Constructing Diversity: Teachers' Perspectives on Classrooms in Catalonia

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ABSTRACT

Interactional analysis can be used to explore transcripts and to provide access to embedded, intertextual information in the discussion participants' talk. In this article, the analysis provides "portraits" of preservice and inservice teachers' orientation towards linguistic diversity in Catalan schools —orientations which can help reveal the discourse participants' previous knowledge and understanding of such categories. By recognising these categorizations as both bounded by commonsense background knowledge and constructed *in situ*, the analysis looks at the categorising processes used by teachers as a part of their life of teaching. It also reveals the social nature of these categorizations because they are, in the dialogic sense, an inseparable element of the socially constituted fabric of language and human interaction (Bakhtin, *Dialogic*) in the environment of schooling and society.

The qualitative research described here highlights teachers' perspectives on diversity in the classroom, as constructed by three different groups of teachers working or studying in Catalonia. Recordings of participants' discussions of cultural and linguistic diversity were transcribed and then analysed using an approach informed by ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, and interactional analysis. Principally, the analysis explored how cultural and social "otherness" was constituted in talks between groups of preservice and inservice teachers and how those categorizations were deployed in their discourse.

Inevitably, the data must be considered within its wider sociohistorical context. The research took place in Catalonia, which is living a transformation across its social stratifications, with subsequent repercussions on the microcosm of schools. According to the Generalitat de Catalunya (Departament d'Acció Social i Ciutadania, *Pla de ciutadania i immigració 2005-2008*) there were 89,066 students enrolled in the Catalan schools from nationalities other than Spanish, making up 9% of the total student population. This percentage has grown to 11.3% in the school year 2007-08 (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia). These statistics indicate the high probability teachers will be encountering culturally and linguistically diverse student populations

in their classrooms. Each year there are more students enrolled in the public schools who have little or no knowledge of the schools' vehicular language and who must be given full access to the educational system as quickly as possible. In the case of Catalonia, students are expected to learn two languages —Spanish and Catalan.

This plurlilingualism found in schools should be seen as an important resource for the enrichment of communication and learning processes. However, sometimes linguistic diversity is seen as not only detrimental to the educational process and environment, but is used as a means of exclusion or domination, given that usually one language is prized over the other languages present. If the teacher's perspectives concerning a linguistically diverse student include negative categorizations of the student's mother tongue, this can become a hindrance to the student's learning (Graddol; Heath; Martín Rojo). Contrarily, if the categorizations of linguistic diversity are positive, then diversity may be understood as a starting block for further learning.

It must be asked, then, what are the categorizations of linguistic diversity in both the minds of learners and educators. It has been shown that in some cases newcomers to schools that are not fluent in the school's vehicular language are categorized as deficient in linguistic skills, rather than being recognized as individuals with varying degrees of multilinguistic competency (Martín Rojo). It can become a vicious cycle in which the student begins to fall behind in other studies, apart from the language classes. Often this leads to remediation based on a diagnosis of learning deficiencies. Another question, then, is whether the initiatives taken by the schools would be different if the categorization of linguistically diverse students were different, that is, if the understanding of a "good" language learner were related to someone with knowledge of several languages rather than someone fluent with the majority language. As Comellas (this volume) aptly points out, making teachers aware of the exceptional value speakers of other languages can bring to the learning process can also be a means of inviting immigrant students to feel more empathy towards their host society. This seems to be a relevant starting point for research into teachers' categorizations of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Theoretical background: A diverse framework for dealing with diversity

The theoretical framework for this research is an approach to transcripts of classroom dialogue influenced by: a) ethnomethodology and interactive and conversation analysis, highlighting social and institutional order of discourse as the product of *in situ* understanding

of meanings (Goodwin and Heritage; Heritage; Sacks *Initial*, *Notes*, *Lectures*; Schegloff; Schutz); b) sociohistorical pyschology (Bakhtin, *Dialogic*, *Problems*, *Speech*; Vygotsky; Wertsch, *Vygotsky*, *Voices*) positing that the human mind internalizes (or "appropriates") images, patterns, utterances, and languages from their sociocultural environment; c) constructivism (Bruner, *Actual*, *Culture*) focusing on a shared sense of knowledge; and d) post-structuralism (Bakhtin, *Dialogic*, *Problems*, *Speech*; Fairclough, *Language*, *Discourse*, *Critical*; Foucault, *Archaeology*, *Power*, *Abnormal*), centering the discussion around socially and culturally formed discourse and meaning which, in certain circumstances, come to be taken as "natural" in opposition to "deviant" or "marginal."

It is important to underline the fact that this research is not about teachers' beliefs. The data was analysed qualitatively in order to explore the social construction of different perspectives teachers take as they interact in conversations. In this same volume, Comellas takes a quantitative approach to teachers' perspectives in a similar situation as described here. Arguably, both methodologies provide complementary insight into differing aspects of a complex reality that must be comprehended from multiple points of view (Howe). Comellas research clearly indicates the predominance of stereotypes held by the teachers concerning diversity. The qualitative perspective carried out here can help pinpoint and analyse the way these available discourse practices are heeded and used to construct the stereotypical categorizations found in Comellas' research. As Widdicombe has stated in a conference presentation, "taking seriously participants' orientation to issues of identity may enhance an understanding of the relation between self and society and the active role people play in constructing identities and creating social order."

Social construction of meaning implies that a category system is not simply for organizing our understanding of the world. Categories are tools for talking about things in ways that are adaptable to our immediate context, and will shift according to different and changing perspectives. Importantly, the work carried out by Comellas ("Representacions," this volume) provides additional support to the argument made here that the participants' background knowledge is an important resource for category construction. His research highlights the similarities between the categorizations of the participants in this research and the questionnaire responses of 74 teachers in 8 public institutions in Barcelona. Above all, it underlines the fact that categories are constructed from and add to the pragmatics of social interaction. As conversation and interactional analysis have shown (Atkinson et al.; Long; Schegloff and Sacks), participants deploy categorical descriptions reflexively and on an interactional basis,

drawing from what Garfinkel (*Studies*) has called background expectancies. As Schegloff (68) points out, "Interaction and talk-in-interaction are structured environments for action and cognition, and they shape both the constitution of the actions and utterances needing to be 'cognised' and the contingencies for solving them."

Approach to the analysis through a "common sense model"

In order to understand what is meant here by "common sense model" it is necessary to examine briefly Schutz's work (1960s) in phenomenology and how it was "respecified" by Garfinkel. Garfinkel (*Respecification*) took up Schutz's proposal about everyday human conduct, which is based on a "sanctioned relationship" between expectations of objects and their actual appearance. The nexus of such a relationship is social because each individual presumes something concerning objects and also supposes that other people make similar assumptions about these objects. When this expectation is "breached," it is treated as no longer "natural." Schutz's theory is directly related to social organization because it implies how different members live their everyday lives according to a "moral order" and have rules for demonstrating "natural attitude" or expectable behaviour. Conversation members construct a "common sense model" based on personal experience and culturally presupposed standards (Schutz) that leads to expectations which the participants perceive as "a natural matter of fact" (Garfinkel, *Studies* 122).

Moreover, Schutz argues that reality is not a pre-existant idea that lies outside language; but rather it is produced by and inscribed in language. This implies that the words speakers use are not empty vehicles innocently transporting concepts. All discourse structure will influence the way reality is perceived. This also implies that humans understand the world and its meanings through cultural assumptions, shared meaning systems, taken-for-granted preconceptions and values that are ideologically based and culturally reinforced. In this way, constructed categories are understood as commonsensical and intuitive (and recognizable) to both the person who assembles the category as well as the other discourse partipants (otherwise communication is not possible).

To help explain this process of categorization, Garfinkel (*Studies*) proposes that all members of society use what he calls "background expectancies" as a scheme of interpretation. Mikhail Bakhtin's (*Dialogic*) approach to language use is applied in this research as a framework of language and social discourse to demonstrate background expectancies

as ultimately "dialogic." Similar to Schutz's precept that all knowledge is social in origin, Bakhtin theorized that all individual expression is ultimately the product of various voices that are linked to one another through a socially constituted fabric of language. This dialogic view on language emphasizes the flux of boundaries between "language systems" and "social acts."

Addtionally, Sacks' (*Initial, Lectures*) Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA for short) provided the means to analyze and highlight the social act of mutually constructed meaning in the teachers' transcripts in this research. According to Sacks, humans in most societies today are exposed to a plethora of linguistic descriptions within a wide range of discursive contexts, as are the cases of newspapers, television, school lessons, billboards, internet, etc. These linguistic descriptions are used by conversants to construct categories and to orient others towards those categorizations and can be analyzed accordingly.

Applying membership Categorization Analysis

In order to understand the proposal behind Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) it is necessary to first establish that conversations are made up of an orderliness that is identifiable for participating members who produce the conversation (Schegloff and Sacks 290; Sacks, *Notes* 22). This orderliness is achieved through the systematic use of identifiable interactional tools such as "devices," "systems," and "apparatus," which are used by members as solutions to specific organizational problems in social interaction. This is important to this research analysis as it implies that utterances are "devices" that are used *in situ* to construct a set of otherwise random objects into a "category" with "members." Within a text, the "device" is used to bring together the implication that anything mentioned within the text somehow jointly forms a group.

Consider a list of three people: Teresa, Thomas, and Celia. The fact that they have been placed in the same list immediately implies that there is some sort of relationship, despite the fact that the features of the relationship have not been established. However, if the device is used within the context of a clause such as "Celia, the teacher, was explaining to Thomas and Teresa (...)" the listener (or reader) will probably immediately place the other two names into the category of students, based on the assumption that the speaker has implied the relationship of teacher-students, although this may not necessarily be the case. It could be that all three names belong to the category of teacher or it could be that Celia is a teacher and Thomas and Teresa are

school board members, etc. Since there is an infinite possibility of assumptions or unstated actualities, discourse participants will "orient" themselves to the more salient feature of the device and make the most "commonsensical" assumptions.

MCA provides an analytical framework for cataloguing how certain activities are commonsensically tied to specific categories and how they are considered commonsensical by the conversation participants. Membership to a category is seen as encapsulating the "stock of commonsense knowledge" of that category. All of this provides recognisable features of how individuals construct sense and how they understand certain "rules" concerning members' behaviour, feelings, rights, and obligations that are linked to the membership role. These normative assumptions are based on cultural and social organization. The way in which the participants orient themselves towards categories and membership to this categories is made relevant in the conversation and the rest of the participants will react or orient themselves to the implications involved in the categorization. Of course, orientation is not always carried out cooperatively, in fact, the other discourse participants may challenge or resist the orientation of the speaker.

Local context, participants, and collection of data

Catalan, Spanish, and at least one foreign language are compulsory in Catalan schools, meaning that the teachers in the study were already working within a context of multilingualism. Recently, in order to meet the new demands on schools for integration of students whose mother tongue is different from Catalan, educational authorities have designed a language plan entitled *Pla per a la llengua i la cohesió social* ('Administrative Proposal for Language and Social Cohesion'). This plan, along with other measures of linguistic policy and media coverage of immigration, helps provide an important backdrop for teachers' understanding of which languages should be taught and how they should be taught.

The participants in the study came from three different groups. Group 1 consisted of students training to become foreign language teachers in a Catalan Education faculty (N = 41). The age range of this group was between 19 and 23, and although they had done intensive one-month teaching placement, none of them were experienced teachers. There were five male members in this group.

Group 2 was made up of foreign teacher trainees (exchange students belonging to a Comenius project involving universities from Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, the Netherlands, Poland, and Sweden) who had come to Barcelona for practice teaching (N = 10).

Only one member was male. This group was used as a control group to further explore teachers' "background of commonsense knowledge." The age range of this group was between 20 and 25. Like the first group, these members were training to become teachers and were carrying out teaching placement at the time of the study.

Group 3 involved inservice teachers (N = 10) working in various schools in Barcelona taking a training course in English as Foreign Language Teaching (EFL). As in group 2, there was one male in the group. The age range and years of experience teaching of this group was more varied. The youngest participant was 24 and the oldest participant was 54.

The data corpus consisted of approximately 25 hours of audio-recordings of the three groups carrying out the same discussion task. Each group was divided into small groups of three or four participants for discussion, which began with written questions and pictures (an example of the written instructions is included in the Appendix). The focus groups were given a collage of pictures of students from different classrooms in Catalonia, all of them with very different physical appearances. The role of discussion leader rotated. The discussions, which focused on multilingualism in the classroom, took approximately one hour and a half for each group. Groups 1 and 2 did follow-up reflection in journals which were later incorporated into the data. The lingua franca of the discussions was English (none of the participants were native English speakers).

Due to the large amount of data, a preliminary selection of the most recurrent categories was made. Furthermore, since qualitative research does not generally concern itself with standardising the interpretation of data, the coder reliability can be questioned. In order to avoid this, Glassner and Loughlin's system of cataloguing codes has been applied to the transcripts. In Glassner and Loughlin's study, tapes of conversations with adolescents were made, transcribed and then coded by "identifying topics, ways of talking, themes, events, actors and so forth (...) Those lists became a catalogue of codes" (Glassner and Loughlin 25). A similar format was adapted and applied to the transcriptions of this research in order to identify the most recurrent categories (Catalogue of Category Assembly: CCA).

Once the extracts had been organized into relevant headings and labeled according to more recurrent category attributes, the extracts were analyzed more thoroughly by looking at the different ways in which the most recurrent categories were constructed in the interaction. Part of this analysis is summarized in the next sections. It should be noted that the transcripts are literal and incorporate all of the language switching and errors made by the participants (see the transcript key in the Appendix).

LANGUAGES AND PHYSICAL FEATURES

After the extract selection through the CCA, it was clear that three of the most recurrent categories were ethnicity, immigrant, and linguistically diverse classroom. Of course, this is not unusual, considering the task design; however it should be highlighted that the groups were told to discuss a multilingual class, not a class with immigrant population. Nonetheless, physical traits were a recurrent attribute for the category construction of ethnic features, as can be seen in the following extract:

Extract (1): Sara, Ana, Victor, researcher (Group 3)

SAR: well we are going to discuss eh about eh a multilinguistic class eh we have in a class eh students from different countries and we have a problem as a teacher because we have a multilinguistic class | here you have a picture some pictures with different children from different countries and you can suppose that they have eh different languages | yes?
ANA: mm
SAR: so now you have to imagine that they have asked to write | sorry you have been asked to work as a language teacher in a multilinguistic class
ANA: mm
SAR: look at these pictures and <5> what languages do you think eh these students can speak and then eh we can discuss about eh your opinion as a teacher in a multilinguistic class
ANA: ok
SAR: what languages can you think these students can speak? ||| we have a b c_ [refers to the way the pictures are labelled by letters]
ANA: I think_
VIC: Spanish?
ANA: Spanish may be a
VIC: b [refers to picture labelled b]
<2>
ANA: I don't know
VIC: it can be· Arabian?
ANA: Arabian _
VIC: or_
SAR: <unintelligible>
VIC: it can be_ Indian?
ANA: Indian
VIC: And this picture? d?
SAR: d?
SAR: f English
VIC: oh yes
ANA: and English? oh no or German

<8>
???: [speaks to researcher]
RCR: it's not easy to guess is it?
ANA: <unintelligible> for me
<4>
VIC: the Spanish also
???: Spanish maybe
VIC: Northamerica?
ANA: and this one?
VIC: That student does not speak Spanish
SAR: why why do you think eh student h wouldn't speak Spanish?
VIC: yes
SAR: why?
<2>
ANA: You don't think this one speaks Spanish?
VIC: yes but it's because the the clothes and the the structure of the of the face and the_
ANA: Yes, he speaks Arabian
VIC: yes
RCR: you guessed it because of the clothes here? [laughs]
ANA: I think so
RCR: <unintelligible>
SAR: yes | and and what about eh student b? why do you think he can speak Arabian language?
ANA: 'cos the_
VIC: the colour of the skin and_ it can be also_
ANA: the faces_ the face but but I think_
VIC: it can be also a gipsy
ANA: Egyptian
VIC: gipsy gipsy
ANA: gips_ ah gipsy <unintelligible>
RCR: so he looks like a gipsy to you
SAR: but before you said this student could be from India or_
VIC: yes
SAR: why?
VIC: the way he_
SAR: because of the face too?
VIC: yes the_
ANA: yes the texture of the face
VIC: the texture of the face yes

The group members interactively "accomplished" (Sacks, *Lectures* 239) or constructed a meaning of ethnicity which was unquestioned by the other members of the group. Sara's opening sequence, which features a multilinguistic class as "a problem," also goes unquestioned by the group and is followed by turns where the participants use physical traits to construct individual ethnic identities rather than focusing on the linguistically diverse classroom.

This tendency to deploy physical features as a device for ethnicity occurred in all of the groups. Using Garfinkel's (*Studies*) terminology, all the members' background expectancies led them to a scheme of interpretation concerning the students in the pictures, based on their common stock of knowledge. Additionally, amongst the groups, one of the most common ethnicities attributed to the pictures was Arabic. The occasionality, that is, the way in which the utterance fits into the expectations or demands of the local environment, created the opportunity of the groups to "identify" the students shown in the pictures by "casting" (Day 151) them into ethnic categories common to their background knowledge —for instance, Arabic immigrants (Extract 2). Importantly, according to statistics from the Interior Ministry, the most rapidly growing groups immigrating to Spain are from Latin America. However, Latin Americans are not typically the image used visually to portray immigrants in the media (Lorite), instead Moroccan immigrants are more likely to appear in media images.

Extract (2): Carolina, Anna, Jiska (Group 1)

CAR: imagine this is your class and these pupils are in it | eh now you have to say what you think they will speak as language what language
ANN: ah which language
CAR: yes
ANN: ok
JIS: mm
CAR: so look at the pictures
ANN: I think_
CAR: and then say the letter and say which language you_
JIS: he will speak some_
ANN: <unintelligible>
JIS: arabic or turkish I think turkish turkish?
(...)
ANN: I think he's from_ Iran?
CAR: Iran | then what language do they speak in Iran?
ANN: =Iranish?=
CAR: =Iranish?= I don't know
JIS: yes or Arabic too I don't know I'm not sure
ANN: ok and picture b?
CAR: and this one is I think this is person b?
ANN: b
CAR: person b is from Morocco I think?
ANN: yes
CAR: but she's wearing sport shoes that sport shoes but ok I think is Morocco

According to Shotter (20), in most instances people are unaware of

how they use talk to "shape" or "construct" a sense of their "social worlds." In the same way, people are often unaware of how categorizations help shape the way they interpret reality. The accountable forms that emerge are "rooted" in the cultural and social background of the teachers and thus provide them with a shared "structure of feeling" (Shotter 20). Of course, their categorizations are also rooted in their individual experiences. This type of interpretation can be seen in the way Cristina "casts" the identity of the student she sees in the picture (Extract 3), "because yes they look like the children we have in the school and we see every day so they look like people from Morocco." For Marga, this casting of the student is apparently shared, since she does not question the categorization.

Extract (3): Cristina, Sara, Marga (Group 1)

CRI: I thi_ I thought that it_ they was from Morocco | how do you say_
SAR: Morocco
<1>
CRI: because yes they look like the children we have in the school and we see every day so they look like people from Morocco
MAR mm
CRI: eh in the second_ no the second image the China_ the Chinese boy_
SAR: mm
CRI: yes | he speaks Chinese or Mandarí | it's the same mm?
MAR: mm
SAR: and | about_ eh my name is Sara about letter b you say about <unintelligible> it's eh_
MAR: yes it's Finland
SAR: the language | bueno it's the Finn the_
MAR: Finland | sí
CRI: he looks like from northern of Europe
SAR: eh?
CRI: he looks like from =northern=
SAR: =northern=
CRI: of Europe
SAR: languages of Europe

Cristina constructs her category based on physical similarities between the student shown in the pictures with the students in her school, just as the other participants deploy assumed physical traits of people from China or northern Europe. In Billig et al.'s (2) terms, there is a "lived ideology" which provides the resources for their way of speaking, thinking, perceiving, and understanding of reality.

Ethnicity and extended attributes

Having deployed physical features as an attribute of ethnicity, the Membership Category of ethnicity was frequently extended to other Membership Category Attributes (MCAs). In Extract 4, ethnic features are used to construct attributes about learner abilities or habits. Students coming from European countries are categorized as having less problems adapting and the families are more habituated toward school life. The student's willingness to learn and ability to adapt to school is also linked to the assumed origins of the individual.

Extract (4): Sara, Ana, Victor, researcher (Group 3)

RCR: are you discussing the advantages now | and the disadvantages?
SAR: disadvantages <unintelligible> because eh they can use all their techniques to eh mm || they make an effort to understand the other other_
RCR: so you as a teacher you see this an advantage?
SAR: as a as a teacher it's difficult_
ANA: Yes it's a big problem
SAR: but they is a_ it's_ I think when there is a different native language <unintelligible>in boy or girl they are interested to learn this <unintelligible>
ANA: yes but with the children it could be an advantage but the teacher_
SAR: as a teacher?
ANA: you have a lot of problem when you have students from different countries with different languages
(...)
ANA: and to a new language and you must_ you can help eh giving extra materials and some things with drawings or with other material
RCR: and this extra material is given in English?
ANA: yes | mm for example pictures_
SAR: I think it also depends on the country the children comes from because for example a children who comes from eh an European country it's easy to adapt because they have same culture the_
ANA: so the problem is not the language | it's the culture?
RCR: yeah I was thinking the same thing | really sometimes it's not simply a question of what you are talking about knowing language
SAR: I I speak about a_
ANA: a lot of reasons eh mostly depending on the family and the the in the culture but the culture from here and they want to learn and all the family are involved and <unintelligible> and the effort is is high <unintelligible> and others they are not interested in the culture or they come here for a short time_ they don't like to learn
RCR: so you think it depends a bit on the family as well?
VIC: I think it's important for these students to get contact with another_ with other children in the street and it's the easy way to learn Spanish and Catalan

RCR: contact with_
VIC: yes
RCR: in the playgrounds_
VIC: yes
SAR: it's like going on holidays_
VIC: I think they learn more language in the street than in the school | and I'm agree with her when she said that some students it depends of the country or where they come from eh they adapt easily or with more difficulty
RCR: what do you mean?
VIC: I think for example_ I think for example in Arabian people in people_ students from Morocco_ I never met one or two good students from Morocco
RCR: Never?
VIC: good students from Morocco?
RCR: never? are they_?
VIC: I try to get memory but_
RCR: you have Moroccan students in your English class or in another class?
VIC: in an English class or in school
???: <unintelligible>
VIC: I don't know why but for example people from Rumania or Europe or people from South America_ I think they_ my experience says that they adapted better eh to school I don't know why
(...)
SAR: depending of the group of the group <unintelligible> it depends also eh the group is a good group or it's a_|
VIC: for example I never met an Arabian student with a good level | never\|
SAR: I have students from Morocco and they are good students\|
VIC: yes?
SAR: and they continue for example in the class and school\|
VIC: yes?

Victor never clarified the features which he attributes to "good level." It is interesting to note that when Sara says that her experience with Moroccan students has been positive, Victor's reply expresses disbelief, obviously indicating uncooperative orientation of Sara's categorization of "good student." As Silverman points out, speakers may resist allowing certain members into categorization. As can be seen by Victor's reaction, he resists allowing "Arabians" into the category of "good student."

Other groups' category attributes also included value judgment – some languages had less value than others. For instance, Arabic is dismissed as a viable language in the classroom by constructing negatively the fact that a student "only speaks Arabic" or in other cases, only able to speak a language; which was constructed to be of less value than knowing to "write and read" (Extract 5):

Extract (5): Maria, Elena, Laura (Group 1)

LAU: an African language I think\|
MAR: ok\|
ELE: ok | eh but only speak not read and write that thing_|
LAU: no\|
MAR: or only speak\|
ELE: yeah it could be possible speak\|
LAU: I think it's different_|
MAR: only speak | and write and read/ what? [laughs] or_|

Similar results from Comellas research into teachers' values of different languages indicated that more prescriptive or "academic" descriptors of language knowledge were more highly valued (Comellas 194) instead of communicative competences. It is relevant to note, however, that the value attributes of the students' languages became less relevant for the student teachers and their orientation gradually shifted towards a categorization of the multilingual student as someone better prepared to learn other languages "because they are used to learning languages."

Extract (6): Maude, Clara, Julia (Group 1)

CLA: yes it's better for them because they they know other cultures other people_
MAU: mm
CLA: they are_
JUL: <unintelligible>
CLA: open
JUL: it's better for them what? the_
CLA: the multilinguistic_
JUL: the multilinguistic
CLA: yes class
JUL: mm
CLA: growing up with other cultures near I think it's good but eh to teach it's difficult I think
MAU: so they are more tolerant and_
CLA: yes I think so
MAU: maybe it's it's easier for them another language because they are used to learn languages I don't know
CLA: mm
MAU: but yeah I don't know I think I would speak to to an older teacher or another colleague and asking how to cope with this | ok | yes and now eh_ imagine that you are_ that you work as a language teacher in this multilinguistic class

CATEGORIZATION OF MOTHER TONGUE

Another frequent orientation of the groups' category construction dealt with the use of heritage languages. Arguably the participants' dialogic "common sense knowledge" provides a resource for their portrayal of society and its representation in the school. Nonetheless, it must be reiterated that this portrayal will, to a certain degree, become a self-fulfilling prophecy of those very features used for the categorization. Since the members perceive these features as salient, accountable attributes of reality, they will produce and re-produce them due to their "motivated compliance with these background expectancies" (Garfinkel, *Studies* 54).

For instance, when discussing the use of mother tongue in the school context, the "official" discourse was often picked up and confirmed as a valid interpretation of "what is best for non-native speakers." This is supported by the fact that this categorization was not only constructed by groups 1 and 3, but also by control group 2 and in the group made up of students from Catalonia and from abroad. As Garfinkel (*Studies* 54) puts it, "Common sense knowledge of the facts of social life for the members of the society is institutionalized knowledge of the real world." Along these lines, the conceptualization of limited use of the mother tongue is best for the minority language speaker appears to be part of the institutionalized knowledge of the education world:

Extract (7): Jill, Kelly, Anna (Group 1)

JIL: I think maybe on the playground when they are only with the two of them that they speak their own language ok but in the class there are other children they can't understand each they can't understand them (...)

(...)

JIL: oh yeah in some schools in Holland it is also forbidden to speak on the playground | in your own language\|

(...)

JIL: also because they don't speak_ some children don't speak Dutch at home so when they want to learn Dutch in this case_|

ANA: they have to practice the school language\|

JIL: you have to practice and practice and when it's for the children too easy to speak their own language_ and that's why they_ it's forbidden to speak their own language and there were also people in the class with another eh language so I think then you can say you_ it's forbidden because otherwise_|

ANA: yes I think it's good_|

JIL: other children can play with these persons because they don't understand what they mean\|

ANA: and then you you you your own_|
JIL: you isolate yourself\|
ANA: these students isolate from the group and that's not good\|
JIL: so this is why I think it's good to forbid it\|

The conceptualization that limited use of the mother tongue is best for the minority language speaker appears to be part of the institutionalized knowledge of the education world. As Goodwin (606) proposes, the background knowledge of "communities of competent practitioners" is based on "the theories, artifacts and bodies of expertise that are its special and distinctive domain of competence." This group's motivated compliance to the domain of the world of education leads to the conclusion: "so this is why I think it's good to forbid it." Interestingly, several groups demonstrated motivated compliance towards the expected use (or prohibition) of the students' mother tongue, however the reasons differed —largely due to agency. For the teacher trainees (groups 1 and 2) the mother tongue could cause problems with adaptation or miscommunication with the other students, as seen above. For the teachers in practice (group 3), use of the heritage language was constructed as a problem for the teachers:

Extract (8): Susana, Patricia, Mariona (Group 3)

SUS: I have a girl from from_ I don't know from *Marruecos* I think and she doesn't speak Spanish and Catalan and then for us it's a problem she doesn't understand anything in the class\|
(...)
SUS: but in all the subjects it's horrible because they didn't_ she doesn't understand anything | science maths\|

Linguistic Diversity: Advantage or Disadvantage?

On the whole, the dialogues reflected a tendency to categorize the linguistically diverse classroom with rather negative features. Many of the discussions began by categorizing the linguistically diverse classroom as a "problem" as can be seen in Extracts 1, 4, 6, and 8 (Extract 1 below is repeated from a previous section):

SAR: well we are going to discuss eh about eh a multilinguistic class eh we have in a class eh students from different countries and we have a problem as a teacher because we have a multilinguistic class | here you have a picture some pictures with different children from different countries and you can suppose that they have eh different languages | yes?

In many cases, the negative attributes had to do with the management and organization of the language classes, and in other cases they were associated with problems related to cultural conflicts or learner ability. Similar to the categorizations constructed around the heritage language, the attribute of advantage or disadvantage of linguistic diversity was often based around agency. Who was it advantageous or disadvantageous for? Depending upon whether the dialogue participants were discussing the classroom from the point of view of the students or from the point of the teacher, the attribute might vary between positive or negative.

Several dialogues demonstrate this type of categorization of multilingual classrooms —an advantage for the schoolchildren but not so for the teachers, due to more work or more responsibilities or lack of resources and so on. For the teachers in group 3, the common framework for the difficulties to be found in multilingual classes laid in the lack of resources, lack of time, and lack of official support accompanied by a general feeling of isolation in facing the situation. The same class, on the other hand, could be constructed with the attribute of advantageous if the focus of agency was on the students themselves:

Extract (9): Susana, Patricia, Mariona (Group 3)

PAT: other negative that it | i·t || hasn't to be negative but it is because you need a lot of materials a different materials and normally you cannot | you cannot have | this material\|

(...)

MAR: you have to to try to to do this if you different_ from differents books diferents images | so we have to prepare this materials sometimes | and we have to to spend a lot of time with every children and so I think we have a lot of hours <unintelligible> to this materials eh to dedicate to these children to these children\|

(...)

MAR: I am Mariona and I think it's eh easier to do this when the children are very young | because they are the_ all the the classes are very dynamic and with eh pictures images so it's easier | but when the children are very are very <unintelligible> are not that younger are older | it's difficult because you have to teach you have to teach science mathematics and it's it's more difficult | so I think the the age of the children it's very important to do this this things no? and on the other hand a multilinguist a multilinguistic class is very rich so older children have differents languages and they can eh | eh_

PAT: learn

MAR: learn of the others no? learn others_

SUS: mm

MAR: other languages and your mind is | more open

PAT: mm

MAR: that if you have only one language | I think so | ok?

Both groups of student teachers (groups 1 and 2) constructed similar categorizations: the diversity was an advantage for the students because they could learn about other cultures, develop tolerance, etc. Importantly, over time some of the trainees began to categorize diversity as potentially enriching, didactic situations *for themselves*, not just for their students, conveying openness to new perspectives and categorizations in their roles as teachers. One student commented in her journal that "first of all I think it is to break down with prejudices with the images you have of the other person" and another student stated that she felt "at the same time it could be rich for myself."

The teachers' discussions (group 3) of the advantages and disadvantages of linguistically diverse classrooms were based on their understandings of their everyday affairs, in this case, the workings of an educational environment. Their understandings of a linguistically diverse classroom were constructed from a background of seen but unnoticed features of common discourse which allows for all their utterances concerning the topic to be recognized as common, reasonable, and understandable for the other dialogue participants. This is why the following categorization of linguistically diverse classroom is given the attribute of disadvantageous, without any interrogation or objection by the other members:

Extract (10): Susana, Patricia, Mariona (Group 3)

PAT: I'm the second leader of the group | and we have now to discuss the advantages and disadvantages that we have in a multilinguistic class (...)
???: advantages?
PAT: yes what the question is it positive and negative of_ in a multilinguistic class? || ok let's start [laughs] let's start with the disadvantages that it's easier to see\ [laughs]|
SUS: ok | yes\|

What makes it "easier to see"? What allows this assumption to be accepted without further explanation? Despite the lack of explanation for the assumption, Susana consents to the categorization; thus the category becomes a legitimatized form. Similar categorizations occur in the next extract:

Extract (11): Liliana, Elsa, Mar (Group 1)

ELS: but eh imagine that you are going to to be their language teacher in a multilinguistic class | which is your first impression?|
MAR: [laughs]
LIL: a foreign language\|
MAR: uff it's going to be very difficult\|

ELS: no | well no you are going to be their teacher so they speak each other a different language | which is your first impression? | imagine that somebody says to you you are going to be a language teacher in a multilinguistic class | which are your first_?|
MAR: it's going to be very complicated\|

What makes these dialogue participants anticipate difficulties when faced with the hypothetical multilingual classroom? It should be reiterated that this extract is produced by student teachers who have not had any (or very little) experience in teaching a multilingual class. Still, they are not the only ones who hold this expectancy, since there are numerous demonstrations of category assembly work by all three groups about the multilingual classroom with attributes such as "difficult," "problematic," "a disadvantage," "a problem," etc. In fact, it was the most recurrent category in the entire corpus, although as mentioned earlier, this categorization was eventually re-negotiated in Groups 1 and 2.

Concluding Remarks

There are numerous demonstrations of categorizations by the three groups about the multilingual classroom with attributes such as "difficult," "problematic," "a disadvantage," or "a problem." At the same time, the research showed that the groups, in particular the trainees, engaged in re-negotiation of some of their categorizations towards a more positive evaluation. This was especially evident when trainees were involved in long-term reflection (during an entire semester) and had personal experience to compare their categorizations with others (as was the case of the exchange students involved in practice teaching in Catalan schools).

It was evident that the three groups were aware of the need for more information and more resources for facing the challenges inherent to changing demographies in the classroom, despite a tendency towards negative categorization of diversity. Teacher training programmes can employ this awareness for more explicit exploration of processes of category construction and the way in which categorizations draw upon a dialogic background for "common-sense making." Such programes can play a key role in helping teachers address the inequities in their own practice and the way in which their practices influence the overall context of the educational system —in other words, help bring about reflection and explicit analysis.

Blommaert and Verschueren (3) have aptly pointed out that a major part of the problem of social inequality existent nowadays stems

from the fact that the majority of people view diversity as a problem and therefore react to this categorization accordingly. These viewpoints will interact and influence teachers' work (goals, purposes, conceptions of students, curriculum) and the "ways in which they [give] meaning to these beliefs by their behavior in the classroom" (Clark and Peterson 287). Teacher training must take on the challenge of providing tools for teachers (in both initial and in-service training courses) to enable them to reflect on their "common sense assumptions" which shape their categorizations and perceptions of their everyday lives, including their interactions within the classroom.

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APPENDIX

The transcript key is based on the transcription codes used by the Grup de Recerca en Ensenyament i Interacció Plurilingües (GREIP) of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

1. Textual notes
??? speaker cannot be identified
[...] part of the text has been left out
[trancriber notes]

2. Intonation
\ descendent
/ ascendent
? wh question
_ interruption of utterance
| tiny gap in utterance
|| longer gap in untterance
<seconds> elapsed time without utterances

3. Overlaps
=text speaker 1=
=text speaker 2=

Discussion Leader 1

Description: You will be the first discussion leader of your group. Try to get your group to discuss how, as language teachers, they would approach the following hypothetical classroom. You can use the steps indicated below as cues. Pictures are provided.

Step 1: Explain to your group that they must imagine that they are going to begin working as language teachers in a multilinguistic class.

Step 2: Show them the pictures and have them discuss which linguistic backgrounds their students might have. Get them to discuss their answers and to explain their reasons.

Step 3: Tell them the languages each student speaks (on the back of the pictures). Get the group to compare their own answers with the answers on the back.

Discussion Leader 2

Description: You will be the second discussion leader of your group. Your task is to get the group to discuss the advantages and disadvantages they see in having a multilinguistic task.

You can use the steps indicated below as cues.

Step 1: Try to get the group to focus first on the advantages and disadvantages globally (class dynamics, methodologies, materials, etc.).

Step 2: Get the group to discuss what specific steps (if any) they feel should be taken for each student or a specific class.