problems […] [and] it does so from a perspective that is consistent with the best interests of dominated groups". Finally, Wodak (2001a: 9) observes that the notion of critique in CDA should be understood "as having distance to the data, embedding the data in the social, taking a political stance explicitly, and a focus on self-reflection as scholars doing research". Acknowledging that part of CDA's legacy lies in critical theory (i.e. the work of Horkheimer and Adorno), Wodak (ibid.: 10) goes on to state that CDA aims "at producing enlightenment and emancipation […] [and] intends to create awareness in agents of how they are deceived about their own needs and interests". In sum, the common denominator more or less explicitly underlying all these observations is the trust in socio-linguistic research as a form of *emancipatory* intervention in the interest of the oppressed, the success of which "is measured by its effectiveness and relevance, that is, by its contribution to change" (van Dijk, 1993: 253; see also Slembrouck, 2001).

By contrast, the body of research on language ideologies (e.g. Blommaert, 1999a; Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity, 1998) not only often sidelines the linguistic aspect of the texts under scrutiny, but it also questions the reliance on a totalising social theory that can explain, and help intervene in, the workings of those 'grand narratives of dominance' that CDA aims to uncover (see especially Blommaert, 2005). By contrast, research on language ideologies takes a more *historical-materialist* approach to social theory. This means seeking to tease out the constellations of *people, resources*, and *constraints* that make possible the

emergence and unfolding of discursive phenomena in a given socio-political context at a particular historical time. The function of social theory here is to provide a window into what Bourdieu (1991) calls praxis, thus helping the researcher to show the ways in which the valorisation of symbolic resources (e.g. languages) hinge on specific institutional positions, and conditions of production and distribution (Blommaert, 1999b: 7; see also Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2002). This, in turn, has also entailed questioning the role played by academic expertise in legitimising political proposals *inter alia* by envisaging languages as identifi-able discrete entities in static, one-to-one relationship to clearly bounded social groups (Makoni & Pennycook, 2006b).

3.2 *Moving forward: ideology, power and history re-visited*

Despite their differences, Language Ideology and CDA should in my opinion inform each other since they offer together an important theoretical and methodo-logical apparatus through which to gain insights into the complexity of language politics in contemporary post-industrial societies such as Sweden (see also Blackledge, 2004, 2005 for a similar line of argument). This is true insofar as a linguistic/argumentative analysis of texts proposed by many CDA approaches is adequate, albeit not necessarily exhaustive, for an understanding of the linguistic basis underpinning the wide-ranging social, economic and cultural transformations related to globalisation (Fairclough, 2003, 2006). However, we also need the concepts offered by the field of Language Ideology because the *re-structuring* and *re-scaling* of relations resulting from globalisation (Blommaert, 2003, 2005; Fairclough, 2003) is not only tangible in the increasing salience of language as a *medium* through which social change is enacted, but is also manifest in an ongoing *re-signification* of languages themselves as *objects* with specific functions, values and boundaries within a given polity (see in particular Studies I, II and III).

Of course, whenever disciplinary boundaries are crossed, problems arise as a corollary to the challenges to bring into dialogue concepts and foci previously treated differently in each paradigm. Although it lies outside the scope of this thesis to give a comprehensive overview of the ontological and epistemological issues ensuing from the encounter between CDA and the field of Language Ideology, I will concentrate in the remainder of this section on three main problematic notions that are relevant for the purposes of this thesis: (i) ideology, (ii) power, and (iii) history.

Ideology is probably one of the most disputed notions in the social sciences. As Blommaert (2005: 158) observes, "[f]ew terms are as badly served by scholarship as the term ideology, and as soon as anyone enters the field of ideology studies, he or she finds him/herself in a morass of contradictory definitions". For Fairclough (2003: 218), "ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination and exploitation". Wodak (1996: 18) argues that ideologies "are often (though not necessarily) false or ungrounded constructions of society". More recently, Wodak

(2001a: 10) suggests that "[i]deology, for CDA, is seen as an important aspect of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations" (see also Weiss & Wodak, 2003b: 14). It appears clear from these definitions that CDA seems to espouse a Marxist view of ideology as 'false consciousness'. That is, ideology is taken to be a falsifying means through which dominant groups *mystify* reality, thereby enacting, reproducing or perpetuating social inequalities (cf. Blommaert et al., 2001). Within this framework, the researcher is viewed as possessing the suitable instruments (i.e. a mediation between linguistic and social theories) through which to *uncover* such processes, and therefore offer the dominated a "unique and superior insight" (ibid.: 7) about their conditions, thus possibly impacting on social change.

I do not want to deny that ideologies may indeed work through processes of *misrecognition* (Bourdieu, 1991) whereby, for example, an arbitrary logic masquerades as sound common sense (Study IV; see also Blackledge, 2005, 2007). Nonetheless, Pennycook (2001: 85) draws attention to the fact that, in adopting a "modernist emancipatory model of knowledge", much of CDA research is caught up in an epistemological dilemma. On the one hand, CDA practitioners do *not* conceal the ideological load of their research activities. For instance, Fairclough openly recognises that any discursive practice (including research) is inherently ideological because it "entail[s] particular interests, commitments, inclusions, exclusions, and so forth" (Fairclough, 1995: 53). To put it bluntly, "there is no value-free CDA, […] there is no value-free science" (Gouveia, 2003: 57). On the other hand, despite acknowledging their intrinsic ideological biases, CDA researchers seem to believe that the discourses they produce are 'less ideological', 'less falsifying' or 'more true' – hence endowed with emancipatory force – than the discourses they investigate. This epistemological dilemma can be interpreted as the result of the failure to question the contingent, situated nature of scientific knowledge (Pennycook 2001: 85), coupled with the embracing of a grand narrative of emancipation that becomes CDA's own totalising and unquestioned myth (Baxter, 2002: 831; Slembrouck, 2001: 33). Current poststructuralist research on language and gender and language politics (e.g. Baxter, 2002; Pennycook, 2006) suggests that this dilemma could be overcome with the aid of a serious commitment to reflexivity on the part of the researcher. This entails the need for the researcher to be explicit about his or her steps in the research activities, thus mapping the situatedness of the production of truth and knowledge claims. Furthermore, although poststructuralism is often associated with an academic exercise of hyper-relativism that is in the end irrelevant to social practice (cf. Finney, 2005 and Pennycook, 2006 for an overview), Judith Baxter (2002) and Alastair Pennycook (2006) point out that embracing a poststructuralist stance does not necessarily preclude the possibility of producing social change. Given that any form of knowledge according to poststructuralism is inherently ideological, contingent and transient, research cannot have an impact on social transformations through the disclosure of *one*

absolute and objective Truth – this being an endeavour ultimately destined to fail. On the contrary, the emancipatory potential of research lies in being part of, and therefore shaping, the operations of power through the production of alternative and oppositional narratives that "ask questions where others have located answers" (Dean, 1994: 4). That is, consistent with Foucault's (1978: 95) remark that "[w]here there is power, there is resistance", the narratives developed by researchers can be important forms of resistance by questioning the uniformity and homogeneity often assumed in the discourses they bring under investigation (Baxter, 2002). This is an observation that raises another problematic issue, namely *power*, and its relation to language.

Wodak (2001a: 10) argues that '[f]or CDA, language is not powerful on its own – it gains power by the use powerful people make of it', and goes on to further qualify her standpoint as follows:

> [p]ower is about relations of difference, and particularly about the effects of differences in social structures. The constant unity of language and other social matters ensures that language is entwined in social power in a number of ways: language indexes power, expresses power, is involved where there is contention over and a challenge to power. Power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and long term (ibid.: 11).

Here Wodak envisages the power of language as if it derived from a pre-existing social power. Thus, according to such a view, it is possible to determine who the dominant and the dominated are, on the one hand, and how the language of the dominant is employed to exert power over the dominated, on the other. However, as is foregrounded in Study V, this conceptualisation of power may be problematic for several reasons. Undoubtedly, both CDA and the field of Language Ideology have not only amply demonstrated that socially valued material and symbolic resources including language(s) are *unequally distributed* among individuals in a society, but it has also shown that *some* individuals determine what counts as valuable in that society (cf. Bourdieu, 1991). Accordingly, research that identifies itself as 'critical' should explore those discourses which are most likely to have an impact on public opinion, and thereby contribute to *naturalising* – i.e. making *commonsensical* – images of languages and their speakers, such as in the cases of discourses of political parties, mainstream media, etc. (cf. Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998a, 1998b; Blackledge, 2005; van Dijk, 1993; Verschueren, 1999). Nevertheless, Nikolas Rose observes that any *a priori* distribution of power may fail to recognise "the dynamics of power relations within the encounters that make up the everyday experience of individuals" (1996: 37). This last observation brings us back to Wodak's definition above. If "power does not derive from language", it is difficult to understand how "language can be used to challenge power", or even "subvert" it. This is because, as Pennycook (2001: 126) points out, a theoretical perspective that envisages power in language as a derivative of a pre-existing social power forecloses any possibility of agency, opposition and

resistance "from the margins of power" (Butler, 1997: 156). Margins of power define here all those discourses that are not dominant in a given context in a specific historical moment, including for example the academic discourses produced by CDA. And it can be useful at this point to take the Swedish socio-political context to exemplify further this point. Studies III, IV and V argue that we are witnessing in Sweden the emergence of a set of intertwined discourses that view language requirements for citizenship applicants as a measure for the well-being of Swedish society. The interesting aspects in the Swedish context are that: (i) these discourses were initiated by an opposition party, the Liberal Party, struggling for electoral success, and (ii) by representing a language test as a self-evident practice in a democratic society, the Liberal Party sought to challenge and overrule the dominance in Swedish politics of another discourse according to which language requirements for citizenship are discriminatory and unjust. In an analogous way, Study VI illustrates that there is a discursive struggle between two opposing ways of representing mother tongue instruction, and its effects on linguistic minorities. In both the debates on language testing for citizenship and mother tongue instruction, it is problematic to determine *a priori* who is powerful, and who is not. Is the Liberal Party powerful? What about the other politicians who were against the language testing proposal? Are the claims advanced by politicians more authoritative than those of, say, academics, simply *by virtue of* the social position of their proponents? And, when the contention is between academics, does social power provide us with a sufficiently adequate variable to explain discursive struggles?

To anticipate some of the answers to those questions, Study IV shows how a variety of social actors (including journalists) legitimate the language testing proposal through subtle strategies whereby different arguments are connected to each other arbitrarily so that 'illusory representations' are represented as though they were 'grounded in reality' (Bourdieu, 2000: 181; see also Blackledge, 2005, 2007). Or, focusing specifically on one policy document, Study V shows that the recontextualisation and resignification of academic texts can be another strategy through which to invest a policy proposal with authority and legitimacy. Finally, Study VI illustrates that authority in the debate on mother tongue instruction is a complex discursive process through which social actors position themselves and others by fore-grounding some identities while backgrounding others.

In sum, without denying the impact of social power on language, I would argue that CDA needs a more dynamic conceptualisation of the power of language that is not wholly *reducible* to, or exclusively *derivative* from, social power. Therefore, the focus should be less on who is powerful or not, but rather on which *available* discursive resources (i.e. strategies and means) are employed to make an utterance powerful and authoritative. This question of availability of resources then leads us to the last important notion for discussion here, namely *history*.

One of the main points of criticism advanced especially by Blommaert (1999b, 2005; see also Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000 and Blommaert et al., 2001) is

that CDA lacks nuanced analyses of the "history of discourse data" (Blommaert, 2005: 64), that is, "the ethnographic origin and *situatedness* of data is hardly treated [in CDA]" (ibid., my emphasis). Without entering into an ongoing academic contention between Blommaert and some exponents of CDA, I sympathise with Wodak's observation (2006) that Blommaert's critique warrants some modification, particularly in view of the fact that the notions of intertextuality and interdiscursivity (see Fairclough, 2003: 218) play a fundamental role in much of CDA work aiming to understand how texts and discourses are linked to each other both synchronically and *diachronically* (Wodak, 2001a). Furthermore, history is indeed an important topic of analysis in one particular strand of CDA, i.e. the discourse-historical approach developed by Wodak and her associates at the University of Vienna in the 1980s (see Wodak et al., 1999; Blackledge, 2005). That said, Blommaert's call for a more explicit engagement with the situatedness of research data still merits serious attention.

In Blommaert's view, the problem of history is not simply a matter of identifying intertextual or interdiscursive links. Nor does it mean providing accounts – no matter how comprehensive they are – of the history of a given political entity, society, etc. Rather, it requires the adoption and implementation of an *historiographical approach* that pays attention to the *multi-layered historicity* of a social event (Blommaert, 1999b; Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; see also Studies II and III). Such an approach involves an appreciation of history not as purely *sequential* background information that is *external* to the texts under investigation. Instead, history should be viewed as a nexus of different intertwined temporalities – the "here and now" embedded in "slow processes […] beyond the reach of individuals" (Blommaert, 1999b: 3) – that determine not only what kinds of texts are produced in a specific moment, but also what meanings and values these texts embody at that very moment.

In practice, an historiographical approach *à la* Blommaert implies four main methodological considerations. First, the researcher needs to pay attention to "the real historical actors, their interests, their alliances, their practices and where they come from, in relation to the discourses they produce" (Blommaert, 1999b: 7). In this way, it is possible to trace the social provenance of statements or claims, and unravel the dynamics of social formations and conflicts (see in particular Studies I, III, IV and VI). Second, identifying which semiotic resources are at the disposal of social actors in a specific place at a given time requires not only looking at the diachronic trajectories of such resources, but also taking a bird's eye perspective that captures the interrelatedness between the local/national discursive phenomena and trans-national or global flows (cf. Blommaert, 2003, 2005; Fairclough, 2003). Third, a focus on the constraints of discourse urges the researcher to go beyond the explicitly *linguistic* realisations of discourse, and investigate more precisely the domain of the *unsaid*. This does not only pertain to what is taken for granted, the so-called 'common ground' of assumptions or presuppositions (Verschueren, 1999; Fairclough, 2003) on which any form of verbal communication is based. It

also relates to what is legally silenced through overt forms of censorship or, more subtly, what is viewed as taboo, and therefore socio-culturally *unspeakable* (cf. Butler, 1997; see specifically Studies II, III and VI). Fourth, as Blommaert (2005: 64) points out, "[s]ome things can only be said at certain moments, under certain conditions. Likewise, and very often as a correlate of this, some things can only be *researched* at certain moments and under certain conditions" (my emphasis). To this, I would also add: *by certain people*. That is, engaging with the situatedness of research data is not just an exercise geared to unpacking the historical conditions of production and distribution of such data. It also requires the researcher to make explicit the social, cultural and institutional pre-requisites that have enabled him or her to collect a definite sample of tokens of discourse, thereby *turning them* into data (cf. Haglund, 2005: 30; Simon & Dippo, 1986: 200ff). This in turn brings us back to the issue of reflexivity, to which I will now turn.

4 The position of the researcher vis-à-vis the researched discourses

I have already observed above that both CDA and the field of Language Ideology endorse a view of research as inherently ideologically-laden and socio-politically situated. Speaking from a CDA perspective, van Dijk admits that "[u]nlike much other scholarship, CDA does not deny but explicitly defines and defends its own socio-political position. That is, CDA is biased – and proud of it" (van Dijk, 2001b: 96). In an analogous way, Blackledge draws upon Chilton (2004) in order to point out that "[t]he political standpoint of the critical discourse analyst should never be entirely absent, as it may be impossible to analyse political language behaviour unless one exercises one's political intuitions" (2005: 60ff). Reasoning along similar lines from the position of Language Ideology, Blommaert forcefully claims that:

> [t]aking sides is unavoidable: it comes with doing a particular type of questioning of linguistic reality. An attempt at providing a history of language which takes into account social and political factors forces us to voice interpretations of these factors. And in social and political reality, interpretations are partisan, and they almost automatically align the one who formulated the interpretation with one or another political bloc. So be it. (1999c: 436)

These observations resonate well with the assumptions of ethnography and other strands of qualitative research, according to which "descriptions and explanations […] involve selective viewing and interpreting that are based on one particular way of seeing the world" (Haglund, 2005: 30), such that the "researchers cannot be neutral, objective or detached from the knowledge they are generating" (ibid.). Recognising the partiality of knowledge, however, is by no means tantamount to overlooking the importance of academic rigour – an exercise that, according to poststructuralism, ethnography and other qualitative research, requires the researcher to be self-reflexive and acknowledge his or her ideological and institu-

tional positions, "rather than to employ amnesia and poor arithmetic whilst claiming academic neutrality" (Heugh, 2003: 39).

In reassessing my own work in this self-reflexive spirit, I have to admit that each of the studies in this collection makes explicit only the reasons that motivate the choice of a specific data-set for the purpose of that particular study, and thereby leave out the principles and often conflicting processes of knowledge production related to the research activity as a whole – this is a limitation that mainly arises from the space constraints dictated by the journals and edited collections to which the studies presented here have been submitted. Therefore, I aim in the remainder of this section to fill this methodological gap, and lay bare the conditions that have framed my research on language politics in Sweden.

4.1 Breakdowns of understanding as rich points

Although this thesis cannot be characterised as ethnographic, the three methodological steps of ethnography formulated by Agar (1995) can be nonetheless instructive here to describe *a posteriori* the beginning of my research activities. According to Agar, at the first stage, the ethnographer *needs to be there*. That is, the ethnographer needs to be *in* the context that will become the object of study, because 'being there' is the necessary prerequisite for the second step in ethnographic research, namely the identification of so-called *rich points*. These are crucial moments in which the ethnographer feels caught up in an impasse generated by a discrepancy between what is observed, on the one hand, and the researcher's set of assumptions, on the other. As Agar puts it (ibid.: 587), "[w]hen a rich point occurs, an ethnographer learns that his or her assumptions about how the world works, usually implicit and out of awareness, are inadequate to understand something that happened". Finally, the third moment is to reflect upon these breakdowns of understanding. It is important to point out, however, that the ethnographer assumes *coherence* on the part of the people observed. In Agar's (ibid.) terms, "[t]he rich point […] isn't their problem, it's your problem. The rich point doesn't mean that they're irrational or disorganized; it means that you're not yet competent to understand it". Accordingly, the ultimate aim of the ethnographer is to map and make sense of that coherence with the aid of some kind of conceptual tools. Needless to say, steps 2 and 3 never end up in an absolute closure, because meaning making will always generate new rich points that need to be understood, and so on.

If read in the light of the three phases spelled out by Agar, my research on language politics in Sweden has its fundamental pre-condition in the fact that I am a migrant who moved from Italy to Sweden in 1999 for personal and economic reasons after completing a cycle of studies in Modern Languages (English and Russian) at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan. Accordingly, I had *access* (cf. Agar, 1995) to what would become the field of research when the three language debates explored in the present thesis reached their highest peaks of visibility: (i) May-June 2002 and September 2005-February 2006 for the debate on

the promotion of Swedish; (ii) August 2002-March 2003 for the debate on language testing for citizenship; and (iii) April-May 2006 for the debate on mother tongue instruction. No less important in terms of access to the field was the fact that, by 2002, I had attained an 'advanced' level of proficiency in Swedish after nearly five years' informal, self-directed language learning. Furthermore, also in 2002, I was evaluating different topics for a dissertation at the same time as I applied for, and was subsequently granted, a Ph.D. position at the Centre for Research on Bilingualism, at Stockholm University.

Most crucial for turning such debates into an object of study was the emergence of a series of breakdowns of understanding. First of all, there was a major discrepancy between what I was observing and the sociolinguistic literature I was familiar with, according to which Sweden was a country with a low level of linguistic consciousness (Lund, 1986) characterised by the absence of Swedish as a target of political intervention (Teleman & Westman, 1997). This mismatch was generated not only by the fact that I perceived the Swedish language far from being sidelined as an object of political and media interests, but also because my daily encounters with people were characterised by a continuous assessment of my linguistic practices, especially in terms of phonological realisations or accent. That my interlocutors assessed my verbal flow as nearly 'without an accent' (*nästan utan brytning*) was a recurrent topic of conversation, and an object of praise, as soon as it was known that I was originally from Italy. At this stage, two questions arose from the discrepancies between my assumptions about Sweden and everyday observations: (i) if we assume the existence of a low level of linguistic conscious-ness, why did language awareness seem to me so central in everyday encounters? and (ii) if we assume that Swedish had been absent as an target of politics, why did it become so overtly thematised in 2002?

At the same time, these questions generated a theoretical quandary. On the one hand, a passion for the history of the Scandinavian languages had brought me into contact with the work of Einar Haugen about the language situation in Norway (see for example Haugen, 1972). These readings, in turn, drew my attention to a whole body of theoretical work on language policy and language planning (e.g. Cooper, 1984; Fishman, 1974). On the other hand, in reading this literature, I grew increasingly aware of that fact that this scholarship could be suitable for reconstructions *a posteriori* of how languages become codified, standardised and so forth, but, mainly because of its structuralist underpinnings (cf. Watts, 2001), it could not help me to get to grips with the questions I was asking myself about *contemporary* Sweden.

4.2 *Turning existing discourses into data: ideological stances and institutional positions*

The conflicting experiences described above took two interrelated trajectories. First, as regards theory, my supervisor Kenneth Hyltenstam suggested that I should read Blommaert's (1999a) *Language Ideological Debates*, and become

more familiar with different types of discourse analysis, in particular CDA and the sociolinguistic literature drawing upon the writings of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault. Second, partly as a result of these theoretical readings, I started exploring different discourses that seemed to me pervasive in both the debate on the promotion of Swedish and on the introduction of a language test for Swedish citizenship, and would also be crucial later for the analysis of the debate on mother tongue instruction. To begin with, all these debates were being reported on, albeit to different degrees, in the media sites to which I had access on a regular basis: (i) the daily *Dagens Nyheter*, to which I subscribe, and (ii) the section of the newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet*, called *Language Column* (*Språkspalten*), available electronically through the Internet[11]. Furthermore, the proposal of a language test for citizenship was a recurrent topic in the TV debates related to the parliamentary election in 2002. A second interesting aspect was that all debates seemed to be characterised by the active engagement of a few linguists and other academics (including my Ph. D. supervisor and some other colleagues at the Centre for Research on Bilingualism) who were stepping into the process of policy making in different ways, either by contributing to the formulation of policy documents, or by fiercely debating the pros and cons of language testing for naturalisation and mother tongue instruction. Finally, these were also episodes in which politicians (in the restricted sense of the term) were staking claims about languages, often referring to scholarly work, thus possibly re-shaping legislation.

The factors described here directed me to concentrate on academic, print media, and political discourses. The privilege accorded to these discourses, rather than to the outcomes of more ethnographically-grounded interactions (e.g. focus groups), was also motivated by the desire to concentrate on the arguments advanced by the so-called 'élites' because they are typically geared on the manufacturing of consent, and therefore are most likely to affect public opinion (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998b; van Dijk, 1993). However, making sense of these discourses would have never been feasible without talking to people in Sweden (friends, other academics, and politicians) on language-related issues. It was partly as a result of many interactions with friends and acquaintances whom I respect that I was constantly haunted by the desire to understand why they agreed with the Liberal Party's arguments that it was 'logical', 'good', or 'self-evident' to introduce a Swedish language test as a pre-requisite for the granting of Swedish citizenship to migrants. By the same token, in the case of the debate on the promotion of Swedish, I was not only intrigued by the exchanges with other academics who viewed a standardised majority language, Swedish, as a 'small' or 'minority' language under the 'threat' of English, but I was also attracted by what I perceived as ambivalence or fear on the part of the state in deciding whether to legislate Swedish or not as the principal language. In this respect, I was no less fascinated by the heated reactions of my colleagues against the claims that mother

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[11] The current hyperlink to *Språkspalten* is: http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/kultur/did_5602044.asp – accessed on 23 April 2007.

tongue instruction is detrimental to the success of linguistic minorities in Swedish society.

Of course, my perceptions are revelatory of my own ideological stances vis-à-vis the object under investigation. Politically, I do not belong to any established party in either Italy or Sweden, but I view myself as a sympathiser of the Left. In particular, I distrust the shared belief of many Centre-Right parties in free will as the *only and necessary precondition* for the accomplishment of personal choices, thus downplaying the socio-economic constraints that impinge on human agency (cf. May, 2005). Possibly the notion of the *engaged outsider* (Stevenson, 2002: vii) is most pertinent here to describe my social position in the Swedish context with regard to the debates in question. Although I feel most often accepted in many different social situation *inter alia* thanks to my 'good' Swedish, I am an outsider because my geographical and cultural provenance, together with my Swedish language skills, no matter how advanced these may be, will never allow me to 'pass' (cf. Piller, 2002) as a full member of the imagined community (Anderson, 1991 [1983]) of Swedes. Nonetheless, assumed or attributed identification with the nation should not be confused with membership and participation in the state (Blackledge, 2005; Blommaert, 2006). In this sense, residency in Sweden and employment as a Ph. D. candidate at the Centre for Research of Bilingualism granted me the opportunity to engage with social issues that might have a bearing on my own status and positions of outsider vs. insider in Swedish society. Likewise, the research environment at the Centre for Research on Bilingualism strengthened further the belief that multilingualism and multiculturalism are the necessary cornerstones for the achievement of a truly democratic society today. It would be naïve, however, to think of academic institutions and their practices as themselves free from power.

Commenting on Foucault, Haglund (2005: 12) observes that "power inscribes all social relations, at every conceivable level and in every possible form of society". In addition, as Foucault himself (1980) clearly points out, the operations of power cannot be separated from the production of knowledge (see above and Study V). Accordingly, research activities (e.g. interactions between researchers, Ph. D. supervision, etc.), and their outcomes (academic articles, Ph. D. dissertations, etc.), can be viewed as some of the most tangible manifestations of the kinetic interface between power and knowledge. Undoubtedly, power imbalances can be highly problematic especially when, say, a Ph. D. supervisor is one of the key actors in the debates investigated in a Ph. D. dissertation. In this respect, although power can never be neutralised in the end, it can be contested or opposed through different strategies. In the specific case of my Ph. D. supervision, a strategy adopted to partly counterbalance the constraints that my main supervisor, Kenneth Hyltenstam, could possibly set in my analyses was the appointment of a co-supervisor outside of Sweden, namely Sally Johnson at the University of Leeds. However, the fact that Kenneth had an active role in the language debates studied here should not be viewed as a potentially detrimental factor. This is

insofar as our periodic conversations about language politics in Sweden constituted unique sites for me to obtain deeper insights into the ways in which Swedish policy-making works. No less significant for the research process was the opportunity to step out of Swedish academia, and spend in total nine months at the University of Leeds. This temporary 'break' allowed me to take some distance from the Swedish context, at the same time as the encounter with a different academic environment, together with its traditions and practices, helped me in the self-reflexive process of assessing my own position in relation to the object of inquiry. Furthermore, the specific research interest of Sally Johnson in investigating the role played the media in language debates had an influence on my research focus drawing my attention to the peculiarities of (print-)mediated interaction. On the whole, the academic discussions between me and my two supervisors constantly made me sensitive to the ideological stances that we, linguists, socio-linguists, linguistic anthropologists, adopt. Such awareness is not a random or exceptional phenomenon, but is itself part of a recent historical shift to self-scrutiny in sociolinguistics, according to which researchers must acknowledge their own interests and ideological positions in the study of languages in their social, cultural and political dimensions (cf. Jaworski, in press, see also Bucholtz, 2003; Coupland, 2003; Eckert, 2003; Heller, 1999; Heller & Duchêne, 2007; Johnson, 2001, 2005a).

It was this complex nexus of experiences, theoretical readings, institutional and personal positions and beliefs that framed the research questions listed above. Having set the questions and the conditions underlying their formulation, I now want to try to summarise some of the answers provided in the studies of this thesis.

5 Language ideological debates in Sweden: overview of the studies

It will appear clear below that the three language debates in question are different from each other in many respects. Nonetheless, the notions of *ideology*, *power* and *history* are key here in order to understand the commonalities of these debates. The main argument developed throughout the studies is that the Swedish debates are the manifestation of conflicts between different language ideologies that struggle for power and dominance, or, to use Gramsci's (1971) term, hegemony, thus attempting to impose one specific way of envisaging the management of a nation-state, Sweden, at the beginning of the 21st century (cf. Blackledge, 2004, 2005; Blommaert, 1999b).

As Blommaert (2006) remarks, not all political entities are nation-states. Nor should the state be treated as coterminous with the nation. Rather, the nation-state is a particular form of societal organisation according to which the people who occupy a territorial space delimited by (often) clear-cut borders are continuously subject to processes of socio-political, economic and cultural unification (Bourdieu, 1991, 2000; see also Blackledge, 2004, 2005). A distinctive trait of the nation-state is that the socio-economic activities of a polity are to different degrees controlled (or not) by the state, understood as an apparatus of interdependent

institutions (e.g. parliament, government, courts, school, etc.). At the same time, these institutions play a more or less active role in regimenting symbolic processes whereby that polity becomes united through a cultural and historical 'common fabric', thus giving rise to the nation. In other words, to echo Anderson's (1991 [1983]) well-known account, the state provides the members of a polity with a complex set of symbolic resources through which they can *imagine* themselves as a *national community* that not only shares a bounded territory, but also a specific framework of reference in terms of values, beliefs, history, and, most interestingly for our purposes here, one or several common language(s). That said, one of the main problems that a nation-state finds itself facing is that national communities are generally heterogeneous as far as language(s) are concerned. As a result, the construction of the nation typically requires the state to choose and ratify – either overtly through legislation or more covertly through praxis – the varieties of some speakers as national or official languages.

In recent years, the problems posed for the nation-state by linguistic heterogeneity have been fuelled further by two factors related to globalisation: (i) the increase in human mobility; and (ii) the re-scaling of state power in relation to super-state organisations (e.g. the EU). It goes without saying that neither diasporas nor inter-state or super-state relations are new phenomena emblematic of late modernity. Nonetheless, as Blommaert (2003: 615) observes, "[g]lobalization results in intensified forms of flow – movements of objects, people and images – causing forms of contact and difference perhaps not new in substance but new in *scale* and *perception*" (my emphasis). Taking Sweden as a case in point, this thesis shows that the increased linguistic heterogeneity of the Swedish population resulting from immigration, coupled with Sweden's accession to the EU, contributed to generate new perceptions of the functions and status of the Swedish language vis-à-vis the other languages in the Swedish sociolinguistic landscape: English, indigenous minority languages and migrants' languages. In this way, a range of conflicting language ideologies were mobilised and came into mutual struggle (cf. Jacquemet, 2005).

Analogous to the cases described in Duchêne & Heller (2007), the studies in this thesis show that, in their outer and most patent facets, such ideological struggles deal with the relationships between languages in today's Sweden, and how the state, through legislation, should – or should not – intervene in the regimentation of such relationships in order to (re)produce some kind of linguistic order. The studies will also show that when social actors appeal to a linguistic order, they not only draw boundaries between different languages in a given society, but at the same time they often also bring into existence a social order in which the speakers of those languages come to occupy specific, often non-negotiable, social positions (cf. Blackledge, 2005: 213; Blommaert, 2005: 217; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004: 21; Stroud, 2004: 199). These linguistic and social hierarchies, in turn, are imbricated in an often assumed and implicit moral order of what counts as good or bad, acceptable or taboo in that society (see in particular

Heller & Duchêne, 2007: 4)[12]. In what follows, I will summarise the main results of the studies thematically. I will start from the debate on the promotion of Swedish. I will then move on to the debate on language testing for citizenship, and I will end with the debate on mother tongue instruction.

5.1 Promoting Swedish

The publication of the draft action programme for the Swedish language *Mål i mun* (SOU, 2002) in April 2002 represented a key moment in Swedish language politics for several reasons. First of all, this policy document constitutes the most comprehensive outcome of a long-lasting discussion about the status and future of Swedish in a globalised world, in which English is perceived to become gradually more powerful. Second, as a practical measure to counter the increasing dominance of English, one of the proposals in *Mål i mun* is to ratify a law establishing that (i) "Swedish is the principal language of Sweden, and the country's official language in international relations", and (ii) "those working in public administration should use clear and comprehensible Swedish in their work" (SOU, 2002: 35) – a suggestion, however, that proved to be particularly problematic, and has not been officially implemented yet.

Focusing on different aspects of the debate on the promotion of the Swedish language, Study I and II should be read as complementary insofar as they both take *Mål i mun* as their point of departure, although they pursue opposing time trajectories. The main concern in Study I is to reconstruct the different "chains of discourse" (Blackledge, 2005: 1) on the Swedish language that preceded and eventually fed into *Mål i mun*. Furthermore, this study also seeks to understand the reasons and conditions underlying the emergence of the language debate in question at a specific historical conjuncture. By contrast, Study II focuses on the period subsequent to the publication of *Mål i mun*, and looks at the ways in which a language debate may – or may not – come to a closure. Given that such closure has not been achieved yet in the specific case of the legislation of Swedish, Study II pays close attention to the quandaries that the Swedish state had to face when legitimating – i.e. rationally justifying – its engagement in language issues.

Although, as Blommaert (1999b) points out, it is impossible to determine with certainty the exact points in time at which a debate begins or ends, Study I illustrates with the aid of the notions of interpellation and iterability (Butler, 1997) that the origins of the debate on the promotion of Swedish can be located at the intersection between different academic discourses on language that were circulating at the beginning of the 1990s, namely the discourse of language

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[12] The studies will illustrate that specific historical and ideological conditions determine the domain of what remains unspeakable, i.e. taboo, in a given society at a specific moment. Accordingly, given the overarching role of these conditions in impacting the three debates under investigation here, the contextualisation of these debates has often required drawing upon and accounting for the same historical and ideological backgrounds. This, in turn, has led to a number of repetitions across the studies.

endangerment (see Krauss, 1992) and the discourse of English as a global language (see Phillipson, 1992). Crucially, this was also an historical phase of political and economic distress mainly because Sweden was experiencing a crisis of its well-known welfare state system, and, partly as a result of this, the Social Democratic Government then in power started considering the idea of a Swedish accession to the European Union. It is this synergic interplay between existing available discourses, on the one hand, and socio-political transformations, on the other, that provided the favourable conditions for the emergence of an academic discussion about the status and future of the Swedish language at that very moment. This is insofar as the discourse of language endangerment and the discourse of English as a global language supplied a number of Swedish linguists with the semiotic means through which to make sense of what might happen to the Swedish language as a consequence of the re-negotiation of state power ensuing from EU-accession – itself one dimension of globalisation in the sense of re-structuring and re-scaling of relations between states (see above). In particular, the discourse on language endangerment and the discourse on English as a global language helped those linguists to conceptualise Swedish and English as entities struggling with each other in a set of interlocked spaces (Sweden, the EU, the world). Moreover, assuming a stronger power on the part of English, such discourses also contributed to representing Swedish as a "minority language" (Hyltenstam, 1996, 1999b) threatened by English in many societal domains (culture, higher education, etc.), and therefore in need of state support and promotion.

The concerns about Swedish vis-à-vis English, however, did not remain confined within academic environments. In Study I, a review of parliamentary motions submitted by MPs during the 1990s shows that the status of Swedish in the EU institutions was also a preoccupation of politicians. In this respect, it is difficult, not to say impossible, to determine with certainty whether the claims advanced by politicians and academics respectively are tied together by a relation of causality as if the former were generated or prompted by the latter. Nonetheless, the links between academic and political discourse are patent in the texts under scrutiny. Here MPs as well as the Government explicitly referred to the fears expressed by academics about the future of the Swedish language in order to buttress the view that some kind of state measures should be taken in order to secure the status of Swedish.

The question that remains to be answered then is why the Government in 2005 suggested that the recognition of Swedish as the principal language of Sweden should *not* be officially embodied in law (Prop. 2005/06). In other words, what is interesting here is to understand the reasons why the Government first seemed to endorse the preoccupations about the Swedish language, but in the end it drew back from fully supporting a language law. Bringing together the results from Study I and II, I would argue that an answer to this question can be provided with

the aid of the notions of *scale*[13] and *legitimation*, and their mutual relations to *language(s)*.

As Blommaert et al. (2005: 203) puts it, "[t]he notion of scale precisely emphasizes the idea that spaces are ordered and organized in relation to one another, stratified and layered, with processes belonging to one scale entering processes at another scale". Blommaert et al. (ibid.) also highlight that the relationships between these spaces are dialectical. This entails that the material and symbolic flows emanating from different spaces may impact on, or indeed come into conflict with, each other. At a meta-level, it also means that the perceptions and discursive representations of such processes are subject to the conditions and constraints that rule a specific space. To this complex picture, one should also add a *linguistic* dimension, namely the fact that each space typically encompasses several languages, the *values* and *functions* of which not only vary in one given space, but also across different spaces. I will now try to illustrate this apparently abstract multi-scalar model with the help of the Swedish context.

On a first level, Swedish has the *de facto* status of dominant, majority language in relation to, say, indigenous minority languages and migrant languages in Sweden. Because of historical and political reasons, however, such position has been traditionally taken for granted and downplayed (cf. Oakes, 2001), and therefore has not been endorsed in the law. On a second level, through accession to the EU, Sweden became a component of a political-economic space (i.e. the EU) in which Swedish was granted the status of official and working language of the EU institutions, at the same time as it came to occupy a *de facto* inferior status in relation to other EU languages (e.g. English and French) (cf. Phillipson, 2003). On a third level, Sweden is also part of an increasingly more interconnected global space in which English or better English*es* in the plural, to underscore the diversity of varieties of such language (Kachru, 1997), are widely used and taught as either second or foreign languages, and have high symbolic and communicative value (cf. Phillipson, 1992). That said, I agree with Pennycook who argues that "we don't have to accept all of Phillipson's (1992) imperialistic claims [about the spread of English] to nevertheless acknowledge that there are widespread social, cultural, educational, economic and political *effects*" (2006: 90, my emphasis). And in the case of Sweden, it is precisely the unequal position of Swedish in relation to English in the European and global spaces thus possibly undermining the dominance of Swedish in the national space that engendered the demand for the state to make *explicit* through legislation the status of its majority language.

However, assuming that the state in liberal democracies "is typically obliged to rationalise its actions in terms of the general 'good of the people'" (Johnson 2005b: 462), the Swedish state found itself in the position of having to rationally justify the introduction of a law on the Swedish language. Drawing upon Habermas's (1979) notion of legitimation crisis, Study II shows that the rationali-

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[13] Admittedly, the notion of scale, albeit present in Study I, would have benefited from a more prominent foregrounding there.

sation of the proposal of a language law is a discursive process that proved to be thorny because it clashed with a constraint under which such rationalisation may be performed in the national space, namely the unacceptability of an act on the part of the state that may be perceived as an overt manifestation of nationalism privileging one ethnic or linguistic group. As I will illustrate hereafter, such a constraint is itself the result of the interaction between two specific historical and ideological developments.

Oakes (2001) points out that while language and ethnicity[14] had been important symbolic means for the construction of the Swedish nation in the 19th and early 20th century, the political success of Social Democracy after World War II brought about a downplaying of the linguistic and ethnic components of national identity as a part of a broader ideological project geared to the creation of a nation built on "the ideologies of anti-traditionalism, rationalism, democratism and international-ism" (Oakes, 2001: 70; see also Dahlstedt, 1974). On the one hand, the Social Democratic project of boosting Sweden as an international model had as its linguistic counterpart the fact that *English*, rather than Swedish, became an important symbolic resource through which to represent the Swedish nation in the international arena (Oakes, 2001: 153). On the other hand, in the national arena, Swedish language and ethnicity did *not* cease to be important categories through which to mark boundaries between what counts as 'Swedish' vs. 'Other' (cf. Stroud, 2004). Rather such boundary-making on the basis of perceived or presumed linguistic practices assumed *covert* forms, also partly as a result of the so-called ideological turn from assimilationism to multiculturalism/diversity (*mångkultur/mångfald*) that took place in the mid 1970s (see also Studies III and VI). Taking its most tangible manifestation in the catchwords equality (*jämlikhet*), freedom of choice (*valfrihet*) and co-operation (*samverkan*), such shift not only entailed that the state should abandon the project of forcing ethnic and linguistic minorities to abandon their cultural traditions, and embrace instead an alleged Swedish norm, but it also meant that the state would become a supporter and active promoter of ethnic and linguistic diversity. While it is true that it is still unclear today whether multiculturalism/diversity has had a *real* impact on grass-root attitudes to linguistic minorities (Hyltenstam, 1999b; Nygård, 2002; Oakes, 2001; Wingstedt, 1998), the shift from assimilationism to multi-cultural-ism/diversity in the 1970s is no less important because it affected the conditions of Swedish policy-making, and public discourse more generally. In other words, not

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[14] Following May (2001: 28ff), I do not want to convey here that I view ethnicity as a kind of primordial essence or biological attribute. Rather, I consider ethnicity a socially constructed and more or less fluid category that individuals in certain contexts mobilise and make salient in order to make sense of who they are. However, treating ethnicity as a purely discursive construction may fail to recognise that "when ethnicity matters, it can *really* matter" (May, 2001: 43, emphasis in original). To put it in the simplest terms, recognising the contingency of ethnicity should not underestimate that ethnicity is indeed perceived as *real* by the people who invoke it in discourse.

only is it now unacceptable to encourage *overtly* assimilatory policies[15], but it is also unthinkable for the Swedish state to sanction any form of ethnic and linguistic discrimination.

Having outlined the historical ideological backgrounds that may have an impact on Swedish public discourse, it is now relevant to go back to the observation that the Swedish Government rejected the proposal of language law on the basis of the fact that it would be *discriminatory* to legislate the use of 'clear' and 'comprehensible' Swedish as a pre-condition for working in public administration. While it lies beyond the scope of Studies I and II to either support or discard the proposal of language legislation, the aim here is to try to understand why such a proposal became tied to discrimination, and therefore seems to have reached an impasse. According to the results of Studies I and II, the answer lies in the twofold function – i.e. instrumental-communicative and symbolic – of language(s), and how these may be impacted by language legislation.

According to the arguments advanced in *Mål i mun*, legislating the status and use of Swedish as the principal language would be a political strategy through which to mediate between 'unity' and 'diversity'. On the one hand, a law would ratify an existing reality according to which Swedish has a dominant position in the national space. Consequently, such a law would not automatically undermine the status and use of minority languages, provided that these are continued to be granted some kind of official recognition (as they are in Sweden). On the other hand, a language law would be an act that proactively marks that Swedish, rather than English, should remain the language that unites Swedish society (*samhälls-bärande språk*) even in future, although English would still be encouraged as an important school subject. Such an argument might be certainly well-suited to a view of languages as non-mutually-exclusive media of communication that can be distributed more or less equally in different domains (i.e. schools, courts, public administration, etc.) through different forms of state recognition.

Nonetheless, given that the communicative and symbolic functions of language are eventually inseparable (May, 2005; see also Bourdieu, 1991), a law sanctioning the status of Swedish as the "principal" language is also a manifestation of what Michael Billig (1995: 87) calls a "syntax of hegemony" – a symbolic act through which the Swedish state chooses *one* language to stand for the Swedish nation. In this way, the state would *actively legitimate* through legislation the symbolic hierarchy of existing unequal positions occupied by the different languages in the Swedish sociolinguistic landscape, overtly re-asserting Swedish at the top, followed by indigenous minority languages, and migrant languages. Of course, state acknowledgement of the symbolic function of Sweden as a marker of the Swedish nation might appear a perfectly commonsensical measure – after all, someone could argue, Swedish is indeed the language that has historically been

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[15] This does *not* mean that discriminatory statements are absent from public discourse. Rather, as some of the studies in this thesis illustrate (III, IV, and VI), the discriminatory load of such statements is more *covert* and *implicit* (cf. Blackledge, 2005).

spoken on the Swedish territory by the vast majority of its inhabitants. However, such official recognition is problematic in the specific case of the Swedish context not only because it clashes with the Social Democratic fear for *overtly* linking one language to one ethnicity as a metonymic representation of the nation as a whole, but also because of its potential *social effects,* namely that it might be perceived as a tangible manifestation of state-induced symbolic inequality.

To conclude, the quandaries that the Swedish state had to face in addressing the issue of a language law are symptomatic of a conflict between new sociolinguistic conditions brought about by the dialectical interplay between super- and sub-state transformations (i.e. EU accession and increased ethnic diversity), on the one hand, and the constraints in the discursive regime at work in the national space, on the other.

5.2 Language testing for citizenship

While the debate on the promotion of the Swedish language presented in the section above stretched out over a time-span of more than ten years with little or sporadic media involvement, the discussions related to the Liberal Party's proposal to introduce a Swedish language test as part of the naturalisation process were concentrated, at least in their most patent manifestation, over the months immediately before and after the parliamentary election in 2002. In this context, newspapers, TV-programmes and webpages became important contextual spaces where different views about the language testing proposal could be entextualised and channelled to a wider audience. Although the Liberal Party's proposal failed to have any actual impact on Swedish legislation, and therefore no language test was introduced in the end, Studies III, IV and V seek to foreground the importance of two important aspects of this debate: (i) the relationship between the Liberal Party's proposal and the historical context of how the link between language and citizenship have been conceptualised in Swedish political discourse during the last thirty years; and (ii) the arguments advanced to justify a language test for naturalisation as a measure in the interest of migrants and Swedish society at large.

Let us start from the purely legal aspect of citizenship in Sweden. Swedish citizenship legislation is grounded on the so-called *jus sanguinis*, or principle of descent, according to which a child is granted the citizenship of one of his or her parents. Nonetheless, the qualifying requirements for acquiring Swedish citizenship through naturalisation have been rather tolerant in the post-war period, namely uninterrupted legal residence on the Swedish territory over 5 years (*lag* 1950). To this, one should add that proficiency in the Swedish language has not explicitly figured in Swedish legislation as a pre-requisite for gaining Swedish citizenship. As already observed above, it is true that the promulgation of the citizenship law in 1950 prescribed that any application of naturalisation should be followed by a certificate in which different categories of so-called 'competent' people would give evidence of the applicant's proficiency in the Swedish language. Nonetheless, in line with the ideological turn to multicultural-

ism/diversity, such practice was abandoned at the beginning of the 1980s because of the *inequality* of treatment that it might give rise to. The issue of inequality was also central in the report of the parliamentary committee appointed in 1997 with the aim to evaluate whether and how the citizenship law should be amended. It is manifest in the arguments advanced by this committee (see Section 1 above) that proficiency in the Swedish language should *not* be tied to naturalisation because it would be discriminatory. This is insofar as the outcome of language learning is said to be affected by a range of socio-cultural conditions that might favour some migrants and disadvantage others (SOU, 1999: 315). It is also stated that a language test would be problematic especially with regard to the type and level of language proficiency that should be tested (ibid.: 316). Consistent with this view, the revised citizenship law in 2001 did *not* contain any reference to language proficiency as a pre-requisite for naturalisation. In brief, I would argue that since the 1980s there has been an active attempt on the part of the state to *uncouple* skills in the Swedish language from citizenship in the juridical sense of officially-sanctioned belonging to a particular political entity. Furthermore, consensus on this issue was built on the argument that a language test would be *unjust*, and therefore contradictory to the principles of management of the Swedish polity (see above).

In the light of this seemingly long-lasting political consensus[16] about the rejection of any form of language requirements for naturalisation as discriminatory, it may strike as odd or even unexpected that the exact opposite argument was employed by Liberal Party a year after the revised citizenship law came into force, and generated heated public reactions. According to the Liberal Party, a language test would be far from being discriminatory. Rather, it would be a measure enhancing the well-being of Swedish society. What already appears clear here is that a language test for naturalisation is not envisaged as a purely linguistic issue, but is conceptualised as a wider *social* concern. The social importance of a language test, in turn, is built on a logic that runs as follows: 'Migrants *lack* the Swedish language. Therefore, a language test would be an instrument through which to motivate migrants to learn Swedish. This would enhance social cohesion, would favour migrants' access to the job market, and would also be a symbolic act that marks a step from a sloppy Social Democratic management of society towards a tougher Liberal form of societal organisation'. It is the different aspects of this logic that are explored in Studies III, IV and V.

To begin with, Study III concentrates on how a language test for citizenship is linked to the issue of *social cohesion*. This study begins by looking at the ways in which a variety of social actors in newspaper articles and policy documents represent Sweden as a society in which social divisions depend on proficiency or deficiency in the Swedish language. It is worth noting here that the lack of

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[16] Of course, representatives of different political parties expressed dissent on the issue throughout the 1990s (see Study III). The interesting point, however, is that such dissent never became so prominent as in 2002.

Swedish is not envisaged as a result of the interplay between different socio-cultural and economic conditions impinging on those who move to Sweden, but it is viewed as if it were an *inherent* feature common to all migrants in Sweden. That is, to use Irvine and Gal's (2000) term, lack of Swedish is employed as an *icon* that depicts a deeper essence, some sort of 'immigrant-ness' (*invandrarskap*). Furthermore, textual analysis shows that such linguistic deficiency is represented as a societal problem because it is equated to lack of what counts as acceptable social and moral behaviour in Sweden, thus giving rise to a 'divide' between 'Swedes' and 'Others' that needs to be bridged. Assuming that a language test would impact on migrant's inner essence motivating them to learn Swedish, a language test is then represented as a catalyst of societal cohesion because it would provide migrants with a resource through which they can act properly in Swedish society on a par with Swedes. This might at a first sight sound like an emancipatory argument in the interest of migrants. Or, to put it differently, we are witnessing here a discourse of *inclusion* in which allegedly divided social/ethnic groups are brought together into a whole. Nonetheless, this discourse is only *apparently* inclusive, liberal and anti-discriminatory.

In line with Bourdieu's (1991) observations about *rites of institution*, Study III shows that a language test for citizenship is a discriminatory practice bound in any case to produce some kind of social exclusion. This is insofar as there will always be someone who fails a language test whatever level of language proficiency is established for passing it. After all, one might wonder why introduce a test at all if not in view of ruling out those who might fail. Consequently, there will always be someone who will be disqualified from being recognised the same rights and duties as Swedes and the other migrants who actually pass the test. To this someone might respond by arguing that migrants would be granted the right to take a test as many times as they would like to (as the Liberal Party indeed suggested). This leads us then to ask ourselves why the Swedish language is so important a pre-requisite for the awarding of citizenship to the extent that a migrant absolutely needs to testify to his or her language skills through a statutory examination. The answer lies in two interrelated assumptions underlying the claims advanced by the proponents of a language test: (i) the necessary precondition for being a Swedish citizen is to know and understand Swedish life, culture and morality, and (ii) these can only be grasped by way of the Swedish language. In other words, language, culture and citizenship are tied together in such a way that it is only conceivable for an individual who speaks the Swedish language and knows the Swedish culture to become a Swedish citizen, while all those who cannot *show* through a test that they fulfil these criteria need to be excluded. This also means that inclusion is granted only on condition of migrants' acquisition of a set of pre-established Swedish norms. To put it bluntly, an apparently anti-discriminatory discourse of inclusion is actually tantamount to linguistic and cultural assimilation (cf. Blackledge, 2005 for similar results in the British context).

The study ends addressing the question: 'Why language testing for citizenship? Why now?'. First of all, according to Boreus (2006), the Liberal Party's proposal can be understood as an instance of an ideological change within this party that gradually shifted from being an advocate of the *rights* of migrants and asylum seekers, to underscoring migrants' *duties* towards the state. This is in Boreus's (ibid.) view not just a feature of the Liberal Party, but is a component of a more general tendency among Swedish parties in depicting migrants in contexts of social problems, such as criminality, dependence on subsidies, school failure, unemployment, and female oppression. Second, although it still remains to be explored whether there are links, and if so, of what kind between the debate on the promotion of Swedish and the debate on language test, one can nonetheless suppose that the language testing issue may have been favoured by the increasingly more overt thematisation of Swedish as a topic of political discourse during the 1990s, coupled with the publication of *Mål i mun* in April 2002. Third, it is not purely coincidental that in 2002, the Danish Government, led by a coalition between the Danish Liberal Party (*Venstre*) and the Danish Conservative Party (*Konservative*) and supported by the right-wing populist Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*), hardened the rules for naturalisation. In sum, analogous to the issue of the promotion of Swedish described above, the debate on language testing is indicative of the synergy between these different discursive means and constraints that were in place in 2002.

Unlike Study III which concentrates on social cohesion, Study IV looks at the ways in which a language test is not only represented as necessary in the name of national well-being but also *self-evident*. Specifically, through analysis of a sample of extracts taken from newspaper articles, Study IV seeks to demonstrate how such self-evidence is the result of processes of *(mis)recognition* (Bourdieu, 2000) which link together different arguments related to (i) education, (ii) economy, and (iii) governance, thus disguising an arbitrary logic as natural common sense (see also Blackledge, 2005; 2007 for a similar approach).

Once again, the starting point is that migrants in Sweden lack the Swedish language. On the basis of this linguistic deficiency, a language test is presented as a form of 'demand' through which the Swedish state would *enable* migrants to learn the Swedish language, thereby empowering them with a resource through which they can enter the labour market. The interesting aspect to note here is that 'to make demands' in this context is equated with 'care' on the part of the state in relation to a segment of its population (i.e. migrants). That is, 'to make demand' is infused with positive connotations. Put simply, the logic runs as follows: 'If we introduce a language test, we show that we take care of migrants because these would learn Swedish, and thus they will have the opportunity to become employed'. Despite its commonsensical appearance, such logic is controversial for three reasons.

First of all, Study IV shows that 'to make demands' is based on the contentious assumptions that migrants do not *want* to learn the majority language, Swedish,

unless they are obliged to do so (see the issue of 'motivation' above). Second, it is also assumed that there is a correlation between language testing for citizenship and language proficiency, as if the former necessarily had a positive effect on the latter. In this respect, quite the reverse argument has been advanced by the research tradition of Critical Language Testing (CLT) (see Shohamy, 2001) showing that language tests tied to high stakes (e.g. naturalization), rather than motivating to language learning, have negative effects on test-takers. Furthermore, given that a language test would regard only citizenship applicants, it remains unclear how such a test would impact on the language skills of the migrants who do not want to apply for Swedish citizenship – an issue that has been overlooked in the Swedish debate because 'migrants' have often been taken as synonymous with 'citizenship applicants'. Third, it is highly controversial how language proficiency, language testing and employability are tied together. Of course, I do *not* deny that proficiency in a majority language may help to gain access to the labour market, and in many cases may be indeed a precondition of employability (cf. May, 2003, 2005). Nonetheless, an *exclusive* emphasis on language is an oversimplification of a more complex reality that migrants have to face in their everyday life. This is insofar as career success or failure is envisaged as dependent on a *single* factor, namely skills in a majority language, which in turn are viewed as the tangible outcome of individual's will or motivation. The inherent problem in this view is that everyone – irrespective of ethnic, linguistic and social background – is supposed to have equal access to material and symbolic resources, provided that he or she so wishes. Accordingly, this view fails to recognise the social structures that encroach on the possibility of the choices that members of minorities may make or not (May, 2003: 113). And these are often not dependent on factors that a migrant can possibly affect.

While Studies III and IV have as their main object of concern the arguments advanced by a variety of a social actors to support the language testing proposal in a broad range of texts, Study V returns to the issue of migrants' 'lack' of the Swedish language. The focus here, however, is on a specific policy document formulated by the Liberal Party: the report published under the title *Språkkravs- reform brådskar – nya fakta och argument* ('A Reform of Language Requirements is Urgently Needed. New Facts and Arguments') (2003). The decision to concentrate on a single policy document is the outcome of two observations about this report. First, here the Liberal Party makes extensive use of scholarly work to substantiate the argument that migrants lack proficiency in the Swedish language. Second, a few academics whose work has been cited in the report dissociated themselves from supporting the language testing proposal, and accused the Liberal Party of *misusing* research results. By bringing together CDA (Blackledge, 2005) and Foucault's (1991) notion of *governmentality* (see also Dean, 1994, 1999 and Rose 1996), the aim of the study is to trace how the legitimation of a specific political proposal is tied to processes of knowledge production, and, in particular, how the recontextualisation of arguments in academic reports has resulted in a *re-*

signification of these arguments in the Liberal Party's policy document such that the researchers in question felt they had been mis-understood, or even misquoted. Furthermore, the study also seeks to understand the meaning of 'motivation' in relation to language test and citizenship.

First, the study shows that resignification occurs through a process of *erasure* of the complexity of the argumentation in the source text. Analogous to the results of Study III and IV, what is erased and not taken into consideration is the impact of socio-economic factors on the process of second-language acquisition, which then leads to the representation of the lack of Swedish as a pure outcome of migrants' (ir)responsibility. However, the important feature here is that the representation of migrants' linguistic deficiency is legitimated by way of reference to academic reports. This is particularly significant in the case of the Liberal Party's proposal because we can see how a hitherto non-dominant political discourse stakes claims to power, thus trying to impose itself through claims to knowledge (see also Section 3.2 above).

Second, I have already observed above with regard to Study III and IV, that it is often unclear in the Swedish debate who would benefit from a language test (i.e. citizenship applicants or all migrants). Rather than assuming confusion or misunderstanding on the part of the supporters of a test, Study V shows that the proposal of a language test for citizenship can be taken as a prime example of what Dean (1994, 1999) and Rose (1996) call an advanced liberal governmentality. According to Dean and Rose, this form of political rationality has two main characteristics: (i) a nearly obsessive concern with an individual's active participation as a pre-requisite for the well-functioning of a society; and (ii) an overt emphasis on the freedom of the individual in making choices for his or her self-fulfilment in that society. Dean and Rose also remind us that this does not actually mean a real 'retreat' of the state from impacting socio-economic issues. Rather, it entails the implementation of "an array of technologies of government" (Rose 1996: 42) that seemingly enhances the individual's freedom, while at the same time paradoxically limiting it. Against this backdrop, I suggest in Study V that the Liberal Party's proposal of a language test for citizenship can be viewed as a tangible example of advanced liberal governmentality on the basis of two observations. First, textual analysis shows that the meaning of citizenship is not fixed and stable, but is constantly sliding from (i) being synonymous with official *belonging* to a political body to (ii) defining *active participation* in a society (cf. Blackledge, 2005: 213). Second, in relation to citizenship as participation, a language test is envisaged as if it were a practice which frees the individual *from within*, impacting individual motivation. In this way, a language test would liberate migrants from reliance on the welfare system of subsidies, enabling them to make their own choices. As I demonstrate in Study III, however, a language test for citizenship is inherently *disciplinary* because it is based on a norm of linguistic and cultural correctness, and therefore inevitably results in barring those who do

not conform to such norm (see also Blackledge, 2005; Piller, 2001; Shohamy, 2001).

The study ends trying to make a theoretical point about the potential of Foucault's notion of governmentality in studies of debates on language testing for citizenship. This is because governmentality provides us with a suitable theoretical tool through which to explore the interconnectedness between politics and knowledge. Therefore, a governmentality approach could be applied further to those contexts where a language testing for citizenship has been implemented. This would shed light on what kind of 'expert' knowledge is invoked (or not) to legitimate the linguistic/cultural skills to be tested, and the level of proficiency established as necessary for becoming a citizen of that country.

5.3 Mother tongue instruction

On 15 February 2006 the Social Democratic Minister for Schools, Ibrahim Baylan, made public the decision of the Swedish Government to give financial support to a project with the aim of reducing segregation in school. Drawing on the positive results of a 'pilot study' carried out in a few schools in Malmö in southern Sweden, one of the aims of the project was to strengthen the use of 'mother tongues', i.e. the languages of linguistic minorities, as *media of instruction* (see also Section 1 above). The importance of this political decision can be understood if read in the wider context of Swedish educational politics since the 1970s. First, according to a comprehensive historical overview presented by Hyltenstam and Tuomela (1996), home language/mother tongue instruction in Sweden can be described as an originally ambitious and pioneering project that gradually lost credibility as a result of decreasing political will and economic support. Second, it is true that this educational provision has been a *right* accorded to members of linguistic minorities since the Home Language Reform in 1977, and different forms of bilingual education were originally advanced and implemented in local contexts. Nonetheless, mother tongue instruction in Sweden today generally entails that languages other than Swedish are the *object* rather than the *medium* of teaching and learning activities (Hyltenstam, 2005; Hyltenstam & Tuomela, 1996). That said, it appears clear that the decision in 2006 to encourage the use of 'mother tongues' as the medium of instruction was not only the manifestation of a renewed interest of the state in this type of educational provision, but it also shifted the emphasis towards the importance of 'mother tongues' themselves in the learning process for children of linguistic minorities.

This decision, however, was not without its detractors. In particular, an academic, Ebba Witt-Brattström, Professor of Comparative Literature at Södertörn University College, criticised the Government "for taking a racist attitude by not investing in consolidated Swedish language instruction (but instead more home language instruction)" (*Dagens Nyheter*, 19 April 2006, my translation). The standpoint of this academic, in turn, generated a chain of reactions from other academics, journalists, writers who either supported or criticised Witt-Brattström

in the columns of one of the largest Swedish dailies, *Dagens Nyheter*. Although bilingual education was the starting point, the debate tackled apparently disparate topics, such as linguistic practices in Swedish suburban areas, and sexism in language.

The aim of Study VI is to bring under investigation a single aspect of this print-mediated debate, namely the heated exchanges in *Dagens Nyheter* between Witt-Brattström and some researchers working on bilingualism, including a few of my colleagues at the Centre for Research on Bilingualism. This focus of analysis is motivated by the fact that I wanted to concentrate exclusively on the claims on the issue of mother tongue instruction/bilingual education, rather than looking at all the arguments advanced in the debate. The exchange between these academics is also particularly relevant because it is an example of a discursive struggle whereby different academics attempt to position themselves – with the help or under the constraints of the print-media – as the 'experts' on a given topic.

At this juncture, it is important to foreground once again that the specific focus of Study VI on linguistic expertise is itself the manifestation of what one might call a 'self-reflexive turn' in sociolinguistics (see Section 3 above) which have led sociolinguists to start analysing their own positions as 'experts' vs. so-called 'lay' in linguistic issues. As Heller (1999: 261) puts it, "since we [sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists] have a position, whether we want to or not, it is probably best to have some critical distance on what we do, and on whose interests are served by our action and the knowledge we produce". Reasoning along similar lines, Johnson (2001) suggests that taking such a critical distance should not only entail acknowledging and assessing a researcher's own interest and stakes in a given debate, but it also requires "working towards a greater understanding of those popular discourses of language that have hitherto been constructed as irrational, subjective and emotional" (Johnson, 2001: 601). Following Heller's and Johnson's observations, Study VI draws on performativity theory in order to seek to tease out (i) the strategies through which the "expert/lay divide" (Johnson, 2001: 602) on the issue of mother tongue instruction is discursively constructed, and (ii) what kind of values and beliefs underpin such claims.

First, Study VI illustrates how the struggle for expertise between Witt-Brattström and researchers working on bilingualism is the result of conflicting processes of identity positioning whereby the 'Self' emerges in discourse. What is most remarkable here is that Witt-Brattström does not attempt to position herself as the 'expert' on the issue of mother tongue instruction explicitly drawing upon her social position as an academic or professor. Rather, she invests her statements with authority by positioning herself as (i) a non-ethnic Swede, (ii) a feminist, and (iii) competent on the issue of bilingual education. This is realised textually through citation of fragments of family history, on the one hand, and of claims advanced by other social actors (mainly journalists), on the other. Furthermore, Witt-Brattström attempts to invest her critique of mother tongue instruction with authority by discrediting the academic field of bilingualism. As a reaction to this,

researchers working on bilingualism counter-argued questioning not only the contents of Witt-Brattrström's claims, but also her authority in an academic field that is not her own.

Second, Study VI shows that this struggle for authority is foremost the manifestation of a clash between two ideologies: (i) disguised assimilationism and (ii) multilingualism. In brief, Witt-Brattström claims that the promotion of mother tongue instruction, rather than consolidated Swedish language instruction, is racist because it leads to the development and spread of non-standard varieties of Swedish (*blattesvenska*), thus preventing linguistic minorities from a possibility of success in the labour market. Here Witt-Brattström does not only envisage the Swedish language as the *necessary* prerequisite for social and economic mobility, but she also presents mother tongue vs. Swedish as mutually exclusive, of which the latter is seen as more important than the former. In other words, Witt-Brattström's claims are the manifestation of a common sense belief that runs as follows 'Here we are in Sweden and therefore 'they', migrants, need to learn and speak 'good' Swedish *rather* than their mother tongues'. Although it may appear as commonsensical, this belief is discriminatory for several reasons. First, analogous to the issue of the language test, what is not taken into account here is the socio-economic inequality of different groups in a polity: not everybody starts with the same pre-requisites in second-language learning. Second, 'good' Swedish is a normative, albeit vague and constantly shifting, concept that encodes an abstract level of acceptability of language skills, and thereby rules out those linguistic practices that do not conform to this established norm (cf. Blommaert, Creve & Willaert, 2006). Third, Swedish is envisaged as the *only legitimate* resource as the medium of instruction, while all other languages are dismissed as inappropriate, and thereby devalued. Interestingly, this discriminatory discourse is disguised as democratic and emancipatory (cf. Blackledge, 2005: 2). To this, researchers working on bilingualism responded with a view of languages as not necessarily mutually exclusive. This does not mean that these researchers negated the importance of learning a majority language (Swedish) (see also the observations above on language testing). Rather, they highlighted that acknowledging the importance and value of a common medium of communication does not *necessarily* preclude the official recognition, use and instruction of the other languages of a polity.

6 Final remarks

Academic inquiry about language politics in Sweden with a focus on Swedish is still a young field of research. Although a considerable body of literature has been produced on the codification and standardisation of the Swedish language, and much has been written about migrant and minority languages in Sweden (for a literature overview see e.g. Teleman, 2003), the status of Swedish vis-à-vis the other languages in Sweden, and the surrounding public debates are still a rather unexplored area of research (for exceptions see Hult, 2004 and Oakes, 2001, 2004,

2005). Therefore, the main scope of the studies on which this thesis is based is to partly fill this vacuum both empirically and theoretically. In this sense, this thesis does not only seek to bring under investigation an interesting, but to date somewhat neglected political context, but also to provide a range of examples of how a theoretically multi-pronged approach based on CDA and Language Ideology can be fruitful in order to shed light on different aspect of language debates.

To conclude, I concur with Blommaert (1999b) that the terms 'end' or 'closure' are not particularly suitable in the context of language ideological debates and language politics (see in particular Study II), because what we might perceive as the tangible conclusion of a debate may instead prove to be a temporary moment of stasis that preludes future uptakes. In the case of Sweden, none of the debates brought under investigation in this thesis has come to an 'end'. Therefore, it is worth mentioning here some of their most recent developments: (i) the newly elected Centre-Right Government has recently directed the appointment of a new parliamentary inquiry about the ratification of a language law (February 2007); (ii) the Liberal Party brought up again the proposal of language requirements for citizenship in the context of the parliamentary election in 2006. This time, however, a language test was replaced by obligatory attendance at Swedish language courses as a pre-requisite for the granting of citizenship; (iii) in December 2006, the Liberal Minister of Integration and Gender Equality, Nyamko Sabuni, proposed in an interview with the free daily *Metro*, that Swedish instruction should be given priority while mother tongue instruction should be "taken care of" by migrant communities' organisations (*Metro*, 15 December 2006). In other words, it still remains to be seen what is going to happen in the near future with regard to these three issues.

Sammanfattning på svenska

Denna avhandling handlar om tre språkdebatter som nådde sina höjdpunkter i Sverige i början av 2000-talet: (i) debatten om främjandet av det svenska språket, (ii) debatten om språktest för medborgarskap, samt (iii) debatten om modersmåls-undervisning. Avhandlingens huvudsakliga inriktning är att anta en teoretiskt mångsidig syn på dessa debatter och försöka belysa följande aspekter: Varför uppstod sådana debatter just då? Vilka diskurser fanns tillgängliga vid dessa speci-fika historiska tidpunkter? Vilka är de sociala aktörer som gick in i dessa debatter? Vad har de för intressen i detta? Vad kräver de? Vilka värdesystem, idéer och åsikter – d.v.s. ideologier – ligger bakom sådana krav? Vilka är effekterna beträf-fande identiteter, föremål för politisk intervention, sunt förnuft och makt som dessa avhandlingar och ideologier producerar?

Det främsta argumentet, som utvecklats under studierna, är att de svenska debatterna är ett uttryck för konflikter mellan olika språkideologier som strävar efter hegemoni, och således försöker införa ett specifikt sätt att tänka sig styr-

ningen av en nationalstat, Sverige, i början av 2000-talet (jämför till exempel Blackledge, 2004, 2005; Blommaert, 1999b).

Som Blommaert (2006) anmärker är inte alla politiska enheter nationalstater. Inte heller skall staten behandlas som likställd med nationen. Nationalstaten är snarare en särskild form av samhällsorganisation i vilken människorna som bebor ett landområde, avgränsat av (ofta) klara gränser, kontinuerligt är föremål för processer av socialpolitiskt, ekonomiskt och kulturellt enande (Bourdieu, 1991, 2000; se även Blackledge, 2004, 2005). Ett distinkt drag hos nationalstaten är att de socialekonomiska verksamheterna i ett samhälle i olika grad styrs (eller inte) av staten, underförstått som en apparat bestående av sammankopplade institutioner (till exempel riksdag, regering, domstolar, skolor och så vidare). Samtidigt spelar dessa institutioner en mer eller mindre aktiv roll i organiserandet av symboliska processer varigenom samhället enas genom en kulturell och historisk "gemensam grund", som på så sätt gör att nationen uppkommer. För att återge Andersons (1991 [1983]) välkända redogörelse, så förser staten medlemmarna i ett samhälle med en komplex uppsättning av symboliska tillgångar, genom vilka de kan *föreställa sig* själva som en *nationell gemenskap* som inte bara delar ett avgränsat landområde, utan även specifika referensramar beträffande värderingar, åsikter, historia och, vilket är mest intressant för syften med denna avhandling, ett eller flera gemensamma språk. Ett av de främsta problemen som en nationalstat står inför är att nationella gemenskaper generellt är heterogena beträffande språk. Följaktligen kräver typiskt uppbyggandet av nationen att staten väljer och stadfäster – antingen offentligt genom lagstiftning eller mer förtäckt genom praxis – vissa språkvarieteter som nationalspråk eller officiella språk.

Under de senaste åren har problemen som drabbar nationalstaten genom lingvistisk heterogenitet ökat ytterligare genom två faktorer som är förknippade med globaliseringen: (i) människors ökade rörlighet och (ii) omfördelningen av statens makt i relation till överstatliga organisationer (till exempel EU). Det säger sig självt att varken invandring eller mellanstatliga eller överstatliga relationer är nya fenomen som är uttryck för senmodernitet. Icke desto mindre, vilket Blommaert (2003: 615) uppmärksammar, "[g]lobaliseringen resulterar i intensifierade former av flöden – förflyttningar av föremål, människor och bilder – vilka orsakar former av kontakter och skillnader, som kanske inte är nya i huvudsak, men som är nya i *omfattning* och *perception*" (min kursivering). Med Sverige som exempel visar denna avhandling att den ökade lingvistiska heterogeniteten hos den svenska befolkningen till följd av invandring, i kombination med Sveriges inträde i EU, har bidragit till att skapa nya uppfattningar om svenska språkets status i förhållande till andra språk i det svenska sociolingvistiska landskapet: engelska, inhemska minoritetsspråk och invandrarspråk. På så sätt har ett antal motstridiga språkideologier mobiliserats och kommit i konflikt med varandra (jämför Jacquemet, 2005).

Liknande fallen som beskrivs i Duchêne & Heller (2007) visar studierna i denna avhandling att sådana ideologiska strider, i sina yttre och mest påtagliga aspekter, rör sig om förhållandena mellan språken i dagens Sverige, och hur staten, genom

lagstiftning, bör – eller inte bör – ingripa i organiseringen av sådana förhållanden för att (åter)ge ett slags lingvistisk ordning. Studierna visar också att när sociala aktörer åberopar en lingvistisk ordning drar de inte bara gränser mellan olika språk i ett visst samhälle, utan framkallar samtidigt en social ordning, där talarna av dessa språk kommer att inneha specifika, ofta icke förhandlingsbara, sociala positioner (jämför Blackledge, 2005: 213; Blommaert, 2005: 217; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004: 21; Stroud, 2004: 199). Dessa lingvistiska och sociala hierarkier, i sin tur, överlappar varandra i en ofta antagen och underförstådd moralisk ordning efter vad som räknas som bra eller dåligt, acceptabelt eller tabubelagt i det samhället (se särskilt Heller & Duchêne, 2007: 4).

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