Constructing differences: A qualitative analysis of teachers' perspectives on linguistic and cultural diversity

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Abstract

How teachers and students work together through discourse to construct their understanding of the context they live and work in will influence, in many different ways, the interaction within their classrooms.

This article will describe a qualititative discourse analysis-involving three different groups of teachers—which focused on the way in which the participants assembled categories about linguistic and cultural diversity of students in a foreign language classroom. It will be argued that the ways in which these teachers categorised language learning and language learners within the context of linguistic diversity was relevant to the way in which they interact with a linguistically diverse context. Extracts from transcripts are discussed to demonstrate different categorisations related to diversity and foreign language teaching.
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Keywords: Meaning Category Analysis; Discourse analysis; Categorisation; Diversity

> *School performance, like other artifacts of the social world, is constituted by and insep-arable from, the processes of talk and text, such that talk and text and performance are mutually constituting, rather than having an objective independent existence i.e., being stable, discrete and permanent.* (Heyman, 1984: 12)

1. Introduction

As Heyman's statement above indicates, how teachers and students mutually construct their understanding of the context they live and work in will influence the way in which they interact within that context. This implies that perspectives of the classroom and classroom performances in it can be better understood by analysis of the everyday interactive, dialogic features of classroom

interaction. With this premise in mind, the research described here analyses how three groups of teachers constructed their categorisations of linguistic and cultural diversity in relation to their classes and the ways in which these category constructs were part of the immediate and dialogic context of their classrooms.

Carried out in Catalonia, Spain, the research looked at the category assembly belonging to three different groups of teachers: one group consisted of in-service teachers and the other two groups were made up of students who were enrolled in teacher training courses at the time. This research framework and its insights, while focusing on a particular context, is more generally relevant to the world of education, especially as the rate of population movements worldwide has increased significantly in recent years. This means that educational centres around the world are multiethnic and multilingual, in opposition to an "homogenous" idea of classrooms sometimes held by teachers who see immigration as a new phenomenon.[1]

Nonetheless, wide societal debates have positioned immigration and cultural diversity in public discourse so that it is now a predominant topic in many countries. Coverage of changes in education due to immigration is common in Spain as well although, as Gómez (2002) indicates, the prevalent depictions of immigrants in mass media are of lower educational and cultural levels. This conceptualisation of a "transforming" society and subsequently, conceptualisations of the changing classroom must be seen within a social, cultural and dialogic framework which affects the teachers' perceptions of teaching processes. Recent research dealing with the incorporation of newly arrived students to the autonomous regions of Spain (where bilingualism is quite frequent) indicates that administration and teachers tend to have pre-established ideas about these students' linguistics competences and their ability to learn (Maruny & Molina, 2001; Navarro Sierra, 2003). As Vila (2002) points out, educators sometimes tend to attribute newly arrived students with features that contrast with supposed attributes of 'modern Western society' without any real knowledge or experience of the other culture.

Thus, a starting point of the research was to devise a means of examining the categorisation of diversity as it was mutually constructed by the teachers and to determine which categorisations were more frequently constituted by teachers in regards to teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students. The analysis of data from this research indicated that the groups consistently categorised the monolingual language classroom in opposition to the multilingual classroom and that the latter was constructed as more "difficult." These findings and other related issues will be discussed in further detail in this article.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this research is an approach to transcripts of classroom dialogue influenced by: (a) ethnomethodology and interactive and conversation analysis (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Heritage, 1984; Sacks, 1972, 1992; Schegloff, 1972; Schutz, 1962), highlighting social and institutional order of discourse as the product of *in situ* understanding of meanings; (b) socio-historical psychology (Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985, 1991) positing that the human mind internalizes (or "appropriates") images, patterns, utterances, and languages from their socio-cultural environment; (c) constructivism (Bruner, 1966, 1986, 1996) focusing on a shared sense of knowledge; and (d) post-structuralism (Bakhtin, 1981; Fairclough, 1989,

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[1] Although, as Richard Lewontin has put it, "Wholesale migration is not a recent phenomenon brought about by the development of airplanes and ships; it has been an economic necessity at all times" (1982: 113).

1992a,b, 1995; Foucault, 1972, 1980, 2004) 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."

At a time when teachers are re-positioning themselves to multicultural and multilingual societies, diversity may represent a new dimension for teachers in their meaning-making processes. It also presents a challenge for researchers interested in finding a framework for analysing these meaning-making processes. The cross-disciplinary approach taken here endeavours to provide just such a framework.

> This kind of interdisciplinary set-up is simply characteristic for any valid linguistic pragmatic approach to real-life data. (. . .) the migrant debate is not a unified object of research: there are linguistic dimensions to it, but at the same time, it is clearly caught up in historical and contemporary social structures and processes, interwoven with power relationships and attitudes. (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998: 37)

Significant to this research is the fact that the ethnomethodological tradition cited above does not look for meaning of utterances in and of themselves; meaning is socially constructed through routine categorisation work of the conversation members (Sacks, 1974: 218). In other words, people *use* categories to make sense of the world, however, the categories are not merely perceptual filters, they are tools of orientation. According to Sacks, dialogue members perform "identity work" which is used to bring together all the elements in a text so that they jointly form a group. That is, they assume and project some sort of relationship. In the now famous example given by Sacks, in the utterance "The baby cried; the mother picked it up" most listeners/readers of the sentence would assume that the mother mentioned is the mother of the baby. Sacks calls this "Membership Categorisation Analysis," or MCA (cf. Sacks, 1984). Of course, this may not necessarily be the case but it is the most "commonsensical assumption" (Sacks, 1984). Another important element of MCA is the fact that the categorisations produced by the dialogue members must have "accountable features." These accountable features are constructed through the members' interaction, according to their concepts of "reciprocity of perspective," which means that each dialogue member is expected to use categories that are "recognisable" by other members. Using Sacks' Membership Category Analysis helps the researcher highlight which "features" of a category the speaker is "orienting" the other members towards as well as how these members recognise the categorisations, thus highlighting the ways in which talk, context and performance are mutually constituted.

The research emphasised that the category assembly work of each individual in the study was a socially negotiated, contextualized process. The process consisted of the teachers building a logical, consistent version of his/her foreign language teaching practice in relation to linguistic and cultural diversity. As Heyman has argued in his studies of French–English interactions between student and teachers in Canada, there are certain known factors in each context which will raise "norms, expectations, and stereotypes as to the probable nature of student/teacher interaction" (Heyman, 1984: 14) but the actual "scenario is not scripted. Neither biography, nor context is determinate in a fixed, objective sense." (Heyman, 1984: 14) The interpretation of such interactions must rely on observation of the "sense making activities" of the people involved.

These sense-making activities are carried out through recourse to available background knowledge and it is this same background knowledge that is used to construct identities and categorisations. The way in which one perceives self and other are influenced by the conceptual framing of definitions of group identity, however, there is no objective criteria to identify so-called natural groups (Ronen, 1979). Despite this lack of objectivity, the parameters used to define group identity is closely linked to both group-internal (group self-perceptions) and group-

external perceptions and conceptualisations. More importantly, these perceptions are historically and socio-culturally shaped; in other word, these perceptions and conceptualisations are assembled through common-sensical, background knowledge, including construction of what is "normal" and what is not.

> (. . .) we pay less attention to true characteristics than to what the "other" might represent in our socio-psychological and moral frame of reference. We reconstruct the other in terms of our own categories, expectations, habits and norms." (. . .) the deviation, the "abnormality", is attributed to the "other" as an essential property. The foreigner, or the "other" in general, is thereby getting *abnormalized.*" (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998: 19)

Furthermore, as Blommaert and Verschueren aptly point out, "group identities do not only determine our opinions and discourses about others, but also other forms of behaviour towards them (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998: 24). According to these two authors, the societal and socially structured dimensions employed in category construction of identities hinge directly upon ideology, which they define as "any constellation of fundamental or commonsensical, and often normative, ideas and attitudes related to some aspect(s) of social 'reality'" (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998: 25). Blommaert and Verschueren describe social actors' recourse to a "stock of topoi, motives and stories which can be used for constructing user-friendly 'new' ideologies" (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998: 25). This stock is not questioned because it is deeply embedded in the implicit social discourse that it becomes a part of social "reality" and is thus a manifestation of Vygotsky's (1978) "mind in society." Put another way, these building blocks of ideology are techniques of domination that have a coercive force as they are enacted within social institutions, discourses, and practices (Foucault, 2004). This research aims to bring these discourse and practices – the implicit topoi used by teachers – to the fore. Arguably, if they are not made explicit, they will continue to go unquestioned.

3. Local context of the research

Catalonia is an autonomous region in Spain that has two officially recognised languages, Catalan and Spanish. The use of Catalan was suppressed during the time of General Franco's dictatorship and its revival only began after Franco's death, in 1975. In part this is due to the Spanish Constitution of 1978 and the creation of the autonomous communities in the following years. However, language policies promulgated by the Catalan government (Generalitat de Catalunya) have also had an important role in ensuring that Catalan is now commonly used in many aspects of daily life, including education. Within the schools, Catalan, Spanish and at least one foreign language are compulsory, meaning that the teachers in the study were already working within a context of multilingualism. Nonetheless, there is an increasing number of foreign pupils entering compulsory education in Catalonia who are not familiar with Catalan and/or Spanish. In response to this situation, the Department of Education of Catalonia has created policies to ensure that newly arrived students can learn Catalan as quickly as possible and actively participate in the schools' programmes.

3.1. Participants

The study consisted of three different subject groups. One of the groups was made up of teachers who were training to become foreign language teachers (English and French) in a Catalonian Teacher Education faculty ($N = 41$). For identification in the research this group will be called

pre-service group. The class was a mixture of students from Barcelona and students from other European countries[2] and the age range was from 20 to 25. The ratio of female to male in the pre-service group was 2:1. The second group was also made up of teachers in training and consisted of foreign students (ages between 20 and 28) who had come to Barcelona for practice teaching (*N* = 10). None of these students were from Spain and their knowledge of Spanish was very basic when they were first placed in the schools. All of them were assigned to the EFL classrooms in their practice schools, even though they were not training to become language teaching specialists (they were training as primary education teachers).[3] These students were participating in a course on "intercultural education" at the host university, along with carrying out their practice teaching. There was one male student in this group. For identification, this group will be called *intercultural group*. The third group involved in-service teachers (*N* = 10) working in various schools in Barcelona who were taking an in-service training course in teaching English as a foreign language (henceforth called EFL). As in the intercultural group, there was one male member of the study group. The age range of this group was greater: from 25 to 51. All of them, except one, were currently employed as EFL teachers. This group is identified as *in-service group* in this article. The names of the participants in the research were changed to ensure the participants' privacy.

3.2. Data collection

The data compiled for this research consisted of approximately 25 h of audio-recordings (which were then transcribed[4]) and student journals from the student teacher groups (*pre-service* and *intercultural*). English was not the first language of any of the participants in the study, although the classes and discussions were all carried out in English. For the recordings, all three groups were asked to do the same task during one of their teacher training sessions. Each study group was divided into smaller groups of three or four participants and written instructions for different discussion tasks were distributed to each of the conversation groups; the instructions were written so that the role of "discussion leader" rotated.[5] Each discussion leader was given the specific instructions for his or her part of the task, along with orientation for the topic and instructions to help mediate the conversation. For example, the discussion leader #1 was asked to elicit ideas about how to set up a class made up of students shown in pictures given to them by the researcher. The pictures came from various magazine and newspaper articles about students throughout Spain. The discussion leader was directed to tell the other participants that the class was made up of "linguistically diverse" students. At no time were the participants told that they would be discussing classes made up of immigrants or minority language students, although many of the categorisations which emerged involved attributes concerning immigrants.

The next phase, led by a different discussion leader, focused on discussing advantages and disadvantages involved in teaching the classes. The third phase was a discussion designed to decide on the most appropriate "teaching approach" for their "students." For this part of the task,

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[2] There were students on an Erasmus scholarship exchange from Austria (2), Germany, Sweden, and Portugal.

[3] These students were participating in an international project (*ARGONAUTS of EUROPE*) which was addressed to future school teachers and was coordinated by the Hogeschool van Educatie in Utrecht (NL). The Pedagogische Akademie des Bundes in Vienna (AT), the Masaryk University in Brno (CZ), the Universities of Linköping and Karlstad in Sweden and the Teachers Training College in Szczytno (PO) and Facultat de Ciències de l'Educació, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona were the associate members.

[4] The participants were all L2 English speakers. Slight corrections to the extracts have been made.

[5] Two examples of the written instructions are given below:

the discussion leader was provided with different models of teaching approaches written on cards that s/he summarised for the other participants. The participants could decide on one, none or a mix of the teaching styles. The entire process took approximately one hour and a half for each group. The pre-service teacher groups were asked to do follow-up writing in their journals.

4. Discussion of data and analysis

4.1. Preliminary analysis

Frequency of category constructions was ascertained by using an adaptation of Glassner and Loughlin's (1987) "catalogue of codes." This preliminary analysis of the transcripts was done to identify configurations of exchange occurring with a significant frequency, thus helping to identify the most salient features in the three study groups' category constructions. The more frequent categorisations were then incorporated into a database which was especially designed for this research. Similar to Internet search engines, this database provided a means of categorising and retrieving different extracts or texts according to most frequent appearance of topics. The parameters of the classificatory system were established according to frequency and consistency of appearance; the relevancy of the context to the category; and its accuracy to the category. Thus, it could be seen that in the preliminary analysis of the transcripts, diversity was assembled with the feature of "advantage" 54 times and as a "disadvantage" 57 times.

4.2. What does "advantage" mean for the participants?

It is important to note that the overall study was qualitative despite an apparently quantitative preliminary approach. The categories in the "catalogue" were only orientative for the more detailed analysis using MCA, by providing insight into which extracts were indicative of salient topics for the study groups. Diversity in the classroom was constructed as both an "advantage" and as a "problem" at very similar frequency (as stated earlier, "advantage" was assembled 54 times, "problematic" or "difficult" 57 times). This is seemingly contradictory, however by applying Meaning Category Analysis, the qualifying features that were foregrounded made it clear that

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Person 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 multilingual class.
Step 2:	Show them the pictures and have them discuss which linguistic background their students' might have (you have the answers on the back of the pictures, but do not tell them now). 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.

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

the understanding of diversity as an "advantage" was different for each group. The in-service teachers, for instance, constructed diversity as an advantage predominantly for the *students*, and did not construct diversity as an advantage for the *teachers*.

(1) In-service group 3 (Samantha, Ann, Irving)[6]

109	SAM:	as a as a teacher it's difficult_	
110	ANN:	It's a problem|
111	SAM:	but they is a_ it's_ I think when there is a different native language well any boy or girl they are interested to learn this|
112	ANN:	yes but with the children it could be an advantage but the teacher_	
113	SAM:	as a teacher/	
114	ANN:	you have a lot of problems when you have students from different countries with different languages|
115	SAM:	yes|
116	ANN:	because_	
117	SAM:	even in a even in English lang_ even in a foreign language classroom/	

The construction of diversity in the classroom as an advantage for the student was juxtaposed with features of "extra work" and "difficult" for the teacher, thus reinforcing the category construction of "advantage" solely for students.

(2) In-service group 1 (Sharon, Kim, Marion)

194	KIM:	other negative that it | i·t || doesn't have to be negative but it is because you need a lot of materials different materials and normally you cannot | you cannot have | this material|
195	SHA:	XXX|
196	KIM:	because the school doesn't have it or because the person in charge of this eh does doesn't pay attention to every school|
197	MAR:	I agree with you | we have a lot of material but I think we need a lot of hours | three hours_	
198	KIM:	mm|
199	MAR:	to do this material because normally this material is not is not from here, it is an adaptation because normally we don't have the material in in any book | you have to to try to to do this if you can find different_ from different books different images | so we have to prepare these 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 XXX to these materials eh to dedicate to these children to these children|

In the following extract 3, the first speaker, in turn 11 began by categorising diversity as having at least one advantage, however, by turn 13 she had assembled the multilingual group with the feature of "all are disadvantages," especially when the other participant focused the orientation of the discussion on the fact that the members of the class do not all "have the same language" (turn 12). This illustrates the way in which the dialogue participants work together to mutually assemble their categories. It highlights the fact that, as Heyman pointed out, categorisations do not have "an objective independent existence" and are not "stable, discrete and permanent" (1984:12).

(3) In-service group 2 (Sandra, Maria, Elisa)

11	SAN:	for me it could be an advantage‿ one only one|
12	ELIS:	but as your group is a multilingual group and I think they they don't have the same language|
13	SAN:	eh | then for me all are disadvantages then|
14	ELIS:	although you want them to explain to the rest of the class‿|
15	SAN:	then it's the problem|
16	ELIS:	I think it's very difficult because if they don't‿|
17	SAN:	I agree|
18	ELIS:	the same language|
19	SAN:	I agree with you|

Clearly, the teachers have constructed the background knowledge of teaching based on "the theories, artifacts and bodies of expertise that are its special and distinctive domain of competence" of education (Goodwin, 1994: 606). The teachers are working together to construct their "practice-based theory of knowledge and action"; in this case, that linguistically and culturally diverse student profile is problematic and difficult, compared to the construction of the 'normal' classroom.

Like the in-service teachers group, the pre-service teachers constructed the category of the linguistically diverse language classroom with accountable features of "extra work," but in their categorisations, the "extra work" is a part of the teacher's responsibility and is constructed as an acknowledged and accepted part of the teacher role. This included awareness of the background of the students in order to better understand the learner. The pre-service teachers are intersubjectively categorising "a community of competent practitioners" (Goodwin, 1994: 616) according to assumptions of what constitutes the work, tools, and artefacts of their profession. The following extract brings together an important range of cognitive phenomena that reveals differences between the way the pre-service and in-service teachers construct their perceptions of professional responsibility towards diverse students.

(4) Pre-service group 3 (Loli, Olga)

14	LOL:	perhaps is the teacher has to to know a bit of each culture|
15	OLG:	mm|
16	LOL:	to better understand each each child [. . .]|
17	LOL:	it's another difficulty | to have a multilingual class|
18	OLG:	yeah you mean that the teacher has to be informed|

These remarks are also consistent with the way in which the pre-service groups constructed diversity as an advantage for both the students and the teachers. For them, diversity can provide interesting opportunities for learning for the students but also provides resources and opportunities for the teacher. In other words, while the in-service teachers attributed linguistic diversity with "advantage" only for the students, the pre-service teachers constructed the category of linguistic diversity with "advantage" in such a way to indicate it was also an advantage for teachers because it was "easier" and provided more teaching opportunities and teaching resources.

(5) Pre-service group 9 (Hans, Silvia, Daniel, Marie)

57	HAN:	I think the advantages are | that they can learn lots of things from lots of things from each other | related to other cultures and they can they can learn | a lot
58	SIL:	yeah a lot of things
59	HAN:	yeah I would be happy about the fact that‿ at the possibility of teaching a class with different cultures | because it's‿ it's easier for a teacher because she has other possibilities to make the | the teaching more interesting
60	MAR:	mm
61	HAN:	cause you have more choice
62	DAN:	yeah I think that you have a a lot of variety of things to do with all this XX there is lots of cultural things you can do with them
63	HAN:	yes and you can learn a lot too

Other comments by pre-service teachers reinforce these sentiments: that diversity was potentially enriching for themselves, not just for their students. Both Mandy (pre-service group 1) and Moira (pre-service group 5) highlight this point. Mandy says, "first of all I think it is to break down with prejudices with the images you have of the other person" (turn 329). And Moira makes the following remark about advantages associated with linguistic diversity.

(6) Pre-service group 5 (Lilian, Elsa, Moira)

14	MOI:	but at the same time it could be rich for myself\\\|
15	ELS:	yeah\\\|
16	MOI:	everyone learns a lot of‿|

On the whole, both pre-service groups' (*pre-service* and *intercultural*) categorisations dealing with linguistic diversity were generally more positive than the in-service group's category assembly work. Some Category Bound Activities (features) of the linguistically diverse class included the usefulness of demonstrating to the children that diversity can be "successful" and "interesting" and can provide the students with opportunities to "learn from the others." Another feature was that the student could know all the cultures in the class, so that "he has a multicultural vision." Also, these teachers thought that diversity in the classroom gave the students the chance to learn about other cultures and how to respect one another and "so they are more tolerant,"as illustrated in the following exchange:

(7) Pre-service group 8 (Jeffrey, Celine, Chrissy)

182	CHR:	I think the advantages are | that they can learn lots of things from lots of things from each other | related to other cultures and they can they can learn | a lot\\\|
183	CEL:	yeah a lot of things\\\|
184	CHR:	and they are learning‿|
185	CEL:	and how to respect others\\\|
186	CHR:	yes\\\|
187	CEL:	and XXX that there is not only one religion and one language and one culture | XXX they only know their culture | their own culture I mean and maybe they don't know that there are people from India that have another religion\\\|
188	CHR:	yes\\\|
189	CEL:	and all these thing\\\|

Furthermore, as we see in extract (8) the categorisation of the multilingual class also carried positive attributes relative to citizenship and ethics: part of its definition is as a means of sharing different cultural ways of problem-solving.

(8) Intercultural group 1 (Jill, Kelly, Annabelle)

| 182 | JIL: | yeah and it's also interesting to talk with all the children to eh say that everyone say what the difficulties are for them\\\| |

183	ANN:	yeah|
184	KEL:	yeah|
185	JIL:	maybe they can give X_ that's the nice thing that you have many multicultural eh persons that they give eh other children at the class at X how to solve a problem or how they do that in their country|
186	KEL:	how they deal with a problem in their country in this culture things like that|

4.3. "Normal" constructed through dichotomy to "Others"

The way in which the groups constructed the linguistically and culturally diverse classroom in opposition to the "normal" classroom was similar for all three groups. The features of the "normal classroom" were constructed as monolingual, with one lingua franca for communication. This construction included the idea that if everyone spoke the same language, then they had the same learning styles—thus making it an easier class to handle. Having multiple languages in the classroom, albeit in a foreign language classroom, meant having "a different structure" from a class with "only people from the same country."

(9) Pre-service group 1 (Mandy, Helen, Lori)

261	HEL:	you have an_ if you have so many different different languages and cultures you have to make a different structure in your classroom	it's not like if you have only people from the from the same country same
262	LOR:	yeah|

The apparent theoretical framework (commonsense background of knowledge) that both the pre-service and in-service teachers deploy has its referents in what social scientists and historians have traditionally used to analyse the relationship of the immigrant culture to that of the host society – assimilation (Hirschman, 1983). Assimilation, wherein immigrants yield characteristics of their old life in favour of the cultural features of the host society (usually constructed as superior and more favourable attributes), is seen as a positive evolution.

The teachers constructed a view of the 'normal' classroom as one in which one language prevails, implicitly promoting the idea of acceptance of the values and mores of the host culture. This was most prevalent for the in-service teachers, as we see in the following exchanges:

(10) In-service group1 (Sharon, Kim, Marion)

272	KIM:	(. . .) mm but I think with a multilingual class it's not_ exactly suitable because eh the levels are so different and when you have a lot of_ when your class is multilingual and you have a lot of pupils that came from other countries and they don't know the the mother lang_ the language of_|
273	MAR:	of the school|
274	SHA:	a lot of time you have to explain something in your own language to the rest of the students and if they haven't a common language_|

This category assembly of the "normal" monolingual classroom was often juxtaposed with the category assembly of "problem" or "difficult" when they were discussing the opposing "linguistically diverse" classroom. This, in turn, was related to the category assembly of the foreign language classroom in which the classroom management was predominantly in the vehicular language of the school, not the target language. Especially in the case of the in-service teachers, the construction of the EFL classroom indicated that the foreign language was not the language used for classroom management. This is evident in the way in which Samantha has assembled the "Category Bound Activities" (CBA) of a language classroom: "you normally explain it in Catalan or in Spanish."

| 118 | SAM | you try to explain in English | for example you want to explain an activity and you explain this activity in English and normally you explain it in Catalan or in Spanish normally in Catalan and eh the student with other languages eh mm have the same problem as if you explain eh another subject | eh to understand because you use the official language here‿| |

On the other hand, the pre-service groups, while constructing the "normal" classroom as monolingual, also constructed the multilingual classroom positively in the sense of providing rich resources for foreign language teaching as well as providing a purpose for use of the target language. This indicates the process of ongoing change which occurs in category systems as categories are applied, and then mutually elaborate the phenomena they are applied to (Heritage, 1984; Keller & Keller, 1993), resulting in continuous change in categorisations. The pre-service teachers have transformed their category constructions from "very difficult" to making the class *easier* as well as creating a situation of possible equality.

(12) Pre-service group 4 (Brenda, Claudia, David)

| 41 | BRE: | [. . .] I think that maybe that the foreign language class is the only place where they have something in common and all of them are learning the same new language [. . .]if the class is run in English for instance as here\| |

Significantly, the pre-service teachers' assembly work included linguistic diversity in the foreign language classroom as a reason for using English as the vehicular language in an EFL classroom and perhaps most importantly, their construction of English as the lingua franca included the feature of "English" as a means of "equality" for all the students in the classroom. In the following lines it is possible to see how Helen seems to be developing this idea further—because the new students do not feel totally comfortable with their linguistic competence in the school's vehicular language (not able to understand everything) they will develop greater confidence in their abilities if they can speak English and/or learn English, and moreover, this will help the newly arrived students be more accepted by the others.

(13) Pre-service group 1 (Mandy, Helen, Lori)

373	HEL:	they know that‿ because they probably feel very bad about not understanding anything and they first‿ if they come the class I XXX can speak English|
374	MAN:	yes|
375	HEL:	so if the other ones see that they can speak English better than them they will be accepted|

As it happens, this conceptualisation of EFL classes as an equalizing factor had been introduced into the pre-service teachers' discussions before as can be seen by the following extract (14), which came from a recording of a different task about language acquisition.

(14)Pre-service group 7 (Francesc, Moira, Christina)

36	CHR:	Amina has just arrived to Catalonia and she's learning XXX Spanish the school director does not want to put her in the EFL classroom because he thinks she will be confused by so many languages	however in a few English lessons the EFL teacher has noticed that she seems to have no trouble at all adjusting to the lesson	who do you think is right? [reads]
37	<2>	
38	FRA:	come on|
39	CHR:	I think it's your turn to speak|
40	MOR:	to speak you have to speak XXX|
41	FRA:	[reads the question again] XXX XXX|
42	MOR:	I don't know|
43	FRA:	the‿ the teacher|

44	CHR:	yes I think that the EFL teacher is right because in an EFL lesson anybody knows the language	so she's_ Amina is in the same position that her colleagues or partners_ because in Spanish and Catalan she has to learn the language and the others_	(. . .)
48	CHR:	but in English everybody the language for them is a foreign language X be learnt|
49	FRA:	Amina she has problems with Catalan and Spanish it's another different thing no/not in an EFL classroom you have to speak in English|
50	CHR:	in English yeah|
51	FRA:	it doesn't matter if she doesn't_|
52	CHR:	if the teacher speaks all the time in English_	
53	FRA:	and the_	
54	CHR:	all the pupils have the same problem|
55	FRA:	yes	we think the teacher is right|

In this extract the categorisation process is interesting. Despite the fact that language learning is categorised as a problem, it is the *same problem* for everyone. Implicitly, this places everyone on equal footing when in the EFL classroom, indeed, in some instances the newly arrived students are categorised as having an advantage over the others because they may already know English.

4.4. The language learner: cultural and social traits as part of the assembly work

Inevitably, the category assembly by the teachers about the language of the learner will be influential on the way in which the teacher categorises the learner (Graddol, 1994; Heath, 1982, 1983; Martín Rojo, 2003). In their category construction of "language learners," in-service teachers frequently oriented themselves towards the assumed "ethnicity" of the student. Newcomers were categorised according to culture and country of origin and some of the attributes of the category construction of different ethnicities included academic abilities as well as capability to adapt to the host society.

(15) In-service group 3 (Samantha, Ann, Irving)

| 134 | SAM: | I think it also depends on the country the children come from because for example a child who comes from eh an European country it's easy to adapt [. . .] |
| 138 | ANN: | [. . .] depending on the family and the the culture [. . .] want to learn and all the family are [. . .] the effort is is high and others they are not interested in the culture or they come here for a short time_ they don't like to learn\| |

The category of language learner also included social and cultural traits as being relevant to the learners' ability or inability to acquire a language. As can be seen in the above extract, one of the attributable features of "language learner" seems to be the lack of motivation which can be assigned according to cultural or ethnic membership. A few turns further in the dialogue, another teacher employed social and cultural traits as devices for categorising academic "skills," as is seen in extract 16.

(16) In-service group 3 (Samantha, Ann, Irving)

| 146 | IRV: | 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\|[. . .] |
| 148 | IRV: | for example I never met an Arabian student with a good level | never\| |

This category assembly is juxtaposed with a category assembly of "learner autonomy." As can be seen in the next extract, autonomy is categorised according to similar devices as were employed to construct the category bound attributes of "learner," including assumed abilities according to the established group "identity." In the same dialogue, Irving constructs the attributes of autonomy as "knowing what to do." This feature is not part of the category construct of newly arrived students who do not speak the vehicular language.

(17) In-service group 3 (Samantha, Ann, Irving)

182	IRV:	but I don't think that this kind of student can be able to work alone because they don't know what they have to do and then I think that this organisation of classroom can be used only with the other students the normal students‿|

As seen in the previous extract, the categories the in-service teachers deploy when discussing students with foreign backgrounds demonstrates how they differentiate between the normal "us" and abnormal "them." Other in-service teachers oriented their categorisations with similar traits, so that the abnormal 'they' is problematized, as seen in extract 17 where the "newly arrived students" are not autonomous in their learning practices because they do not speak Catalan or Spanish. 'Problems' are due to features that attributed to 'them' (the foreign students); features, such as culture, language, etc.

This seems directly related to the way the previous category of language classroom was assembled so that one of the category bound attributes of "the foreign language class" is 'classroom management is conducted through Catalan', rather than the foreign language being taught. Not only is the lack of knowledge of Catalan in the foreign language a problem, it is also constructed as a reason for exclusion from other language classrooms. For the in-service teachers, the students who do not speak the vehicular language of the school are constructed as having no real need to study foreign languages because they cannot 'communicate'. The ability to 'communicate' is only accepted as long as it is in one of the official languages of the school.

(18) In-service group 3 (Samantha, Ann, Irving)

209	SAM:	eh yes more than in English because at this moment they don't need real English [. . .]
211	SAM:	no yes yes when you as a teacher‿ a new student just arrived from Morocco and he only speaks Arabian‿ why do you have to teach him some English structure if they can't communicate with you in any language? it's very difficult|

The pre-service groups also employed category devices with socio-cultural traits to construct the category of the language learner. Nonetheless, the pre-service groups more frequently constructed the multiple language speaker positively (as a language learner). As Maud (turn 29, *pre-service group 6*) explains it, "maybe it's it's easier for them another language because they are used to learning languages." This construction demonstrates an orientation towards a categorisation of the multilingual student with a CBA (category bound attribute) of better language learning abilities. This attribute included previously developed language awareness and acquisition skills and often led the pre-service teachers to construct linguistic diversity as an advantage for language acquisition and provided a rationale for the pre-service teachers to promote the use of the students' heritage language.

4.5. Heritage language and its use

The attributes the groups constructed for the "linguistically diverse class" included dialogic knowledge which encapsulated "certain known factors in each context which will raise "norms, expectations, and stereotypes" concerning "the probable nature of student/teacher interaction" (Heyman, 1984). This was evident not only in how the teachers constructed their students as language learners, but also how they constructed them as social beings within the school. This included the ways in which they should interact with their environment, as is evidenced by their category assembly work concerning the use of the students' mother tongue in the school. In the research, the relevance of the students' mother tongue was considered within the framework of how "mother tongue" was expected to fit into the local context. This, in turn, was related

to how "mother tongue" took on positive or negative connotations, according to the situation itself.

In several extracts the positive or negative construction depended on whether the mother tongue was the vehicular language of the school or a minority heritage language. For instance, there were categorisations of the language learner as "better or worse language learners" according to their mother tongue or place of origin. In the following extract, the speakers constructed the language learning abilities according to geographic origin (East European countries), although interestingly, they do not agree on the abilities of one group – the Chinese – perhaps indicating that they are using their individual background knowledge to construct the categories of these students.

(19) In-service group 2 (Sandra, Maria, Elisa)

182	MAR:	I think people from the East Europe European East European countries countries
183	SAN:	These people really learn a language fast | Catalan Spanish I mean they really get the
184	SAN:	yes?
185	MAR:	the language uh the difficult thing is when they are Chinese or especially Chinese I suppose
186	SAN:	I never have a student from those countries | I don't know | I'm sure they get language they quicker than the others

The teachers constructed similar category bound attributes of students who spoke a language similar to Catalan and/or Spanish.

(20) In-service group1 (Sharon, Kim, Marion)

| 227 | KIM: | *pues*[7] I think it's- it depends on the mother language the children has because XX a language near to the Spanish and Catalan the time of learning the new language is shorter but if the child is for example from China so it will take long- a a long time to to learn the new language (...) |

Interestingly, this category construct was quite contrary to another in-service teacher's (extract 21) who had had experience working with immigrant students and found that, contrary to the common category constructions, the South American students did not necessarily have fewer difficulties than other students (line 69). However, through negotiation in the dialogue, Maria "re-oriented" her categorisation to admit that having to learn only "one more language" was an advantage (lines 78 and 79).

(21) In-service group 2 (Sandra, Maria, Elisa)

69	MAR:	yes because maybe when it is a new language it's not easier even when this language is really similar to the one you are using | for instance if you are from South America it is really difficult to to learn Catalan|
70	SAN:	are you sure/| I don't think so|
71	MAR:	maybe not to speak to write it and to- yes I think so I don't know|
72	ELIS:	XXX with |
73	SAN:	we have students from *sudamèrica* and they have a good level of Catalan|
74	ELIS:	but with South America |
75	MAR:	I think it's more difficult |
76	ELIS:	South American people have the advantage that |
77	SAN:	yes | but|
78	ELIS:	they know Spanish in advance in advance so they only have to learn one one more language
79	MAR:	that's true|

In the following extract below, it is possible to see how an in-service teacher uses the categorisation of "mother tongue" and its attributes to create the "other." In the constructed category of "other," the teacher Sharon includes the category bound attributes of using the mother tongue in

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[7] The dialogues were in English but occasionally the participants used their L1. This language-switching has been maintained in the transcriptions.

opposition to her construction of allowable social activities in the school. Drawing on her own social and professional experience (membership expertise as a teacher), Sharon attributes "Arabs" with certain social tendencies. In this case, her observation is that they tend to speak in Arabic when amongst themselves and don't know how to use Catalan on a social level. Sharon puts Arabic and Catalan, as mother tongues, in opposition by saying that they (Arabs) "try to use their mother tongue." In this category assembly work, Catalan speakers can use their mother tongue and it is not condemned; but Arabic speakers should not use their mother tongues, even as a social language amongst other Arabic speakers (even when they are on the playground). The implication of the sentence "try to use their mother tongue" is that they do it furtively even though they have been warned not to do so.

(22) In-service group 1 Multilingual task (Sharon, Kim, Marion)

76	SHA:	I observe‿ I I say that in a playground on different times if they are‿ for example two are "Moros" and they are friends they speak Arab|
77	KIM:	mm|
78	SHA:	more times yes is because they don't know speak in Catalan but others that do‿ apart from sisters and brothers ‿they try to to use their mother tongue|

The salience of the topic of mother tongue is evident in all three groups (both pre-service and the one in-service group). Mother tongue is sometimes categorised as the majority language (Catalan or sometimes Spanish) and its indexicality is related to attributes of "legitimate" or "licit." In other cases, as in the above extract "mother tongue" seems to be positioned in opposition to the "school vehicular language." This category assembly seemed to be according to "motivated compliance with these background expectancies" (Garfinkel, 1967: 54) of institutionalized categories, which directly affected the way members constructed their categories about such things as language policies and their understandings of whether imposed language use is correct or not. This can be observed in the following pre-service teachers' dialogue, involving participants originally from Holland. In this dialogue, the use of mother tongue in the school was also discussed. In this case, Jill reproduces the predominant perspective within the Dutch school system while adding her own personal attributions to the "official" discourse. The "official" discourse is picked up by Ann and confirmed as a valid interpretation of "what is best for non-native speakers."

(23) Intercultural group 1 (Jill, Kelly, Annabelle)

245	ANN:	yeah and eh this is a multilingual class and imagine there are more children of the same country or culture in the class and eh‿ are you XXX do you accept it as a teacher that they speak in their own language and do their cultural things together in groups or something or‿|
246	KEL:	I don't know|
247	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 so I think it's not good to talk in their own language because other children then don't know when they are laughing they don't know what they say and if they say something =XXX XXX=
248	???:	=XXX XXX=
249	JIL:	miscommunication so I think when you speak‿|
250	???:	XXX|
251	JIL:	as a whole group everyone has to speak the same language and maybe sometimes to explain it to another one who can't use‿|
252	KEL:	yes ok|
253	JIL:	XXX own language but then you see what‿ when they use it and why they use it but I think it's not no‿|
254	KEL:	not allowed to do that no|
255	JIL:	and in some schools‿|

256	KEL:	XXX|
257	JIL:	oh yeah in some schools in Holland it is also forbidden to speak on the playground	in your own language| (…)
263	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_|
264	ANN:	they have to practise the school language|
265	JIL:	you have to practise and practise 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_|
266	ANN:	yes I think it's good_|
267	JIL:	other children can play with XXX persons because they don't understand what they mean|
268	ANN:	and then you you you your own_|
269	JIL:	you isolate XXX|
270	ANN:	XXX isolate from the group and that's not good|
271	JIL:	so this is why I think it's good to forbid it|
272	ANN:	ok|

Arguably, based on their dialogic "common sense knowledge" of how society is organised, this hierarchical perspective of language use makes sense for both Jill and Annabelle. As Garfinkel puts it, "Common sense knowledge of the facts of social life for the members of the society is institutionalized knowledge of the real world" (1967: 54). Their dialogic understanding of language policy in Dutch schools provides them a mental organisation or framework of how language policies should be set up in the schools. Consequently, their motivated compliance to this perspective allows them to subscribe to the "natural facts of life in society" (Garfinkel, 1967) and in turn, it becomes self-fulfilling: "so this is why I think it's good to forbid it."

All of the study groups demonstrated "motivated compliance" towards the expected use (or prohibition) of the students' mother tongue in the school, however the attributes for this compliance are quite different. For the in-service teacher in extract 22, it is constructed as the students' wilful digression from school norms, in the pre-service teachers' construction in extract 23, compliance is related to the fact that the use of the mother tongue will "isolate" the newcomer from the other students. In this case, the agency and purpose behind the categorisations are different and demonstrate different perspectives towards the newly arrived students.

Although it was predominantly the in-service teachers who used devices of geographic or ethnic origins as part of the construction of the "good" or "bad" language learner (see extracts 15, 16, 17 and 19), they did not deploy this device as part of the categorisation for the *process* of language learning whereas the pre-service teachers did. As one participant from the intercultural group put it, "it's_ it's easier for them another language because they are used to learning languages." The pre-service teachers do not construct categories of the language learner with attributes that are directly related to inherent traits or abilities of ethnic groups. Their category assembly work deployed devices about the existence of multiple language competences and how this could affect the language learning process, rather than focusing on "inherent abilities" stemming from their ethnicity or origins. For them, the fact that the students already knew languages (any language) could serve as a stepping stone for further language learning, but at the same time the role of the teacher in the learning process was often highlighted.

(24) Pre-service group 9 (Hans, Silvia, Daniel, Marie)

146	HAN:	probably is as you said if they are in a class where they already have English as second language so imagine at a Spanish class everything is Spanish but they have English as a foreign language then you probably could build groups of two or three three students and they could yeah they could help each other

Parallel to this, the pre-service groups constructed the category of "heritage language" as an important feature to the student's self-esteem and for further language learning.

(25) Pre-service group 1 (Mandy, Helen, Lori)

| 375 | MAN: | the teacher will need _or will have to try to make them confident about their own language because it can be easily to to make lose their self-esteem\|[...] |
| 381 | MAN: | then he will feel more confident in English lessons \| |

There seems to be a general awareness from the pre-service teachers that they must re-construct the categorisation of the monolithically homogenous, monolingual classroom to adapt to a new categorisation of linguistic diversity in the classroom.

(26) Pre-service group 5 (Lilian, Elsa, Moira)

| 244 | ELS: | more and more immigrants are coming and they are living here so_ but I think that we have to think that maybe we can work in a class like this and_ well you have to be conscious\| |

Arguably, this is a result of the course the two groups were following (given by the same teacher). In this course explicit analysis of their category 'assembly work' was integrated into the class activities. The results of their reflection – seen in individual journals and in the re-negotiation of some of the categories towards the end of the study – indicate that explicit analysis of teacher discourse had a positive effect of helping the groups re-negotiate categorisations that had held before starting the course. The class activities deliberately drew out the participants' categorisations, which were then contrasted with readily available discourse centered around the immigrant student, e.g. educational policies, media representations, teachers' 'lounge talk'. These discussion-focused activities were followed by debate sessions and reporting sessions about the ways in which the participants' had employed commonsense discourse to construct and negotiate their categorisations. These sessions, in turn, were followed by individual journals to give them time for more reflection.

As a consequence, the pre-service teachers are more critical of administrative policies than the in-service teachers. They seem to be more inclined to construct an understanding of the teacher's job as something flexible, collaborative and in need of constant revision; they must follow the curriculum but "change a bit." As Kelly puts it:

(27) Intercultural group 1 (Jill, Kelly, Annabelle)

| 187 | KEL: | but you can leave your method and do it in different ways teach the same in different ways\| |

The diversity also provides a welcome source of new material for the pre-service teacher in order to make their classes more "interesting" and more "innovative." Moreover, the construction of the linguistically diverse classroom, despite having attributes of "difficult," etc. is attenuated by the fact that, for the pre-service teachers, the problems are really not different from other classes.

(28) Intercultural group 1 (Jill, Kelly, Annabelle)

| JIL: | yes they can help each other with different things I think also the difficulty is that eh it's eh difficult to make make clear for all the children maybe but I think when you have only your culture you have the same problem (...) |

It seems that this group may be coming to an understanding of diversity that coincides with the argument put forth by Blommaert & Verschueren, "Diversity is as inevitable and as restrictive as gravity. It is not to be deplored, nor to be exalted. It is simply there, to be used as a resource" (1998: 14).

5. Discussion

The research indicated that, on the whole the participants were aware of the need for addressing multicultural issues. Significantly, considering the array of differences in experiences in teaching, these similarities imply that all the groups had a common stock of knowledge about immigration, linguistic and cultural diversity and multicultural education which did not necessarily come from first-hand knowledge. The similarities in category assembly work also highlights the dialogic background knowledge drawn upon by the dialogue participants to assemble their categories, thus implying that the common stock of knowledge of the educational world is quite marked by such categorisations. It was also clear that awareness of diversity did not necessarily mean that diversity was characterised positively. Diversity, both linguistic and cultural, was frequently categorised as a problem, especially for the in-service group. Presumably, the dialogic resources available in the educational world are much more focused on diversity as a problem, not as a worthwhile challenge and certainly not as a resource for educational innovation.

This assumption is supported by the volume of policies, documents and other texts that now circulate, not only publicly, but within the Spanish educational system, concerning the 'problem' of integration of new profiles of students. As Blommaert and Verschueren convincingly argue, the ideological underpinnings of the public debate concerning migrants creates a "debate [that] is essentially based on a distancing and confrontational view of 'us' versus the 'other,' captured in (often implicit) terms of 'normality' versus 'abnormality'" (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998: 21). By creating this opposition, the host society is constructed in a superior position vis-à-vis the other. Thus, while the European 'host' culture is constructed as inherently open-minded and tolerant for 'otherness' (p. 63), they are also constructed as carrying the burden of 'modernizing' migrants from their superior, more civilized position (p. 101). This is evident in the majority of Spanish policies concerning social equality in education which take the perspective of integration of foreign students associated with marginalised, socio-economically lower classes (García Castaño, Granados, & y García-Cano, 1999). As a consequence, the focus of most of the Spanish policies has been towards 'compensatory education' (Jiménez, 2002; Navarro Sierra, 2003: 88); a focus that inevitably influences educators' perspectives towards the students they are working with.

Indeed, there were several resources used for the category assembly work that seemed to come from a common dialogic background. Among the resources, the more frequent and more relevant to diversity in the classroom was a shared understanding that the situation of the monolingual or bilingual majority should be altered as little as possible. Linguistic diversity was seen as an advantage in some areas, but it was never constructed as a possible "normal" situation, as can be observed in the way in which the teachers established the categories of "normal" in opposition to "other" classroom. The recognisability of the "normal" classroom relied on the attributes that the majority of the students were speakers of the school language. This placed the speakers of the vehicular language in a privileged situation, which remained unchallenged throughout the dialogues. It also helped contribute to the categorisation of linguistic diversity as a problem—the more languages in the classroom, the harder it is for the teacher to manage.

This can be linked to the question of linguistic immersion of the immigrant students. Arguably, due to the successful campaign carried out in the 1980s to promote Catalan as the language of education, many Catalonian teachers' background knowledge draws on this experience to construct the categorisation of language acquisition for the immigrant students (Navarro Sierra, 2003: 198; Vila, 1995). However, this does not take into consideration the different factors involved in the two situations. In the 1980s, the majority of immigrants to Catalonia came from other parts of Spain. The bilingualism of the teachers working in the schools guaranteed that the teachers

were able to communicate in the immigrant students' mother tongue (Spanish) whereas this is no longer the case with the new profile of immigrant students arriving to Catalonia.

Consequently, linguistic and cultural diversity were assembled with attributes, such as "conflict" and possible "teaching problems" inside the classroom by all the groups. Inevitably this incorporates a negative component into the framework of multilingualism; multilingualism is construed as a possible threat to the intactness and well-being of the classroom (and possibly, society). As Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1989: 55) put it, there seems to be an implicit assumption that "many languages divide a nation" (or a classroom, as in this context). Just as the monolingual society is viewed as more solidified, likewise, the monolingual classroom is "commonsensically" understood as an easier, less problematic base to begin language instruction. Even though linguistic diversity was assembled by some of the groups as possible teaching resources for languages and multicultural education, without exception, the foundation of the successful classroom seemed constructed upon the idea of "one language" as preferable for class management and for instruction. This calls to mind Bowles and Gintis' (1976) analysis that the school system is constructed upon an understanding of school as a place for preparing pupils for their future role as workers in capitalist society. Parallel to this is the idea of the 'Correspondence Principle' – that is much of what happens in schools, happens in the workforce – e.g. conformity to hierarchy and normative rules. Diversity, in such cases, is not welcome or rewarded. The teachers involved in the research group appear to work with similar public discourses – diversity, apart from the permissible amounts, is tantamount to breakdown in social organisation.

In a similar vein, the research highlighted the way in which the teachers deployed "hard, difficult, problem, etc." in different ways and with different degrees of "negativity." For instance, the research data shows that the in-service group's negative category bound attributes (CBA's) occurred more frequently and were not often accompanied by attenuating positive attributes. In contrast, for both of the pre-service groups, positive attributes become a part of the negotiation and re-construction of the category of "linguistic diversity," resulting in new CBA's in which diversity is seen as a favourable resource. In the transcripts, it was possible to see how different understandings of linguistic diversity were proposed and made available by the conversation members and in many cases were eventually appropriated, thus indicating new assembly work by the pre-service teachers in order to come to new understandings of diversity. If teaching practices are to challenge the "Correspondence principle" (Bowles & Gintis, 1976) by promoting the idea that diversity and non-conformity are assets rather than hindrances in the classroom, then pre-service teachers appear to be more willing to accommodate the idea that there is a new need for the definition of 'successful learner'.

The pre-service groups' re-negotiation of categories, as well as the differences in categorisations between the in-service and pre-service teachers had not been foreseen in the design of the research and therefore a means to account for these differences was not incorporated into the research, nor does the data allow for an in-depth study of individual factors of each of the participants. Still, there are some group factors that can be highlighted as possibly influencing the categorisations of the groups. First and foremost, the fact that the pre-service students are in the midst of their initial teacher training and therefore undergoing a long-term learning process means that, on the whole, they may hold a pre-existing disposition towards personal and intellectual growth. Nonetheless, it must also be recognised that the in-service teachers have demonstrated their own proclivity towards furthering their knowledge by enrolling in a continued education course—although the time and effort invested is much less than initial teacher training.

Another factor is that both pre-service group members had taken part in at least one course dealing with multicultural education—implying that, minimally, these participants had some

theoretical basis of concepts associated with the course. Moreover, all the students in the pre-service groups had either directly or indirectly been involved in exchange programmes—whether completing a stay abroad through an Erasmus programme, participating with their practice school in a Comenius project, completing part of their practice teaching abroad or interacting with Erasmus students in their classes. On the other hand, the pre-service groups' experiences in schools with diverse populations (limited to practice teaching), was considerably less than the in-service teachers—many of whom had been teaching in schools in neighbourhoods with high rates of immigration for years.

Thus, the most relevant factor appears to be the time spent by both pre-service groups in reflection on the topic of diversity and their own understandings of diversity. While there has been considerable research into the benefits of developing critical and reflective judgement and awareness of self-agency in pre-service teachers, it is also widely recognised that pedagogical approaches aimed at fostering reflective judgement are not easily implemented—even when the teacher trainees value these ideas. Accommodating new ideas – which is inevitably a process of ongoing conceptual change – is usually difficult and must take place over a long period of time (Strike & Posner, 1992). Accommodation of new ideas requires replacing 'commonsense', taken-for-granted categorisations with new, plausible category constructs. In order for learners to do this, they must not only be aware of the categorisations they currently construct, they must see need to replace them with other ideas that seem as plausible as their 'commonsense' one.

It was evident in the research that all the teachers were aware of the need for more information and more resources for facing the challenges inherent to changing demographies in the class-room, despite a tendency towards negative categorisation of diversity. At the same time, it could be seen that the categorisation of diversity in the classroom was not static and is not based upon deterministic structures which remained unchanged from lesson to lesson. In the classroom identities of "self" and "other" are continuously and collectively re/constructed and re/transformed (Duff & Uchida, 1997). This is encouraging since it allows for the possibility of teacher training programmes that help teachers become aware of their processes of category construction and the way in which they draw upon their dialogic background for "common-sense making." This can play a key role in helping teacher address the inequities in their own practice and the way in which their practices influence the overall context of the educational system.

Abt-Perkins and Gomez (1993) have suggested that teaching about cultural values must begin with self-inquiry. This means that teachers must first examine how their construction of categories and subsequent attitudes and behaviour towards members of those categories relate to their teaching. Then they will be able to fully understand the impact of their role in their students' socialisation. Indeed, there are numerous studies which demonstrate that giving teachers the opportunity to reflect on both their teaching roles as well as their teaching practices can help bring about permanent change (Beyer, 1984; Buchmann, 1984; Bullough, 1989; Clift, Houston, & Pugach, 1990; Feiman-Nemser & Flooden, 1986; Smyth, 1989; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984). However, people's attitudes can only be modified by themselves; and are only likely to change when they become aware of the fact that examining their category assembly work would lead to improved practices for dealing with the surrounding world (in this case, the classroom).

Inevitably, merely studying multicultural education in the teacher training programmes is not entirely effective, either. Research has shown that theoretical classes only make a little difference because both pre-service and in-service teachers are more likely to accept theoretical assertions only when it accords with their own perspectives (Dooly, 2005; Su, 1996, 1997). It has also been shown that with more theoretical information, combined with empirical opportunities to reflect

upon the way in which they categorise "diversity," teacher trainees are more apt to innovate their way of thinking about diversity (Dooly, 2005).

This premise is supported by the fact that the pre-service teachers' groups were more aware of diversity as a pedagogical resource. Teacher training should take advantage of these elements and try to provide a nexus of good teaching practices wherein diversity, as an asset is part and parcel of the "commonsense" dialogic background of all teachers. Blommaert and Verschueren have aptly pointed out that a significant contributor to the problem of social inequality is that the majority of people view diversity as a problem (1998: 3) and therefore react to this categorisation accordingly. Adopting a socio-cultural approach which views teachers' perspectives as "a reflective, socially defined interpretation of experience that serves as a basis for subsequent action (. . .) a combination of beliefs, intentions, interpretations, and behavior that interact continually" (Clark & Peterson, 1986, p. 287), helps foreground teachers' perspectives as situation-specific and action oriented. These perspectives will interact and influence their 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 & Peterson, 1986, p. 28). Teacher training must take on the challenge of providing tools for teachers (in both pre-service and in-service training courses) to enable them to reflect on their "common sense assumptions" which shape their categorisations and perceptions of their everyday lives, including their interactions within the classroom.

While the research described in this article was not designed as a pedagogical approach, some recommendations can be made, based on the teaching approach used during the data compilation as well as the outcome of the research. First, the pre-service groups were expected to participate in a 'community of inquiry' approach as part of their coursework. Splitter and Sharp (1995) describe this approach as a cooperative attempt by a group to inquire into problematic issues to create deeper meanings and enable informed judgments. The emphasis was on dialogue – as is evidenced by the recorded tasks – wherein the dialogue members were encouraged to articulate their opinions, questions, doubts, criticisms and analysis of 'problematic' situations and issues. Second, the students were challenged to take responsibility for their own categorisations by reflecting on how these categorisations were constructed. This meant moving beyond a mere 'listing' of their ideas and understandings of the topic discussed. The students were asked to link their categorisations with the different dialogic discourses around them, to consider the impact these conceptualisations would have in their school context (where they were doing their practice teaching) and finally, to reflect on how their response to different situations was based on a highly complex integration of local contexts (e.g. school, teacher training courses, community) and their own personal categorisations and perspectives.

All of this was carried out through individual tasks that were then integrated into small group tasks designed to foment discussion and debate. These tasks were followed by whole group tasks aimed at summarising outcomes of the debate as well as further questions for inquiry. To provide one example—following one small group discussion, the entire group designed a 'manifesto' based on their conclusions about language diversity and language acquisition. To complete the cycle, each student was asked to analyse the manifesto individually, outlining what they agreed with fully, what they were still uncertain about and why, and then to consider how the different points of the manifesto would have an impact on the school context where they were working.

En bref, while the research itself was not designed as a pedagogical approach for raising teachers' awareness of their category assembly work, it is useful to consider how the dialogic process emphasised in the data analysis could be incorporated as a tool for teacher training. The experiences described in the compilation and analysis of the data provide orientation for possible strategies that can be used for raising teachers' awareness of how discourses about diversity

circulate and influence their categorisations and the impact these categorisations will have on their teaching.

Another recommendation is to get teachers to create artefacts that document their perspectives about different issues in the course and then to discuss some of the intended meanings embedded in these artefacts (documentation can include any artefacts designed by the pre-service and in-service teachers-webpages, blogs, recorded dialogues, students journals, manifestos, etc.) In this initial stage, the dialogue participants should be invited to explicitly examine their categorisations and possible sources of influence of these categorisations. To help the students begin to recognise their own dialogic background, excerpts of education policies, newspaper clippings, and video recordings of teachers discussing different issues were used in the classroom. In many cases students were surprised to see that, as Garfinkel says, they are unable to "tell how they know" (1967) about several of their own category constructs.

Pre-service and in-service teachers should be encouraged to locate key themes (category devices) in the artefacts they are analysing and should consider whether they think these are categorisations that might prevail among most teachers or whether they feel it is an 'individual' categorisation. They should also be encouraged to draw links between the artefacts they have constructed in the classroom and their teaching context and experiences.

A further, and perhaps more difficult step is to invite the pre-service and teachers to challenge their 'commonsense' assumptions they have identified in their first analysis. They can be asked to try to come up with alternative category devices which they had not considered before—with an emphasis on different cultural assumptions they had not been willing or able to entertain before. They should also ask themselves whether, after coming up with alternative categorisations, they prefer to maintain their previous categorisations or not and why they might or might not change them. (For the teacher trainer, this requires a delicate balance between orientation towards critical thinking and an imposition of the trainer's own perspectives.)

This leads to a final, yet extremely important recommendation. The process of getting pre-service and in-service teachers to reflect critically on their own categorisations must be done within a very supportive structure. This may be implemented within a 'community of inquiry' as described above but it also requires close personal contact with the teacher and school practice tutor, through face-to-face tutorials and additional online support.

6. Conclusions

Teacher awareness training should be required for teacher licensing to ensure that teachers are prepared to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students and to educate teachers about theories of multicultural education (Skaggs, 2001). Of course, simply introducing and exposing teachers to new procedures or assessment techniques and expecting them to adopt them without resistance is not realistic and does not fully comprehend the complexity of the situation. Successful implementation of changes can only derive from fundamental changes in the categorisation construction that drive teachers' curriculum enactment as well as fundamental changes in education policies.

An overall theme that emerges from this research is that teachers, teachers in formation and teacher educators need to be made aware of, and be able to address issues related to diversity, in both the contexts of their teacher education programmes and their classrooms. Nonetheless, 'superficial' awareness carries the risk of creating 'facile' categorisations and definitions of multicultural education, e.g. based on food, holidays, cultural artefacts, etc. (Banks, 2006; Nieto, 2002). Instead, educators and education policy makers should focus on constructing categorisa-

tions that advocate equity and social justice (Cochran-Smith, 1999; Coleman, 1996; Holliday, 1994; Luchtenberg, 2004; McKay, 2002). As this research demonstrated, one way of achieving this is by making teachers aware of how their categorisations draws from available 'commonsense' discourse in education (e.g. educational policy, research and projects) and from representations of diversity circulating in public discourse.

Banks (2006) emphasises the fact that "worldwide immigration and globalization raises new questions about how to prepare students for thoughtful and active citizenship" (p. 151). Or, as one teacher in this study stated: "the positive is that it's good eh for the children to have contact with different cultures with different languages because this is the future (. . .)." Likewise it is good for the teachers, future teachers and their students to have contact with different cultures and, at the same time, awareness and reflection of their own category constructs about diversity.

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