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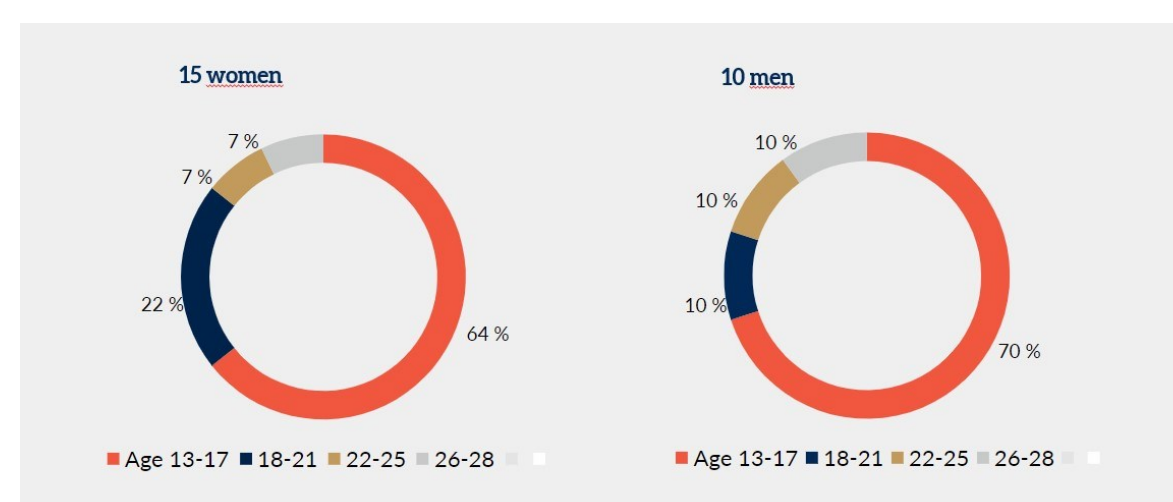
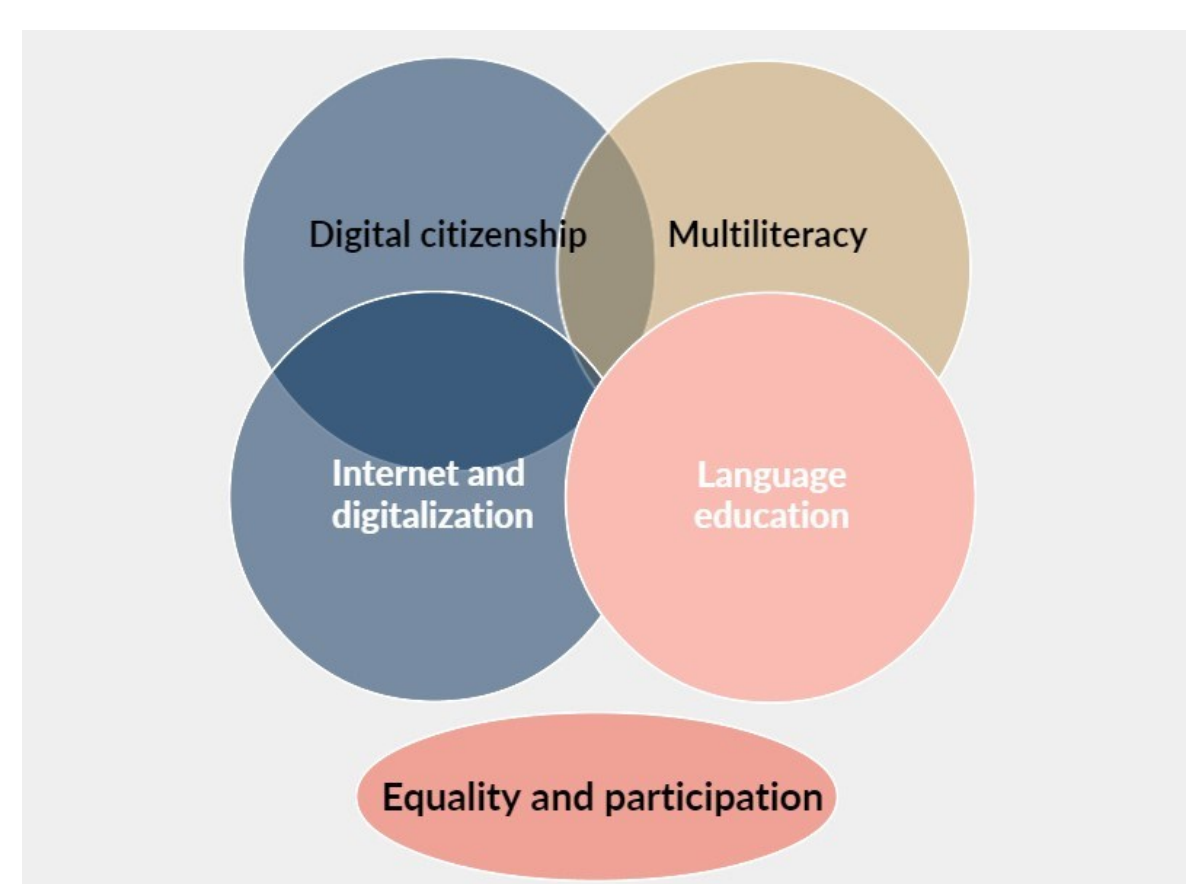
YOUNG DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING PEOPLE'S PLURILINGUAL MEDIASCAPE AND DIGITAL INTERACTION

ABSTRACT

This dissertation's research topic is linguistic agency and interaction of young Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (YD/HoH) people in different environments, especially in digital environments. Focus group of this study is D/HoH young people and young adults (aged 13-28 yrs) living in Finland, who use Finnish Sign Language and possibly also other sign languages as part of their linguistic repertoire. The primary data consists of semi-structured interviews with 25 YD/HoH person. The secondary data consists of questionnaires of focus group, teacher-interviews, and field notes. The data was analyzed via theory- and data-driven content analysis. Preliminary results provide information on diverse digital and hybrid learning, and operating environments: different actor positions and identities are constructed, influenced not only by individual linguistic resources and abilities, but also by environmental structures and practices. Internet and digital media create many opportunities and also limitations for YD/HoH people.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Researching YD/HoH people's linguistic agency and participation in their digital and other environments provides novel information about their multilingual textual practices (Barton & Hamilton 1998; Cope & Calantzis 2000), language socialization, mediascape and accessibility of digital environments. Studies on YD/HoH people's digital participation, linguistic agency and multiliteracy skills as described by them have not yet been done in Finland.



LINGUISTIC AGENCY AND DIGITAL INTERACTION

This study explores YD/HoH people's experiences in a digital and other environments within the framework of Busch's (2015) lived experience of language, linguistic agency (Ahearn 2001) and sociocultural and ecological viewpoints of language learning (van Lier 2004). Linguistic agency and digital interaction are examined as meta-agentive discourses: how individuals describe their own and others' agency in their narratives. Through descriptions, individuals' theories of their own linguistic agency emerge (Ahearn 2001).

DATA AND METHODS

Interviews and questionnaires with 25 Finnish YD/HoH people about their media practices and experiences in different media environments and interviews with two bilingual teachers were analyzed together with field notes via content analysis and multiple triangulation methods that are both data-driven and literature-based (Tuomi & Sarajarvi 2002).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What the media landscape and linguistic accessibility of digital environments are like for YD/HoH people?
- How do YD/HoH people narrate their linguistic-cultural agency and their everyday multilingual textual practices?

CONCLUSIONS

→ Preliminary results provide information on Y/HoH people's mediascape, multilingualism and construction of linguistic agency, as well perceptions of their own possibilities for influence. Participants shared their experiences about their multiliteracies, linguistic accessibility of digital and other environments. Digital environments and social media offer space for peer support, relationships, multilingual language learning and construction of identity in national and transnational contexts alike.

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Sources:

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