

Actions for social justice in multilingual societies



Panel: Action research for social justice in education

Speakers: Ben Rampton, King's College London; Christina Hedman, Stockholm University; Virginia Unamuno, CONICET; Miren Otxotorena-Aranguren, UAM
Coordinator: Júlia Llompart, UAB



ECSPM

European Civil Society Platform
for Multilingualism

Actions for social justice in multilingual societies

Action research for social justice in education

Challenging Linguistic Inequalities: Agency, Conscientization, Interaction and Habitus

 Equiling

Madrid

Towards a new linguistic citizenship:
action-research for the recognition of speakers in the Madrid educational context

Miren Otxotorena Aranguren
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Capital city factor of historical and political power through which the state has been built

- Power: Hegemonic discourses and knowledge
 - Unity of the nation with centrality in Madrid
 - Religion, coloniality, statehood: Race, class, gender

This **nationalist project** is built through a hierarchical social order of languages (among others): Monovarietal: **Monolingual**

- Notions of citizenship are shaped by a centralist nationalism, constructed and reflected through the sociolinguistic order (Hobsbawm, 1996): Accentism and monolingualism
 - Principle of (linguistic) territoriality (Spanish Constitution, art. 3)

UAM & UCM: Mirror the centralist and monolingual model

- Neoliberal university
- Tension between linguistic nationalism and internationalisation

Spain has a centuries' long history of exerting power and establishing a hegemonic social order through language, rooted in a monolingual ideology and reproduced through the habitus

Main objectives: action-research

- Understanding the role of language in the processes of construction of social inequality: recognition, redistribution of resources, participation (Fraser, 2003)
- Theoretical and methodological frameworks and strategies to mobilize participants' and researchers' agency oriented towards social transformation
 - Site: Two public universities of Madrid

Method

- Ethnographically informed longitudinal Participatory-Action Research (Lennette, 2022; Ballena & Unamuno, 2017)
 - Formal and informal groups of students within the university

The group

Multilingualism and languages in contact ⇒ *Multilingualism in Spain* ⇒ Intercomprehension workshop

- 45 students, aged 19-20, 66% born in Spain - majority from monolingual regions (55% born in Madrid, 21 with Spanish as 1st language); three non-Madrilenian teachers/researchers

Critical pedagogy

- Conscientization process (Freire, 1970): Magical phase, critical phase, action phase

The activity: Intercomprehension workshop to challenge nationalism

- Groups of 4-5 students + 1 facilitator
- 5 stages: Introduction to theoretical notions, Hands-on practice with songs in different languages, Reflective stage, Action-oriented stage, Group discussion
- **Analysed interactionally (Goffman's participation frame [1974] & Martín Rojo' power relations [2017])**

***Interactional co-construction of agency:
situatedness and social position***

Group 1: Aragonese and Asturian
Action-oriented stage (IV)

1	P3	ok I think that in each region each language could be promoted I mean for I don't know in	Territoriality principle & Displacing agency
2		Catalonia Catalan in Valencia Valencian but as [P3] says in Madrid	
[...]			
3	F	yes the effort here is to think about this as our challenge like what is it that we can do yeah of course	'Animator' (Goffman, 1974) role (Re)situating agency within participants' social field
4		we can't formulate linguistic policies it'd be nice that they'd let us drive the world but they won't	
5	P4	of course it'd be very good to say <i>oh well I'm sending Pedro Sánchez an email to see if</i> but the thing is	Self-perception lacking status position and agency (Bourdieu, 1990)
6		that he's going to say you're an ant I don't care what you say	
7	F	yeah like becoming Pedro Sánchez right but I mean like we can do things (...) I mean activity that we	(Re)situating agency within participants' social field Use of the verb <i>can</i> Collective agency
8		have done has been something that has changed us like our idea of intercomprehension right the	
9		presence somewhat of languages in the university so it's like to propose (...) I mean a collective	
10		challenge one in which we think that something that we are going to do that's not changing the	
11		world but it can change us or the people near us right	

***Interactional co-construction of agency:
collective agency, distributed agency, social field***

12	P4	ok I have two ideas one of them is more difficult and the other one is easier the easy one was the	Alignment
13		posters' one (...) now that March 8 has passed they have done posters in Spanish and put them up	Gaining voice
14		through the whole university (they/you) should have done them in Asturian or Basque or Catalan	Landing of the action proposal
15		too those same posters translated put beside them when you go see the Spanish poster you also see	Perception of increased social position and available capital within <i>their</i> social field (Bourdieu, 1990)
16		the rest of them the other one was about Catalan that (anonym.) said we had no idea [that Catalan	
17		could be learned in this university] well to send an email to whoever is in charge of doing those	
18		brochures (...) but that's also more difficult maybe (...) they'll say <i>yeah whatever you say</i>	
19	F	(...) for them not to be like <i>we don't have resources we can't do it well</i> if you don't have resources I'll	'Animator' instead of author
20		give them to you (...)	Distribution of resources (linguistic, social capital)
21	P4	exactly maybe it's easier the posters' idea	Alignment Interactional co-construction

[...]			
22	F	I like the idea a lot but we'd have to well identify (...) capacities that we have in this group none of us	Positive reinforcement
23		speaks (...)	Identification of available capital (Bourdieu, 1990)
24	P5	(...) I for instance have contact with people from Catalonia like	Distribution of available resources (Bourdieu, 1990)
25	P3	I could do it in Basque	'Mediational means' (Kerfoot, 2008)
[...]			
26	F	I like that so our challenge is to teach ourselves words in other languages that we have contact with	Recapitulation
27		right and also share those languages in the university through posters one per week this is doable we	Collective mobilisation of resources
28		can do it you know like Monday before class or Tuesday after class whatever we get together and (...)	Positive reinforcement of the action
29	P4	of course unlike the message to Pedro Sánchez that's not going to happen	Critical reflection

***Interactional co-construction of agency:
negotiation and distribution of power***

Group 2: Catalan and Arabic
Reflective stage (III) and group discussion (V)

1	P6	they are similar to other languages for example <i>voldria</i> is a little similar to French and Latin	
2	P8	(unintelligible) nascut (unintelligible) also reminds me (...) of Romanian (...)	Resource ('symbolic capital' (Bourdieu, 1986))
[...]			'Decapitalisation' (Martín-Rojo, 2017)
3	P6	then ah the example of people who spoke Catalan, what would you do would you ask them	Distribution of capital in the social order of the community and power relationships among participants Continuation with guiding questions
4		to speak slowly or would you ask them to speak Spanish	
5	P7	I mean if I don't understand something I'd ask them to speak slowly not for anyone to	
6		change their language	
7	P6	of course or that they translate some parts like if there is really an entire sentence that's like	
8		I have no clue	
[...]			
9	P8	but conjugation and all that I've said for instance in Romanian it's <i>născut</i> and it's written in	'Capitalisation' (Martín-Rojo, 2017)
10		the same way <i>nascut</i> so we conclude that it hasn't evolved as much because Castilian for	Challenging the doxa (Bourdieu, 1984, 1999)
11		example in order to make participles uses <i>-ido -ado</i> (...)	Negotiation
12	P6	yes well but in Latin <i>-ut</i> also isn't used to make participles	Counterargument Negotiation

13	F	but this has a raison d'être , in the Roman legions where they were distributed and zones that	Legitimising and authoritative voice
14		for instance Romania maintained Latin more than others it has to do more with how long	'Capitalisation' (Martín-Rojo, 2017)
15		legions were there for (...)	'Animator' saving face (Goffman, 1955)
16	F	There was a group challenge here wasn't there? For the entire class	
[...]			
17	P6	we were working with a song in Catalan and [P8] has seen that some words can get to be	Symbolic capital as objective when promoting actions of change
18		similar to Romanian and she has told us that there are many words in Romanian that are	
19		also similar to other Romance languages or that are basically the same word so we're	Rebalance of power relationships
20		interested in doing some intercomprehension workshop between Romanian and Spanish or	
21		listening to some song in Romanian and see to what extent we can understand it (...)	
22	P8	it seems interesting to us to do this (...) because generally people study languages that (...) have	
23	P6	status	Final critical reflection

Final reflections on transformative agency

- Critical reflection to challenge a habitus of reproduction and/or resignation (Kerfoot, 2008)
- Intercomprehension as a redistributive practice to challenge the hegemonic sociolinguistic order rooted in Spanish monolingual nationalism
- Dimensions of agency: Reflexive, situated, interactional, distributed, negotiated
- Symbolic and economic available capital < social position < power relationships
- Facilitators acting as animators as crucial for fostering collective engagement, position renegotiation, resource sharing, situating actions and reflections, and recognising agency
- Working groups as a reconfiguration of power relationships within the classroom
- Are the action students conducted transformative? Or just affirmative? (Fraser, 1995)

