



Learning by Hearing?

Technological Framings for Participation

av

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Abstract

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This thesis examines technological framings for communication and identity issues, with a particular focus on Swedish mainstream schools where children with cochlear implants are pupils. Based on a sociocultural perspective on learning, the thesis focuses on how pupils and teachers interact with (and thus learn from) each other in classroom settings. The study comprises a) a sociohistorical analysis of three Swedish non-governmental organizations' periodicals from 1891 to 2010, and b) an ethnographic study including micro-analyses of interaction in two mainstream classrooms where there are children with cochlear implants.

The sociohistorical analysis illustrates how different technologies, in a range of ways, have shaped (i) how people with hearing loss communicate and interact with others and (ii) their identity positions. The analysis also demonstrates the presence of language ideologies in settings where children with hearing loss are taught. Here the main preference is for spoken communication, even though different types of visual communication emerge during the 1980s and 1990s. In addition, the issue of integration has been a matter of debate since the 1970s and provides a backdrop for the current situation, where an increasing number of children with cochlear implants receive their schooling in mainstream public rather than segregated regional deaf schools.

Against this background, micro-analyses have been carried out of classroom interaction and recurring patterns and activities have been identified. The results illustrate that audilogically-oriented and communicative-link technologies play major roles in the classrooms and these both facilitate and limit the pupils' participation. Based on postcolonial theory, the results can be understood in terms of participation and non-participation of the pupil with cochlear implants, who acquire peripheral identity positions in these classroom settings. The analysis also illuminates unequal power relations regarding technologies in use, and expressions of language ideologies in the classrooms, where spoken communication is preferred. Overall, the everyday life of children with cochlear implants in mainstream schools appears to be complex, and it is technologies in use that frame the conditions for their participation in interaction and communication.

Keywords: Cochlear implants, deaf, mainstream, participation, communication forms, communities of practice, ethnography, sociocultural, postcolonial, language ideology.

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