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LESoL SEMINAR SERIES
WINTER 2021
Language, society, and ethnography

Το ΕΕΠΓ σας καλωσορίζει την Τρίτη 14 Δεκεμβρίου 2021, στις 21:00,
στο σεμινάριο στο Μπίνειο και στην πλατφόρμα ZOOM

LESoL welcomes you to its Tuesday December 14th 2021 seminar,
at 21:00 (time in Greece) on ZOOM

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Citizenship as Status, Habitus and Acts: Language Requirements and “Civic Orientation” in Sweden

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Περίληψη/Abstract

Over the past two decades, the notion of citizenship has been put under critical scrutiny in applied linguistic scholarship. This large body of work has focused mainly on the political dynamics surrounding the introduction of a variety of language and culture tests which migrants are required to take in order to be granted permanent residence, or be granted citizenship in a country to which they have moved (see e. g. the contributions to Extra et al. 2009). Considerably less linguistic attention has been paid to the often subtle, everyday practices through which migrants are socialized into being ‘ideal citizens’ (see however Ramanathan 2013 and Khan 2020 for an exception). Against this backdrop, in this presentation I employ a multi-pronged methodological approach that combines (1) a diachronic analysis of public discourses about Swedish language requirements for citizenship and their connections with discussions about the importance of knowledge of civics for newly arrived adult migrants; and (2) ethnographic insights into the Swedish educational provision of *samhällsorientering*, which literally means ‘societal orientation’ but can be better rendered in English as ‘civic orientation’. Specifically, I draw upon Engin Isin’s (2008) tripartite model of citizenship as status, habitus and acts in order first to illustrate how over the past decades citizenship as status in Sweden has undergone a ‘discursive shift’ (Krzyzanowski 2017) both in relation to language and to supposedly ‘Swedish’ values and norms. I then hone in on an Arabic-language course in civic orientation in a large urban area in order to demonstrate how a group of adult migrants are being socialized into a specific mode of conduct framed by these values and norms, and to unveil the subtle acts of defiance they perform in response. I argue that a bifocal applied linguistic interest in language and citizenship in public debates, on the one hand, and in interactions in ongoing educational initiatives, on the other, allows us to better understand how sovereign power, disciplinary power and biopower (see Foucault 1978) intersect in the context of Sweden’s current management of migration.

Βιβλιογραφία/References

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