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ABSTRACTS

A Child's (Proximal) Sense of Snow: Talk, Mobility and Materialities While Learning Cross-Country Skiing

Paul McIlvenny

The intersection of the quotidian practices of social interaction, learning and mobility outside of the classroom – for example, the ways in which talk shapes how children learn to be actively mobile – has been little studied until recently. This paper develops a social interactional approach to analysing talk and mobile action in what are arguably two quintessentially Nordic mobility practices, namely cycling and skiing. More specifically the focus is on investigating and comparing how a child learns to cycle in a bike-friendly urban infrastructure, and how a child learns to ski cross-country, both within the context of familial social interaction. Audiovisual data was collected with mobile video cameras from family bike rides in Denmark and family skiing in Finland, in which among other things a parent instructs and guides a child to bike or to ski. Using an EMCA approach, the analysis locates similarities and differences in how specific materialities are made salient in interactional practices. For example, caregivers talk about weather and surface conditions as a resource for instructed mobile action. Also, a route, a trajectory or a line of movement in a mobile formation is collaboratively constructed in interaction by the participants as part and parcel of their kinaesthetic experience of the respective material environment and infrastructure. Especially when skiing, the more malleable snowscape is (re)territorialised by laying down tracks, which can be reused by participants, both in the same session and across sessions. In this way, these tracks can shape and habituate future mobile actions and immanent pedagogical activities, as well as provide a resource for interactional memory work, eg. for talking about a prior instructed (inter)action. The paper also explores the affordances and limitations of a more reflexive, auto-ethnographic approach to collecting data derived from video recordings of activities in which, to different degrees, the researcher is an active subject.