A third position on Language and Identity across learning sites. Democratic and equity issues for whom, where, when and why

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Taking a point of departure in both my scientific engagement and my experiences of research and societal developmental projects related to ethnicity, gender and functional disability both inside and outside Sweden, I will in my contribution at the Language Learning Roundtable at EuroSLA 2016 present ideas related to a third position where center-staging languaging and identity-positionings are central. I will argue and empirically illustrate how a focus on languaging opens up possibilities for discussing learning, communication and identity-positionings that take place in and via the deployment of one or more oral, written and signed language varieties and modalities. A third position goes beyond the dominating and dichotomizing positions related to (i) language (for instance monolingualism – bi/multilingualism), (ii) language learning methods (for instance methodologies that are based upon top-bottom – bottom-up conceptualizations), and (iii) the organization of language learning (for instance inclusion/integration/mainstreaming – segregation/special treatment). These positions create specific framings for children, young people and adults in different institutions for learning. I will argue that we have inherited and live with these dichotomizing positions within scholarship.

To make visible languaging thus implies that issues related to identity are focused in terms of learning and communicative processes. Here conceptual framings related to the ”chaining” and a ”hybridity-continuum” of different language varieties, modalities and other semiotic resources in languaging are related to an ”expanded-intersectional” viewing of human identity-positionings. Taking a point of departure in different ethnographically framed research projects where different scales of data are focused and with the fields of deafness, (but also ethnicity and gender) as illustration, I will highlight the necessity of a third position in language and identity across learning sites. In other words, I will take the case of research and the organization of language issues in the domain of deaf monolingual and bilingual education as specific instances of a dominating dichotomy, to illustrate how a third position makes visible languaging and identity-positionings and allows for new ways to understand participation and inclusion. Such a position builds upon a critical humanistic thinking where theoretical sociocultural and decolonial framings are central. This position allows for, I will argue, new ways to conceptualize a one-education-for-all and a-society-for-all.

Keywords: