Multiple languages in one society: categorisations of language and social cohesion in policy and practice

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This article examines the way in which socially constructed notions of 'language', 'social cohesion' and 'diversity' create tensions within different educational arenas, particularly concerning educational policies developed at administrative levels and the subsequent interpretation of these policies in the classroom. Specifically, the article looks at the different production and reproduction processes of an official policy concerning 'language and integration', aimed at the immigrant population in Catalonian schools (Spain). The method used combines conversation analysis with text analysis of official documents in order to find traces of interdiscursivity between texts and practices. While the focus of the article is based on a case study of conceptualisations of languages, social cohesion and cultural diversity in two classrooms in Barcelona, it is generally relevant to the world of education, especially as the rate of population movements worldwide has increased significantly in recent years.

Keywords: qualitative research; discourse analysis; text analysis; social cohesion

Introduction

In an article published by this journal, Fejes (2006, 697–8) states that, historically, 'education has been a practice of governing, a way of managing populations and a way of achieving "the betterment" of society and forming desirable subjects'. He argues that an institutionalised construction of learning, aimed at improving the society, will inevitably be inscribed in the discourse and practices within educational contexts, both inside and outside the classroom.

> [T]he notion of pedagogy, a way of governing that has been present in education for a couple of centuries, is spreading to other practices besides the school. We can see how the discourse of pedagogy, with its specific ways of reasoning and expressing itself, is inscribed in the practice of correctional treatment, the library, public health, teachers' education, etc. … learning can be seen as an expression of this new rationality of governing and as a pedagogical technique that is inscribed in different practices not only concerned with formal education. (Fejes 2006, 698)

Although Fejes is concerned with lifelong learning in adults, it can be argued that this notion of pedagogy is equally applicable to the different expressions of rationality applied to the formal education of populations who have, historically, not always formed a part of formal education policy, as is the case of immigrants and their families

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recently incorporated into the school system. Official documents help construct the notions of 'knowledge' and who should have access to this knowledge. In order to have access to discursively embedded notions of social exclusion, our point of departure is that groups considered to be vulnerable to exclusion are constructed through transversal narratives in policy documents, narratives which include notions of how these groups should be governed. At the same time, the interrelationship and interaction of constructed narratives and practices by social agents who deal with these groups need to be theorised and analysed.

Our study[1] is situated within a socio-linguistic context of considerable complexity since Catalonia is not only officially a bilingual region of Spain (Catalan-Spanish), it is also a region which is in the midst of coming to terms with the integration of multiple languages, cultures, ethnicities and religions stemming from recent immigration of people of European and non-European origins. Catalonia has traditionally been a region which attracted Spanish-speaking people from other areas of Spain; however, the arrival of immigrants from other countries (predominantly countries from South America and North Eastern Africa) is a relatively new phenomenon which began in the eighties and ran parallel to the rapid economic growth throughout Spain in the post-dictatorship era.

Along these lines, the notion of 'immigrant' has been 're-defined' within the Catalan context. As will be argued in this study, the word 'immigrant' is no longer strictly conceptualised as referring to someone proceeding from the other Spanish regions (specially in reference to Andalusia, Extremadura, Galicia and Castile), as was historically the case from the 1950s to the early 1970s. (According to a report commissioned by UNESCO, approximately 1,400,000 people from other parts of Spain immigrated to Catalonia during this period; see Morèn 1998.) The term 'immigrant' is now widely used to identify persons born outside of Spain, rather than Spaniards coming from other regions to Catalonia and is often used by the general public to refer to the lower economy, subaltern sectors of the foreign-born community. (It should be noted that the term 'subaltern' is not being used according to its militaristic application. It is applied here in the sense that it was used by Gramsci [1971] to define oppressed, minority groups whose presence is crucial to the self-definition of the majority group.) In contrast, the preferred word in *official* education documents is 'newcomer' or 'foreign' rather than immigrant, as will be seen in this study.

Our main concern in this study has been to try to understand the ways in which particular socially constructed ideologies have had an impact on administrative discourse concerning language, social cohesion and immigration and how this discourse informed classroom practice in the case study schools. We are also interested in examining whether there are visible traces of moments when the classroom practice reproduced or challenged these ideologies. The two classrooms chosen for the case study are special classes designed as the first step into the school system for 'newcomers' ('nou-vinguts' in Catalan; the preferred term for recently enrolled immigrants into the Catalan school system) and the social actors within these classrooms (called 'aules d'acollida'; or reception classrooms).

As Lareau and Horvat (quoted in Monkman, Ronald, and Théramène 2005) have pointed out, social reproduction of prevalent ideologies is not a smoothly flowing process; it is a process of constant tension, challenges and negotiation between social actors. Within this process, teachers are particularly well situated to 'produce … moments of contestation, challenge and social change' (Lareau and Horvat 1999, 38;

quoted in Monkman, Ronald, and Théramène 2005, 5). Inevitably the school is a site of mediation of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977a, 1977b; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Coleman 1988; Stanton-Salazar 2001; White and Glick 2000) and the teacher can play a major role in the mediation and re-mediation of this capital. In this article, we try to find these moments of mediation by observing the way in which categorisations of immigration, languages and social cohesion are constructed as official political discourse and the ways in which teacher practices – which the documents are aimed at regulating – reproduce or challenge these categorisations.

Catalan in the local context

In order to understand the policies and practices interacting in the 'reception classrooms' of this case study, it is necessary to have some historic background of Catalonia, especially during the last 30 years (following the death of the Spanish dictator, General Franco). During this time, the interaction between school, language and immigration has taken on a central role in the project of 'Catalanising' the population, that is, the extension/expansion of general knowledge about Catalan has been at the core of official policies intended for an already complex, linguistically diverse society. This project has brought about a policy of 'recovering' areas of use of the Catalan language in public areas (its use was forbidden during the dictatorship of General Franco).

The Catalan government created incentives to use the language in both public and private domains and placed certain regulations on linguistic and social practices in public domains to such an extent that in some areas, Catalan is now exclusive or highly prioritised. All of these measures were seen as a means of compensation in front of massive use of Spanish (often referred to Castilian in the Catalan context). Such measures included implication in formal education as well. Despite these measures, socio-linguistic studies show that Spanish is predominantly used in many areas of Catalonia (Escobar and Unamuno 2008; Nussbaum 2003; Vallverdú 1984), and as well in mass media. These facts are generally acknowledged by most teachers and are also present in official texts concerning linguistic policies.

The option of schooling in Catalan – a political decision reached through negotiations of the Autonomous Catalan government in the 1980s – puts the school in a pivotal role in the above-mentioned political project, as well as placing the school in a fundamental position for transmitting the Catalan language to future generations, independently of whether it is the student's first or family tongue. The explicit objective behind the policy of predominant use of Catalan in the schools is to avoid social fragmentation into two separate linguistic communities (different from the Belgian model, for instance). Thus, since the 1980s, the teaching and learning of Catalan has been directly associated with a project of social cohesion which, as we demonstrate in our present study, continues to be valid within the context of the latest immigration pattern of people from outside Spain. Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that the language(s) of the latest profile of immigrants are different from the language of the previous majority profile of immigrants to Catalonia (Spanish speakers from other parts of the state). This implies that the policies and practices in the schools must be vanguard in confronting new challenges such as those stemming from a variety of new languages and dialects. This includes validating the use, providing a place and defining the function of immigrant languages within the school context.

Data compilation

The data corpus is made up of the following elements:

- *Pla per a la llengua i la cohesió social*, abbreviated as Pla LIC (Administrative Proposal for Language and Social Cohesion). This is the political document which provides the basis for language education for immigrants. The document illustrates the position of the government in respect to language, education and social policies. It was elaborated by the *Departament d'Ensenyament de la Generalitat de Catalunya* (Department of Education of the Catalonian Government) in 2004. Since its publication, this document has served as the referent for different activities and practices carried out in the Catalonian schools concerning the 'reception' of young immigrants, as well as the training of specialists working in the reception classrooms ('aules de acollida').
- Extracts from discussions with focus groups ($n = 4$). These focus groups are made up of 'language consultants' (called 'assessors'): The Education Department offers materials as well as consultants for schools with immigrant students. The focus group discussions were recorded, transcribed and included in the corpus.
- Recordings from the reception classrooms ($n = 46$): Data stemming from the reception classrooms (the classrooms are called Metro 2 and BCN 3 in this article). The data includes interactions between students in the reception classroom and students in the 'mainstream' classrooms. It also includes video recording of the Metro 2, which is of a group discussion between researchers ($n = 2$) and four students from BCN 3 and different recordings from pairwork arranged between students preceding from the reception classrooms and mainstream classrooms.

Not all the transcripts or the entire policy document can be cited in the article due to lack of space, but examples will be presented to support the analysis made. An explanation of the notations used in the transcripts is included in the Annexure.

Methodological approach

Our approach to understanding both the explicit and implicit categorisations in the education policies and practices discussed here lies in the precept that combining conversation analysis with text analysis of official documents can provide an entry point for understanding how texts and practices are intricately connected to the cultural and social processes of the same society in which they are produced (Boden and Zimmerman 1991). This 'dialogic relationship' framework draws attention to the ways in which these processes are constitutive of 're-contextualisation' of the cultural processes themselves. There are many cases of fruitful research which explore the connections between discourses on immigration and national policies (Billig 1995; Blommaert and Verschueren 1992, 1998; Wodak 2004 to name only a few). We aim to bring this perspective into the situated context of education.

Thus, the analysis carried out in this case study is transversal so that we can highlight the 'dialogue' between different textual materials, as proposed by the idea of interdiscursivity (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). This notion of interdiscursivity implies that all discourse is interconnected, both historically and synchronically within a network of 'texts' (texts is understood in its broadest sense here) – and these texts interact within the socio-cultural context where they are inscribed. This analysis

helps foreground the way in which ideologised notions or categories become linked and 'naturalised' (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998) so that they become recursive 'commonsense' background to other instances of discourse (Garfinkel 1967; Schutz 1962; Shotter 1984, 1993a, 1993b). However, this stance should not be understood as attempting to map language use onto a static view of society (Williams 1992) nor does it suggest a normative vision of how politics, society and languages work.

Our approach to practices and policies was carried out through the study of social and discursive categorisations that can be traced and contrasted in different moments of discourse (oral and written). The different policies and practices which we analyse all have one thing in common: they are discursive moments susceptible to discourse analysis. This option stems from an approach initially established in conversation analysis (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998; Antaki et al. 2002; Boden and Zimmerman 1991; Gallardo Paúls 1996; Schegloff 1991). These authors postulate that categories are specific descriptions of social phenomena which discursive participants put into circulation. The analysis of discursive and social categories have also been of central interest to discursive psychology (e.g. Edwards 1997, Edwards and Potter 1992, 2001), who were interested in the way in which discursive traces within categorisations can be linked to social practices.

Specifically, our analysis is based on the identification of predicates which define the categories. The degree of relevance of the categories is measured through the recurrences (Dooly 2007); features made relevant by the participants can be identified in recurrent discursive instances (Codó et al. 2006). This methodological approach is crucial in order to understand the 'dialogue' between different discourses (Bakhtin 1981, 1986).

Analysis

The analysis is divided into several parts, beginning with a look at the way in which Catalan language and identity has been historically united and how this is a recurrent feature in the texts analysed here. This is followed by an analysis of the categorisation of different languages either as an obstacle to social cohesion or as an available resource. This is directly linked to the diverse ways 'newcomer' is categorised in the official policies and in the discursive practices of the focus group.

As described earlier, the issue of official languages has played an important role in public debate in Catalonia. There appears to be a general consensus that language is one of the most transparent indicators of Catalan identity (Nussbaum and Unamuno 2006; Codó et al. 2006). Not surprisingly, the categorisation of Catalan as a symbol of identity is one of the most recurrent categorisations in the policy document analysed for this research (Pla LIC). In this text, plurilingualism is categorised as the latest context in which the Catalan language must be upheld and strengthened. In Pla LIC, the diversity of languages, cultures and origins is described as a complexity which, understood in conjunction with the precarious situation of the Catalan language, should be managed in such a way that both the Catalan language and Catalan identity are maintained. In fact, this tension between valuing multilingualism and at the same time taking a defensive stance of prioritising one language is not exclusive to Catalonia. As Monica Heller has recently pointed out, in front of the pressures of globalisation, it is common to prioritise one language above others within the framework of growing population movement and subsequent need for redefining of identities (Heller 2001).

The debate about prioritising one language against plurilingualism is not the only concept in the policy that links language education and social cohesion. The policy recovers another important, albeit contradictory categorisation in the debate concerning language within Catalonia: the gradual 'weakening' of the Catalan language. It is categorised as a vital and essential entity to social cohesion and unifying identity, while at the same time it is categorised as weak, threatened and at a latent risk. Concretely, the most frequent categorisation of the policy is the notion that the Catalan language is constitutive to the Catalan identity, while precariously poised to disappear under the pressure of new languages replacing its position of most frequent social use. This provides the basis for the argument that Catalan must be consolidated, promoted and 'potentialised'. Along these lines, the policy for language accommodation for the immigration group contends that 'newcomers' should learn Catalan in order to promote and to strengthen its social value. At the same time, this language serves as a guarantee of social inclusion for the new citizens; thus, it is categorised as a means of egalitarian social participation. This can be seen in the official document in the repeated categorisation of the Catalan language as 'the central axis of a plurilingual [educational] project' and as 'the instrument of social cohesion'.

Pla LIC, Fragment 1

The growing incorporation of student body proceeding from immigration, the appearance of new causes of social exclusion and the insufficient use (normalisation) of Catalan in social interaction are three aspects which require special attention. In this sense, it is necessary to increase awareness, and promote and consolidate the use of Catalan as the main axis of a plurilingual education project and as a model of intercultural education, with final goal of social cohesion. (Pla LIC, 4)

La creixent incorporació d'alumnat procedent de la immigració, l'aparició de noves causes d'exclusió social i la insuficient normalització de la llengua catalana en la vida social són tres aspectes que requereixen una especial atenció. En aquest sentit, és necessari sensibilitzar, promocionar i consolidar la llengua pròpia com a eix vertebrador d'un projecte educatiu plurilingüe i d'un model educatiu intercultural, amb una finalitat de cohesió social. (Pla LIC, 4)

The transcripts from the case study highlight the fact that the social actors in the classroom sometimes appropriate these dominant categorisations. As can be seen in the following extract, the link which is established between social cohesion and the use of Catalan which is existent in the Pla LIC is appropriated and reproduced in the socially constructed categorisations of the focus group. For these discussion participants, similar to the Pla LIC, social cohesion can and should be promoted through the use of this language.

Extract 1: focus group

379 TERESA: well\ and this thing about language and social cohesion /| that thing from -|| {(P) from the Pla LIC\}|

380 MARTA: {(AC) look I think } as long as Ronaldhino and the others like him don't speak Catalan then there's nothing for us to do \| that is\| a lot of talk about social cohesion and a lot about language and a lot of lip about all this \| but until Barça\|

for example \| or those _ those_ important players who are so important to them \
and you know the football games -| and that is another thing -| but every Monday \
eh/| the game and all that \| that don't use Catalan in the television \ they\| they come
out saying this and that /\|| that would be a first step \| more than all the social cohe-
sion we can do \| mostly me, because I'm in a very Castilian speaking zone \|

381 ??: {(PP) XXXX}

382 EULÀLIA: here for example -| the kids are from XXX I mean to say from TAE[2]\
they don't hear even a word \ inside the class \ in Catalan\ ay\ in Castilian not even
one word\|

383 MARTA: no\| but they come=out=

384 EULÀLIA: =and in= contrast\| I mean\| they know\| some of them complain\| about
what you're talking about-| the mix\| eh/| because\| some of them say-| and why do
we study Spanish \|

385 MARTA: sure\|

386 EULÀLIA: because of course\| their environment is surrounded by Castilian speak-
ers \| eh/| let's see\|

379 TERESA: bueno\ i això de la llengua i la cohesió social/| això del -|| {(P) del pla lic\}|

380 MARTA: {(AC) mira jo penso} que fins que Ronaldhino i aquells no parlin català
no tenim res a fer\| o sigui\| que molta cohesió social i molta llengua i molta queta i
molta dentadura aquella i tot \| però fins que el Barça\| per exemple\| o aquests_
aquests_ jugadors importants que per a ells són tant importants\ i saben els partits
de futbol-| i això és un tema-| però de cada dilluns\ eh/| el partit i tot\| no enronin
català per la televisió\ aquests\| surtin dient tal /\|| això seria un pa·s\| més que tota
la cohesió social que podem fer\| sobretot jo que estic en una zona molt castellana
parlant\|

381 ??: {(PP) XXXX}

382 EULÀLIA: aquí per exemple-| els nens que son de XXX vull dir del tae\ no senten
ni una paraula\ dientre de la classe\ en català\ ay\ en castellà ni una paraula\|

383 MARTA: no\| però sur=ten=

384 EULÀLIA: =i en= canvi\| vull dir\| ells saben\| se et queixen alguns\| per això que
tu dius-| la barreja\| eh/| per què\| alguns et diuen-| i per què estudiem espanyol \|

385 MARTA: clar\|

386 EULÀLIA: perquè clar\| en el seu entorn tot és castellanitzat\| eh/| a veure\|

In this extract, Marta appears to align herself with the official discourse that links
social cohesion and the public use of Catalan, citing the need for well-known immi-
grants (in this case, the players from the Barcelona football club, called Barça locally)
as model users, combined with the everyday work of the teachers.

Nonetheless, at the same time, the social actors appear to alter the dominant
categorisations constructed in the official policy. According to this teacher, in

Spanish-speaking areas of Barcelona, cohesion is difficult because the reception classroom is the only 'space' where Catalan is used with the immigrant students, since, as Eulàlia points out, outside of this space, the new students learn Spanish – it is the majority language of those around them – and the language they use most frequently outside of their homes. The teachers resist their role as principal agents in the promotion of the language and social cohesion by shifting this role to other public agents (football players) and the public figures who are responsible for them (the club president and board).

Still, much like the categorisation in Pla LIC, the teachers generally align themselves with the concept of promoting social cohesion through institutionalised use of Catalan (promoted through teachers and public figures). As for learning the second official language of Catalonia (Spanish), there is no need for institutionalised use, due to its assumed availability outside of the classroom. Notably, in the Pla LIC, there is no mention of Spanish as a potentially cohesive factor, replicating the interdiscursive categorisation that Spanish is an easily available resource for immigrants to Catalonia.

It should be pointed out that this may be true – as a recent study by Nussbaum and Unamuno (2006) shows. This study demonstrates that learning Spanish in the classroom and outside it – in numerous and diverse contexts – helps the young immigrants develop better speaking skills in this language, even without formal training in the language. Moreover, they consider themselves – independent of their mother tongue – more competent in Spanish than in other languages.

Multiple languages as (in)visible resources

The policy text mentions the term 'plurilingual project' recurrently, without giving more precise specifications of what such a project means. Considering that the framework of the document intends to orient the schools for the integration of immigrants into the schools, the concept of promoting plurilingualism could be understood as incorporating the mother tongues of the immigrant population into the curriculum. (For more information on the arguments for the right to education in one's mother tongue, see Skutnabb-Kangas 1988; Tollefson 1991.) However, Annex 2 of the document clearly indicates that the policy intends to perpetuate the current language education policy, that is to say, Catalan as the school's vehicular language, Spanish as the second official language and a European language taught as foreign language (traditionally this has been English, French or German – in that order of preference).

The mother tongues of the immigrant students – encapsulated in the term 'languages of the new immigration', are relegated to extracurricular activities and a timetable outside of school hours. In other words, the policy recognises the social importance of 'knowledge of languages' while clearly attributing values to certain languages and practices over others (Pujolar 2001; Schieffelin and Ochs 1986; Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity 1998).

Pla LIC, Fragment 2

In the current social context of Catalonia and the EU, knowledge of languages is a qualitative factor of the education system. Thus, upon completing primary education, the student should understand and be able to express themselves, albeit simply and within limited contexts, in a foreign language. Upon completing secondary education, the student should be able to understand and produce oral and written texts in a foreign

language, autonomously and creatively. Also, upon finishing secondary education, the student should understand and be able to express themselves and have a basic command of a second foreign language. During extracurricular timetable, and in accordance with the criteria established by the Department of Education and the PLC, all students will be given access to learning about the languages of the new immigration (Arabic, Amazig, Chinese …). (Pla LIC, Annex 2, 28–9)

En l'actual context social de Catalunya i dins l'àmbit de la Unió Europea, el coneixement de llengües és un factor qualitatiu del sistema educatiu. Així, en acabar l'ensenyament primari l'alumnat ha de poder comprendre i expressar en una llengua estrangera missatges senzills dintre d'un context. En acabar l'ensenyament secundari l'alumnat ha de poder comprendre i produir missatges orals i escrits amb propietat, autonomia i creativitat, en una llengua estrangera. També en acabar l'ensenyament secundari, l'alumnat hauria de poder comprendre i expressar-se a nivell bàsic en una segona llengua estrangera.

Dins de l'horari extraescolar, i d'acord amb els criteris establerts pel Departament d'Educació i pel PLC, es facilitarà a tot l'alumnat del centre el coneixement de les llengües de la nova immigració (àrab, amazig, xinès…). (Pla LIC, Annex 2, 28–9)

Annex 2, 28 (above), explicitly cites the EU as the framework for establishing the teaching of foreign languages. Furthermore, foreign languages are categorised as the key factors for the need for a plurilingual project. This is repeated in Annex 4 below, in which the valued languages are now named: Catalan, Castilian (Spanish), English and 'different European languages'.

Pla LIC, Fragment 3

The Catalan school must guarantee the knowledge and command of Catalan and Castilian, as well as English according to the different European levels; it should impulse/promote plurilingualism through the learning of different European languages; it should teach respect for cultural and linguistic diversity which conforms with our society, potentialising, whenever possible, the learning of the languages of the new immigration. (Pla LIC, Annex 4, 12)

Partint d'aquesta base, l'escola catalana ha de garantir el coneixement i el domini del català i del castellà, també de l'anglès en grau diferent europees [sic]; ha d'impulsar el plurilingüisme a partir de l'aprenentatge de diferents llengües europees; i ha de facilitar un espai educatiu respectuós de la diversitat lingüística i cultural que conforma la nostra societat, potenciant, quan sigui possible, l'aprenentatge de les llengües de la nova immigració. (Pla LIC, Annex 4, 12)

Interestingly, the European guidelines referred to in the policy document (Council of Europe 2001) place an emphasis on the need for multiple language competences so that citizens are able to 'take part in intercultural interaction' and 'experience several cultures' while the Pla LIC focuses on 'diversity which conforms with our society'. Thus, any diversity which does not conform to the Catalan society (namely the languages mentioned above) is effectively erased, as well as rendering the value of experiencing 'several cultures' (minority languages) invisible.

Through binomial use of Catalan as a language and element for social cohesion, the Pla LIC places an emphasis in the 'Catalanity' ('Catalanitat' – the essence of being Catalan) within a society which is, at the same time, described as multilingual, complex, plural and diverse. This tension between a discourse which privileges one

cultural context in front of other possibilities ('a society which has a Catalan language and culture as one of its most important collective signs of identity', Pla LIC, 3–4), and a modern discourse which recognises social plurality is a constant throughout the text.

Within this plurality, Catalan is constructed as a major agent for facilitating rapid integration into mainstream classrooms for the newcomers and consequently, it becomes the central axis for social cohesion, both in school and in the Catalan society. At the same time, since the newcomer is constructed as a social actor at risk of social exclusion and marginalisation, the 'commonsense' need for the official language policy is reinforced. Coupled with the categorisation of language as the principal agent for social belonging, the Catalan language functions discursively as the key element for access to equality and inclusion, both in school and in society, while the heritage languages of the newcomers remain invisible.

Interestingly, in the analysis of the transcripts, it was found that the prioritising of one language – as found in the policy document – did not correlate with the examples from the transcripts. In the reception classrooms, other languages were categorised as possible 'bridge' languages, and the teachers stated that they often used diverse languages as a recourse to help comprehension and production. Similarly, the students' mother tongues have a symbolic presence in the reception classroom and when possible, the teachers used them as a mechanism for facilitating inter-comprehension. During the discussion of the focus group, Marta, Eulàlia and Jordi demonstrate that they agree with this 'mix' as a positive part of the teaching-learning process.

Extract 3

316 TERESA: we go through the [curriculum] contents\| What do you do?||

317 JORDI: we-| of course\| we have kids who can be from thirteen-| up to sixteen {(AC) seventeen years old}\|| We even had students come from the previous course and who were_have been well a -|| they were a bit behind – as far as Catalan goes\ in their knowledge of {(AC) Catalan\}|

318 TERESA: yes\<0>

319 JORDI> and they mix Castilian more\ {(AC) that is\}| because Castilian as well_ the moment they catch on to Castilian well - that\ it motivates them much more\|| it's_ to explain it to you they make a a _

320 MARTA: a potpourri \|

321 JORDI> a tremendous potpourri but {(AC) I mean\}| you explain to them how important things from here are\| anyway\| you bring it into perspective little by little\| they begin to see the differences -| and you wait and see\| and they even use their mother tongue or they learn French or English -|or with {(?) whatever elements they have\| it doesn't matter what\| you pick up what you can however you can\| and once you have them following you a bit\ and with these first levels\| you see what you can do - {(DC) a bit of planning which is more or less linear\ ve··ry ve··ry ve·ry basic\| very basic\| as long as it is entertaining and they can more or less follow it -| presumably\|mm/| and then_ with_ with one language then-| very briefly\| you use the planned part of the programme/\| but first you have to explain it \| and then from there \ then you work on those aspects \|| of course as they incorporate what they have learnt -| sure there are gaps \| certainly\|

316 TERESA: acabem els continguts\| vosaltres què feu?||

317 JORDI: nosaltres-| clar\| tenim nanos que poden ser des de tretze-| fins als setze
{(AC) disset anys}\|| ens hem trobat amb gent que venia del curs passat i que
havien_ ja portaven doncs un-|| ja estaven una mica més curtits- en quan al català\
en quan coneixement de {(AC) català\}|

318 TERESA: sì\<0>

319 JORDI> i barregen més el castellà\ {(AC) o sigui\}| perquè el castellà també_ al
moment de que ells l'afafen d'això castellà doncs- això\ els promociona molt més\||
es_ per explicar-t'ho fan una un_

320 MARTA: una barreja \|

321 JORDI> una barreja tremenda però {(AC) vull dir\}| s'expliquen\ lo important és
això d'aquí\| i bueno\| els vas perfilant de mica en mica\| que vagin diferenciant -| i
a veure què tal \| i fins i tot amb la seva llengua o aprenen del francès o de l'anglès
-|o dels {(?) elements que tinguin\| és igual\| t'agafes amb el que sigui\| i llavors un
cop els tens allí\ amb aquests primers nivells\| mires de fer - {(DC) una petita progra-
mació mes o menys lineal\ mo··lt mo··lt mo·lt bàsica\| molt bàsica\| que sigui entene-
dora i que els hi sigui bastant-| assumible\|m/| i a llavors_ amb_ amb un llenguatge
doncs-| molt breu\| utilitzaràs pot ser la part de còpia/\| però abans ho has hagut
d'explicar\| i desprès a partir d'aquí \ doncs vas treballant aquests aspectes\|| clar a
la mida que es van incorporant els altres-| clar que hi hauran buits\| seguramente que sí\|

In this part of their discussion, Marta and Jordi describe the students' multilingual
practices as an important means for students to be able to express themselves. This
'potpourri' includes Spanish (along with 'variants', e.g. Colombian, Bolivian, etc.) as
well as other languages which the students know and which, according to the teacher,
helps them in their first stages of learning and adapting. According to Jordi, this
support through other languages, allows the reception classroom teachers to introduce
non-linguistic contents into the curriculum more quickly.

In other samples taken from the reception classroom, valuing the use of different
languages and varieties shapes the teacher's discourse in the classroom (Unamuno
2003). For instance, instead of correcting or sanctioning the contributions made by the
students in other languages or dialects, the teacher opts to systematically incorporate
them, offering translations and linguistic models whenever she considers it opportune,
and employing diverse language resources in her own interventions in the classroom,
as can be seen in the following extract where Camila, an Argentinean girl, participates
in the reception classroom.

Camila contributes to the conversation employing an Argentinean variety of Spanish
(turn 267–9). Her contribution is accepted by her teacher (turn 271), who then waits
until the end of the exchange before offering a Catalan translation of the Argentinean
dialect ('marxa' por 'andate'), which Camila eventually repeats, in turn 274.

Extract 4

263 Teacher: and Pere\| and what?|| she goes to bed with him to trick him and to pass
off the baby as his/| no\| that's not part of the story\| instead he tells her\|

264 Bryan: he tells her/|

265 Teacher: he tells the truth\| what does Pere say?|

266 Bryan: mm-| he gets upset\<0>

267 Camila: get out\| [Argentinean: Andate]

268 Teacher: he gets upset \<0>

269 Camila> =see ya\1= [Argentinean: Chau]

270 Bryan: =yeah\1= =because he says2=

271 Teacher: =see ya [Argentinean: Chau]= =get out [Argentinean: marxa][laughs]3=

272 Bryan> =he's got a _ he's got a wife\3=

273 Teacher: [to Camila] he leaves\| [Catalan: marxa]

274 Camila: leaves\| [Catalan: marxa]

275 Bryan: he's married and she is sleeping with another man \|

263 Mestra: el Pere\| i què?|| i s'en va amb ell al llit per fer-li colar el nano/| no\| a la historia no fa això\| sino que li explica\|

264 Bryaen: li explica/|

265 Mestra: li explica la veritat\| què diu en Pere?|

266 Bryan: m-| se molesta\<0>

267 Camila: andate\|

268 Mestre: se molesta \<0>

269 Camila> =chau\1=

270 Bryan: =sí\1= =porque dice2=

271 Mestra: =chau2= =andate [riu]3=

272 Bryan> =tiene su_ tiene su mujer\3=

273 Mestra: [a Camila] marxa\|

274 Camila: marxa\|

275 Bryan> tiene su mujer i si se acosta con otro hombra\|

The multilingualism in the classrooms, categorised positively in these examples, contradicts categorisations constructed in the language policy (Pla LIC) in which the categorisation of plurilingualism must fit within the framework of predominant

'European languages'. The teachers in the focus group construct plurilingualism as a much broader resource – different languages and varieties may be a resource for communication and a resource for constructing further knowledge, including the immigrants' languages. It may be, however, that these are constructed as resources contingent upon the teachers' knowledge of the language. Moreover, the teachers appear to adopt a stance of strategic use of theirs and the students' situated knowledge(s) (Haraway 1988) and seem to associate this knowledge and future knowledge with possible emancipating effects for the immigrant students (inclusion and access to cultural and social capital).

Differing category constructs of 'newcomer'

Another tension between the narrative official documents and actual practices lies in the way in which social actors categorise the students known as 'newcomers'. The Pla LIC minimises the distinctions of immigrants to 'foreign' and 'at risk of social cohesion' (basically, putting them all into one homogeneous category) while for the focus group members, diversity within this supposedly homogenous group is recognised. This differentiation is exemplified in the following fragment:

Extract 5

235 Eulàlia: and that's the reason, no, that's why a non-Spanish speaking student who now_maybe the idea of the department is to mix all of them in the reception classroom during_it's my opinion I may be wrong_eh /| what I mean to say with all that is each time I've seen a Spanish-speaking and a non-Spanish speaking student in the first trimester that can't work together because the rhythm is very different, they can't work together a Spanish-speaking student with a minimum amount of schooling will understand much better than a kid_

236 Jordi: Chinese\|

237 Eulàlia: Urdu, Chinese, Urdu, Tagalog\

238 Jordi: Urdu\ yes yes\|

239 Eulàlia: even if they know English \ if it is a Rumanian kid you know what I mean -| a Portuguese kid\ Portuguese\ it doesn't matter it doesn't matter \ I mean\ just the same\ they can't be together\ they can't be together \| because they slow the others down \ because you slow down \| now when this child has been here six months \ in the reception classroom \ eh/| in the reception classroom or the TAE \ whatever you want to call it-|

240 Jordi: right right then_

241 Eulàlia: This kid you can get him to_ in oral skills he has more resources \| he'll always be more lost because he doesn't have a romanic language _

242 Marta: no\ but I already know that \ for me the issue is natural sciences \|

235 Eulàlia: i per això no per això un alumne no castellanoparlant que ara_ poder la idea del departament d'una aula d'acollida i de barrejar-los durant _ és la meva

opinió em puc estar equivocant- eh/| que jo vull dir tot això cadascú jo he vist
que un nen castellano-parlant i un nen no castellanoparlant durant el que és un
primer trimestre no poden anar junts perquè el ritme és molt diferent, no poden
anar junts un nen castellanoparlant mínimament ben escolaritzat entendrà molt
més que un nen _

236 Jordi: xinès\|

237 Eulàlia: urdú, xinès, urdú, tagla\

238 Jordi: urdú\ si si\|

239 Eulàlia: encara que sàpiguen anglès\ encara que sigui un nen romanès ves que et
vaig dir-| un nen portuguès\ portuguès\ é igual és igual\ vull dir\ igual\ no poden no
poden estar junts\ no poden estar junts\| perquè frenen als altres\ perque frenes\| ara
quan aquesta criatura ha passat sis mesos aquí\ a l'aula d'acollida\ eh/| a l'aula
d'acollida o al tae \ digueu-n'hi com vulguis-|

240 Jordi: sí sí a llavors_

241 Eulàlia: aquest nen el pots posar_ a nivell oral té més recursos\| sempre anirà més
penjat perquè per a una llengua no romànica_

242 Marta: no\ però si jo això ja ho sé\ si el tema per a mi és les ciències naturals\|

Eulàlia, for example, distances herself from the education administration ('the depart-
ment', turn 235) and defends the idea that the learners have access to different
language resources and should be addressed differently. By applying Zimmerman's
(1995) notion of the psychological construct of empowerment to this type of interac-
tion, it is possible to see that this different type of conceptualisation of the immigrant
group can have an impact on the ways in which they can be empowered, by helping
promote participation that engenders 'the connections between individuals so that a
collective sense of trust, investment and action can be developed' (Speer, Jackson, and
Petersen 2001, 729). This implies the possibility of the social actors challenging the
narratives in the official policy in a way that can position disadvantaged groups to
have access to resources (educational and cultural); resources that are interrelated to
notions of social capital.

Discussion

The analysis of 'interdiscursivity' helped foreground the way in which ideologised
notions or categories have become recursive 'commonsense' background to other
instances of discourse (Garfinkel 1967; Schutz 1962; Shotter 1984, 1993a, 1993b).
Thus, it is possible to see a link between language and immigration and the way in
which they are articulated to the concept of social cohesion. In our study, it was found
that, in the official education policy, 'immigration' is conceptualised as a possible
'threat' to 'social cohesion' and as a 'threat' to the 'vehicular language' (Catalan). At
the same time, Catalan is categorised as a symbol of social belonging, as a condition
for participating in society, and as a means to social mobility, thus linking language
with the notion of 'integration'.

Echoes of these categorisations can be found in the daily practices concerning
language education in Catalonia (especially in the area of language accommodation

programmes), implying that these texts are in dialogue with the construction of social structure (Giddens 1984). Nonetheless, it can also be seen that the dialogue is *not* seamless – the teachers, although aware of the orientation of the language policies for immigrants, do not always comply with the guideline policies, thus producing different interpretations of the categories found here (e.g. plurilingualism as an inclusive resource instead of exclusive, etc.).

There are further divergences between the official and situated discourses concerning plurilingualism. For instance, although the Pla LIC delineates a clear association between school and society, the official document does not enter into the complexity of the linguistic practices in Catalonia. The actual complexity of linguistic practices in Catalonia is encapsulated in the category of 'multilingual practices' without any specifications of the many other languages which are used in the autonomous region of Catalonia (note that this reality is mentioned by the teachers in the focus group). Furthermore, the document does not reflect the actual use of Catalan, which in many urban areas (especially the areas with large immigrant populations) is generally limited to institutions (schools, government offices).

The lack of description of the true linguistic complexity of Catalonia merges with the choice of the school as the central axis for the promotion of Catalan. This is especially relevant, given the school's role in the transmission of capital (e.g. knowledge necessary for being a fully participative citizen), but also, as far as the public institution is concerned, it helps regulate interactive spaces for language use – in both public and social spheres. Catalan is categorised as the official language of public administration and the vehicular language of the school and at the same time, it is also constructed as a necessary resource to guarantee social cohesion (via accessibility to social relationships for immigrants). Thus, it is discursively embedded as an element which traverses various social and cultural strata. In this way, the policy constructs an understanding of the multilingual and multicultural society with one main axis of cohesion and equality: the learning of the same language.

With this logic, officially the reception of immigrants and the promotion of Catalan are intrinsically tied; indeed, this presents both sides of the same coin: the knowledge of the language is presented as a guarantee of social inclusion for new members of society and guarantees the perpetuation of cultural capital. This categorisation of Catalan as a key to social inclusion is shared by the teachers: it is categorised as symbolic of equal and universal access to full citizenship. The teachers categorise knowledge of Catalan as a guarantee against marginalisation of the new minorities (in and out of school). Nonetheless, in practice, the teachers prioritise the use of *multilingual resources* in the classroom instead of the exclusive use of one language.

Traversing the way in which 'immigrant' is constructed as 'problematic' for social cohesion within the Catalonian context is the fact that languages are positioned differently within the educational system – thus influencing the access these languages may provide for different social and political resources (Heller and Martin-Jones 2001). These categorisations, in turn, are related in the document policy analysed here in a wider socio-political arena concerning citizenship and social cohesion.

Within this socio-political arena, the policy follows a general concept of 'citizenship' that has traditionally been linked to the ideology of nation-states and legitimised membership to them. Nation-states have often been ideologised as homogeneous entities with shared culture and language (Gellner 1983), thus leading to the notion of 'social cohesion' as a necessary feature of a united nation, usually based on only one language and culture – a viewpoint which is fairly entrenched world-wide.

> Nationalism is an expression of certain straightforward ideas which provide a framework for political life. These ideas are non-negotiable precepts and not a fully worked out political philosophy. Basic ideas are that most people belong to a national group which is reasonably homogeneous. … Most leading politicians in Europe, since the Second World War, have been touched by some or all of these attitudes, without thinking of themselves as nationalists. Also for large numbers of ordinary citizens, these attitudes are not identified as nationalism but, to adapt the words of Mrs Thatcher, have been 'plain common sense'. (Anderson 2000, 1)

The linguistic policy document confirms the school as the central agent for both the promotion of Catalan and the guarantee of social cohesion. Significantly, the language policy is directed at a community whose interactive language practices can be institutionally regulated – the immigrant student body. This is further complemented by the construction of the non-native student as having a strong link with the risk of social exclusion. Following this orientation, the Catalan language is then categorised as the mediating element between the 'newcomer' and the opportunity for integration and social inclusion. This effectively makes the lack of knowledge of Catalan of certain segments of the population (newcomers) indexical to 'threat of social cohesion' while at the same time placing the onus of inequality squarely upon any immigrant who does not learn the language.

In practice, these categorisations are re-mediated and challenged by the teachers and language specialists. They categorise the immigrant students as active participants in the learning process and with possibilities of access to the social capital through use of resources such as their heritage language – resources which are not recognised in the official language policy document. This conception of plurilingualism as a positive resource for practical actions is in tension with the official one.

The approach used here inscribes itself in the practice of 'problematising' (Dean 1994; Pennycook 2001) the more salient categorisations in the texts and practices related to the question at hand. For example, within the Catalonian context, 'immigrant' has a salient social context and it is within this social context that 'immigrant' has been 'problematised'. What can be noted in the different discourse is that 'immigrant' is constructed as a 'problem' within the Catalonian environment applicable to groups of 'newcomers' *with languages and cultures which are considered to be more difficult to integrate* into 'mainstream' Catalonian society. Arguably, this is a different construct of immigrant from the previous period when most immigrants to Catalonia came from other parts of Spain.

Subsequently, as can be seen in this case study, this current group of newcomers have been categorised as problematic for 'social cohesion' and the education administration – facing public discourse concerning this 'problem' – has produced a policy on how to achieve social cohesion through promotion of the Catalan language and culture. Central to this policy is the concept that institutions such as schools play an important role in producing and re-producing these ideologies, although it should not be forgotten that they can also challenge them.

As can be seen by the policy in question, in a large part reproduction of official discourse is carried out through regulation of language; and language has generally been seen as an important component of cultural and linguistic unification and as a key element to national unity (Gal and Woolard 2001). In other words, schools, as public institutions, are significant localised sites where dominant ideologies can be reproduced or challenged (Banks and McGhee Banks 2007; Fernández Kelly 1995; Nieto 2002; Olneck 2000). Therefore, the nexus between educational policies and

school practice provides a relevant arena for analysis into social construction of categories of languages and social cohesion.

This is, of course, only a case study in a very wide arena of interdiscursively embedded practices and it is impossible to extrapolate the results beyond this scope. However, hopefully these findings will lead to further research and will help contribute to a growing corpus of information and insight into the social and linguistic processes linking individual needs of a student and collective needs of different groups within an increasingly complex society.

Notes

1. This study is part of a research project entitled 'La construcció de la categoria "estranger" en les propostes d'acollida i educació lingüístiques per a l'alumnat d'incorporació tardana al sistema educatiu català' [Category construction of 'foreigner' in education plans and policies for newcomers to the Catalan education system]. The project was financed by the Spanish Ministry of Education and ran from 2004 to 2006. Dr Eva Codó Olsina, Victor Corona, Dr Melinda Dooly, Emilee Moore, Dr Luci Nussbaum, Dr Amparo Tuson were members of the research team. Dr Virginia Unamuno coordinated the project.
2. TAE: This is a term used for language workshops for immigrants. These existed before the Reception Classrooms.

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Annexure.   Transcription key

INITIALS: participants
INITIALS> participant continues turn
Intonation sequences: descending tone: \ ascending tone: / question ? sound is maintained
-
Pauses: brief | medium || long <number of seconds > <0> no pause
Elongation of syllable, according to duration · ·· ···
Overlapping:
=text of speaker A=
=text of speaker B=
Interruptions: text_
Intensity of speech:
piano {(P)text} softly {(PP)text}
forte {(F)text} loudly {(FF)text}
High tone {(A) text} low tone {(B) text}
Accelerated speech {(AC)text} speech slows down {(DC)text}
Simultaneous laughter & speech {(@) text}
[+text+] incomprehensible text
Transcriber's Comments [text]
Incomprehensible fragments (according to duration): XXX | XXX XXX | XXX XXX XXX
???: unable to identify speaker