

Chilean deaf adolescents' experiences with reading: beliefs and practices associated to different types of reading activities

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Abstract

Deaf and hard-of-hearing (D/HH) students' difficulties with written language have been consistently reported, but there are few studies about deaf students' reading practices and experiences. This study aimed to characterize past and current reading experiences of Chilean D/HH adolescents. There were 46 participating students (7th–12th graders). Semi-structured interviews were conducted, which addressed students' beliefs about reading, early experiences with books, preferred reading material, and perceptions of themselves as readers. The interviews were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Results show that, for students, reading is an arduous and not much enjoyed activity; it becomes a task they try to avoid and which they circumscribe mostly to the school context. Some of them report enjoying interacting with other types of texts, especially when these include pictures, but they do not seem to consider them as true reading activities. Reading difficulties faced in their early school years are still present. Students tend to blame their difficulties on limited vocabulary knowledge and to ask for help from teachers and parents in order to understand text. Most of them are not independent readers, and having to rely on someone else to understand text perpetuates their view of themselves as non-readers. Results are interpreted within a sociocultural framework to understand learning and motivation; the discussion includes suggestions for improving teaching practices.

Keywords: Deaf students | Reading practices | Reading experiences | Beliefs | Motivation

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