



Migration and citizenship tests in language learning: Teachers' and learners' perceptions

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From the turn of the century Europe has seen a change in the view of citizenship and integration: From being a means for integration, citizenship has to an increasing extent come to be understood as a sign of or even a reward for integration (Goodman, 2010; van Oers, 2021). This change has led more and more countries to introduce language requirements and knowledge of society tests (KoS-tests) for obtaining citizenship – Norway being no exception (Brochmann & Midtbøen, 2021; Bugge & Carlsen, 2021). In 2021, the Norwegian requirements have been raised from A2 to the preacademic level of B1 for oral skills. In addition, applicants must pass a KoS-test in Norwegian. The main official argument for introducing citizenship tests and language requirements for permanent residency in Norway, has been to motivate language learning and integration, and hence prevent exclusion. However, to date there is little research confirming this assumed causality. Rather contrary, researchers and practitioners in Norway have expressed concern if the requirements may also have the opposite effect, especially for groups of appliers with limited prior schooling and literacy (cf. Bugge & Carlsen, 2021), and research from the Netherlands and Germany have shown that language and KoS requirements may in fact represent a severe obstacle for low educated applicants wanting to become citizens (van Oers, 2021).

The present paper gives an overall presentation of my ongoing postdoc project. By analysing qualitative interviews with LESLLA learners and their teachers answering RQ1 below, the primary ambition of the project is to provide more insight into how citizenship tests affect language learning and motivation among learners with limited prior schooling (LESLLA learners):

1. How do citizenship and migration tests affect motivation for and investment in language learning?

A secondary ambition is to investigate how the introduction of citizenship and migration tests affect teachers. This part draws on in depth interviews and survey data from teachers in Scandinavia (and Europe), and answers the following RQ:

2. How do civic requirements affect teachers' professional identity, their sense of agency and teaching practices?

The project is part of the larger IMPECT-project (Linguistic integration of adult migrant with poor education and the consequences of migration tests, <https://www.hvl.no/forsking/prosjekt/impect/>).