

The language café as a social venue and a space for language training (2018 – 2021)

The overall aim of this project is to explore the ‘language café’ (‘språkcafé’ in Swedish) as a social venue and a space for language training. The data we plan to gather will consist of: (a) ethnographic observations and video-recordings of interactions in eight to ten language cafés that are organized by churches and libraries; and (b) interviews with the social actors involved in the coordination and management of the cafés. Our interest lies in identifying the practices through which participants in the cafés 1) engage in topical talk and in interpersonal relationship work, and 2) orient to moments of teaching/learning. The project will be conducted over a three-year period. At the methodological level, we plan to conduct ethnographic fieldwork (conducting participant observations, producing field notes, and conducting semi-structured interviews with the café-organizers) and to collect audio and video recordings of naturally occurring interactions at the language cafés. This set of data will allow us to combine our ethnographic knowledge of the language cafés and their participants with micro-analyses of social interaction. The project is carried out as three separate studies. Study 1 focusses on the conditions and overall organization and management of the language café. Study 2 and 3 focus on the ecology of the interactional setting of the language café. Most importantly, results of the project are expected to offer insights into the benefits and challenges of organizing and participating in language cafés and to provide practical implications.