

English-medium instruction in Sweden: Parental motivation in school choice

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English-medium instruction (EMI) has long been offered in upper secondary schools and higher education in Sweden. More recently, the number of schools offering EMI for younger pupils has increased. Aiming to understand the linguistic aspirations and imagined outcomes behind the parental choice of the EMI option in compulsory schools (Years 0-9), we conducted a small-scale interview study (Paulsrud & Cunningham, forthcoming) with five parents who chose EMI for their children. Our interview questions encompassed topics such as factors influencing the choice, knowledge and impressions of the school, and beliefs about language use in the school context. The analysis of the parents' motives was framed in Darwin and Norton's (2015) model of investment (capital, ideology, and identity), as well as informed by theories of language ideologies, linguistic hierarchies, and parental aspiration. Our findings reveal that the perceived benefits of fluency in English, high academic achievement, and calm environments interconnect explicitly with *first*, linguistic aspirations, as seen in the parents' investment in the assumed capital afforded by the English language; *second*, an ideology of the English language as connected to a better academic situation than the Swedish language; and *third*, an identity ascribed to their children as able and willing to accept the challenges of instruction through another language. Tensions in the three key areas of investment were also evident, as parents struggled with the effects that their linguistic aspirations and imagined outcomes may have on their children's use and development of Swedish. In conclusion, an exploration of parental motives in choosing EMI for their children reveals that unpacking the motives behind and the consequences of their desires should be of interest to educators and policymakers in all contexts where EMI is offered to young learners.

Darvin, R. & Norton, B. (2015). Identity and a model of investment in applied linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 35, 36–56.

Paulsrud, B. & Cunningham, U. (forthcoming). Parental motives in English-medium school choice in Sweden: Linguistic aspirations and imagined outcomes. In Gu, M., Liu, A., & Huang, C. (Eds.) *Re-envisioning English-medium Instruction in K-12 Schools: Policy, Research and Practice*. Springer.