Teachers' Awareness: Research into Teachers' Categorizations of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity

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The population of linguistically and culturally diverse students in schools in Europe has increased steadily since the 1990s. This means there are increasing demands for schools to find innovative ways to ensure equal education and appropriate learning environments for linguistically and culturally diverse students. Research shows that teachers' attitudes toward their students will have a direct affect on their students' behaviour and output. In order to ensure teachers' awareness of these issues, a study of their general attitudes and perceptions of these situations is germane. This paper will describe a qualitative research project which examined how teachers in Catalonia, Spain mutually constructed their categorizations of linguistic and culturally diverse students in their classrooms. The research consisted of collecting recorded data, which were then analyzed through an approach based on ethnomethodology and Sacks' Membership Categorization Analysis (1972). The research methodology and some of the findings from the study will be described.

It is becoming increasingly frequent to find classrooms with linguistically diverse student profiles. Studies show that educators will more than likely work with students who come from widely diverse cultural backgrounds. They may even teach in classrooms where there are more than twenty home languages (Brown & Davis, 2004; Gay, 2003). Depending on the perspective of the teacher, this linguistic diversity can be seen as a welcome resource for teaching strategies or as a further complication to an already challenging situation. While there is ample evidence to show that multilingualism facilitates further language acquisition (Bialystok, 1991; Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner, 2001; Cenoz & Jessner, 2000; Genessee, 1987; Hoffmann, 1998), many language teachers do not necessarily see linguistic diversity in their classroom as a resource. This implies that research into teachers' perspectives about linguistic diversity is imperative, especially if the goal of education is to implement a plurilinguistic, knowledge-based society (EUNEC, 2005).

It cannot be disputed that the arrival of immigrants of non-European origins to Catalonia (where this study takes place) has had a profound impact on public opinion in recent times. That the topic has had a wide-spread impact is evidenced by the amount of attention it is given in mass media, in political debates, and in everyday conversations. However, contrary to media renditions of social change, the source of linguistic diversity in the classroom is not only due to newly arrived populations to the classroom. It is becoming more and more common for children to acquire several languages from birth or at an early age, especially as it becomes more common for families to live in multilingual and multicultural environments. In their everyday lives, many children are constantly exposed to several languages and mixed cultural customs and therefore they experience simultaneous, multiple language acquisition on a daily basis. And yet, most language teaching is set up in a stage-type process (mono-lingualism added to mono-lingualism), despite the fact that simultaneous acquisition of

languages happens, not only in these family contexts, but all across the world (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003).

Currently, few educational systems have been designed to specifically incorporate the idea of plurilingual knowledge into the school programs, and in most language teaching scenarios, the idea behind language acquisition is of sequential learning (mother tongue or the school's vehicular language first if the mother tongue is different) and then (possibly) a foreign language. This stands in contrast to the way in which language teaching is promoted in the *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (1996), wherein multilingual acquisition is understood as a "complete" process, rather than sequential and structural. This perspective sees the sociolinguistic and sociocultural knowledge of a language as being as important as the linguistic knowledge of a language. The framework also discusses a conceptual understanding of language learning as building upon previous knowledge; linguistic knowledge of one language is understood as being transferable to another. Seen in this light, it is natural to assume that diversity is an asset for the school program and a resource for the teacher to have in the classroom. Still, it can only be an asset if it is recognized and consequently treated as such.

With the above conceptual framework in mind, the need for research into teachers' perspectives on diversity seems pertinent. A qualitative research project was recently carried out which examined both teacher trainee and inservice teachers' attitudes toward linguistic diversity in the classroom. The transcript data were collected in Barcelona, Spain and consisted of recorded data of several activities, which were then analyzed through an approach based principally on Sacks' Membership Categorization Device (this will be explained in further detail below). Some of the findings from the study will be presented in this paper, with special focus on the ways in which the teachers and trainees worked together to construct socially negotiated understandings of multilingualism, language acquisition, and heritage languages in relation to language learning and how these categorizations compare with the 'official' voice of the educational policy in question.

Method

Participants

The study consisted of three different subject groups. One of the groups was made up of teacher trainees studying to become foreign language teachers (English and French) in a Catalonian Education faculty (N=41). For identification in the research, this group will be called the *Teacher Trainee group*. The class was a mixture of teacher trainees from Barcelona and students from other European countries, and the age range was from 20 to 25. The second group was also made up of teacher trainees and consisted of foreign students (ages between 20 and 28) who had come to Barcelona for practice teaching (N=10). The majority of them had some experience with multicultural education previous to participating in the study, and they were participating in a course about "intercultural education" parallel to their practice teaching. For identification, this group will be called the *Intercultural group*. The third group involved in-service teachers (N=10) working in various schools in Barcelona who were taking a continued education course in English as Foreign Language Teaching (henceforth called EFL). The age range of this group was greater: from 25 to 51. This group

is identified as the *In-service group* in this article. The names of the participants in the research were changed to ensure the participants' privacy.

The study took place in Catalonia which is an autonomous region in Spain with two officially recognized languages, Catalan and Spanish. The use of Catalan was suppressed during the time of General Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975), and its revival only began after Franco's death, in 1975. Since then, language policies promulgated by the Catalan government (Generalitat de Catalunya) have 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 and trainees in the study were already working within a context of multilingualism.

A Framework for "Meaning-making" Processes in the Classroom

One of the challenges of research into teachers' perspectives about diversity is establishing a framework for understanding how meaning, as a social process, is negotiated between teachers and students. The framework must necessarily acknowledge that these meaning-making processes affect the classroom interaction, while at the same time the framework must highlight how classroom interaction also affects the meaning-making processes themselves. There can be little argument that classroom interaction will affect both the students and the teachers' behavior and performance. Moreover, research has shown that teachers' ways of constructing their understanding of immigrant students can have a direct effect on their academic success (Eggleston, 1986). The question is, how is the phrase "ways of constructing understanding" to be interpreted? It is becoming increasingly more commonplace to promote the theory that the beliefs individuals hold are the best indicators of the decisions that they make during the course of everyday life (Bandura, 1986). This focus on belief systems has been exploited by educational researchers trying to understand the nature of teaching and learning in classrooms and has resulted in a growing amount of literature that suggests that the beliefs that teachers hold will have a subsequent impact on both their perceptions and judgments, and that these in turn affect their behavior in the classroom.

Despite growing interest in beliefs as a focus of study, it can be argued that teachers' beliefs are not directly observable nor can they be considered as an immutable entity. It is difficult, if not impossible, to claim observation of someone's "beliefs" based on isolated incidents which do not take into account the context in which these beliefs were "exposed." Secondly, the word *belief* has been consistently used with diverse connotations and in varied fields, ranging from theology to psychological mind-mapping and has often been used to describe the cause of certain behaviors. As Cambra (2000) has rightly pointed out, certain terms currently in use when describing research necessarily carry with them criteria and can be grouped within those criteria. She also highlights the fact that in the English-speaking research environment the terms beliefs, principles and beliefs, presumptions, and theoretical beliefs are frequently used. This highlights how difficult it is to accurately pinpoint the term for research purposes.

This is not meant to refute the fact that many studies have found a correlation between teachers' expectations about pupils and their pupils' performance levels (for some excellent examples of such studies, see Dusek, 1985; Rogers, 1986; Rosenthal, 1985; Rosenthal and

Jacobson, 1968). According to Rogers (1991), over 400 studies had been reported between the early 1980s and 1991, and almost all of them found evidence of the "Pygmalion Effect."[i] It seems that there must be some connection. Stating that beliefs are not immutable and at the same time that there does seem to be a connection between beliefs and student results is not in itself contradictory. In his 1988 study, Goodman noted that different teacher trainees might express similar beliefs about teaching, yet the image associated with the expressions of their beliefs differed, indicating that beliefs are not observable. This does not imply that the Pygmalion Effect stemming from teachers' expectations does not exist. However, by stressing that meaning is derived from a *constant dialogic flux* between individual and contextual factors, it can be argued that this effect must be understood within the terms of discursive social interactions rather than as idealized, essentialist conceptualizations.

Measures

Thus, with meaning-making and its subsequent affects understood as dialogic social interactions, the research tool chosen for the analysis of the teachers' dialogues was Harvey Sacks' Meaning Categorization Analysis (MCA). Sacks (1972, 1984) stated that talk is a social activity, and that our way of accomplishing things through talk is based on categories. These categories are tools for talking about things in ways that are adaptable to the requirements of the situation. They are also adaptable to differences of perspective, and changing perspectives; *they are not simply preconceived, organizational categories*. This means that conversation participants are *collaborating* in their social interaction and collaborating in constructing meaning during the contextualized dialogue.

Conversations are made up of an order which is observable for the participating members who produce the conversation (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 290; Sacks, 1984, p. 22). This is important to this research analysis as it implies that utterances are part of a negotiated, observable order which allows the participants to construct meaning. MCA not only acknowledges the importance of social action in talk, it begins from the basis that discourse is an interactional event *involving members who draw upon their cultural and social knowledge in order to construct meaning*. This knowledge forms part of what Schutz (1962) has called the commonsensical framework of conversation members' interactional tools for meaning-making and provides recognizable features (recognizable for both conversation participants and analysts) of how individuals construct sense.

Thus, using MCA, transcripts from the three groups carrying out the same task were analyzed. The task involved discussing the best approach to a language class. The three study groups were divided into small groups of three to four participants. These groups were shown pictures of the students in the class and were given some topics to be discussed during the hour and one-half session. The groups were not given any information about the pictures until after their discussions. The discussions were recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed.

Results

Normal versus Linguistically Diverse

One type of categorization that was frequent among the three groups dealt with the features of the normal language classroom. The normal classroom was usually constructed with the features of being monolingual, or, minimally, of having only one language of instruction. The feature of homogeneous student profile in the normal classroom was also prevalent. The categorization of normal classroom was often constructed in dichotomy to the linguistically diverse classroom, with one of the most prevalent features of the linguistically diverse classroom being difficult or a problem for the teacher. In several cases, the conversation participants were persistent in their claim that the linguistically diverse classroom would be difficult even if they could not give reasons for this categorization. As Shotter (1993) has explained, in many instances people are unaware of how they use talk to "shape" or "construct" a sense of their "social worlds" (p. 20) just as they are often unaware of how categorizations help shape how they interpret reality.

In the example below, Miranda is certain that she can identify membership to a certain ethnic group based on physical features (line 51). In order for the other members to "recognize" the membership, Miranda makes the physical features relevant to the other conversation participants.

(1) Teacher Trainee group (Liliana, Elsa, Miranda)
50   ELS: I don't know but can can be doesn't mean that they are from Russia or they
                       are from Japan | they can be Catalan or or German\|
51   MIR: [snorts] this one's from Peru\|
52   LIL: South America\|
53   MIR: why? because the face and_|
54   LIL: yeah the skin\|
55   MIR: yeah\|

Likewise, in fragment 2, Miranda claims to know which traits are necessary for being native to Spain, although, as Garfinkel (1967, p.122) puts it, she is unable to tell how she knows. Miranda has constructed a diffuse and incomplete sense of someone who is not from Spain, but she is able to give it an "imaginary completeness."

(2) Teacher Trainee group (Liliana, Elsa, Miranda)
100   MIR: the girl she doesn't seem to be from Spain I don't know why\|
101   LIL: no XXX\|

Using their "common sense model" (Schutz in Garfinkel, 1959) of current "normal" classrooms, all the dialogue participants assembled recognizable features for both the normal classroom and for the multilinguistic classroom. As can be seen in the next extract, the frequency and recognition of the features of the normal classroom support the proposition that the teachers and trainees held a similar normative framework of what is a normal classroom and what are its attributes. One of the more commonly constructed attributes of the "normal"

class was the feature of students with "the same language" and/or "people from the same country."

(3) Teacher Trainee group (Mandy, Helena, Lori)
261 HEL: you have an_ if you have so many different different languages and cultures
             XXX 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 XXX\|
262 LOR: yeah\|

     The teachers and trainees also had a similar normative framework of the features of the linguistically diverse classroom. "Difficult" was an attribute which was frequently deployed by all three groups when constructing the category of the linguistically diverse classroom.

(4) Intercultural group (Sandy, Marjory)
189 SAN: it if this would be a class that they don't have any common language they
             all speak different languages\|
190 MAR: mm\|
191 SAN: and I speak a different language | I think that would be like very hard | very
             difficult I don't know |

     Similarly, in the following extract, the use of the utterance "first impression" lends relevancy to the "uniqueness" of the linguistically diverse class. If Maud had mentioned "first impression" only once, this might have gone un-noticed by the other participants; however, she mentioned it three times in two turns and even interrupts the first respondent to repeat the phrase, therein highlighting her emphasis on "first impressions" (lines 1, and 3). This effectively foregrounds Maud's orientation of how she categorized the linguistically diverse classroom as somehow "outside of the normal" and thus worthy of causing "first impressions." Following her call of attention to this feature, the other participants construct a categorization of "difficult" for the multilinguistic class, an orientation that all the members accept and use throughout the rest of the dialogue.

(5) Teacher Trainee group (Maud, Julia, Susana)
1   MAU: ok | so I want to discuss eh eh the first impression of a multilinguistic class
             and it is made up of the students in the pictures | so what do you think of
             multilinguistic classes?|
2   SUS: I think it's_|
3   MAU: what's the first impressions if you come into a class and these children are
             sitting there? what do you think is your first impression?|
4   SUS: difficult\|
5   JUL: difficult\|
6   SUS: I think it's it's difficult to to teach eh with so much different people | with
             such different languages and cultures\|

     This extension of the linguistically diverse classroom as a "difficult" situation because the class members do not have "communicative tools" (vehicular language or no knowledge

of languages), was common among the three groups, although the attribute of agency did vary. At times, it was constructed as the students' lack of linguistic knowledge (extract 6, below) and at other times, it was attributed to the teacher's inability to communicate with or understand the students coming from another country.

Daniel constructs a category of "people" from Spain and he highlights one of the membership features as "people who more or less understands a language" (line 400, extract 6) – implying everyone speaks the *same* language. Daniel never answers Hans' question about why this is better than a class with multiple languages (turn 401).

(6) Teacher Trainee group (Hans, Maria, Daniel)
400   DAN: these two classrooms are not bad | are good but for my experience the first
                one eh is better in that case of two or three they could be a really XX classroom for
                example for people from | Spain | if we are s_ talking about Spain | or people who
                more or less understands a language\|
401   HAN: but why are they not excellent for a multilingual_ multi_

During the same conversation about classroom set-up, Daniel sets up another dichotomous categorization of students, based on where they are from. The "children like that" are assembled as the students who are not "from here" and who do not "have the same level" (extract 7).

(7) Teacher Trainee group (Hans, Maria, Daniel)
483   DAN: well I I said that they are good classrooms too but not for a_ with children
                like that
484   TCHR: ok listen_ what kind of children would be good for classroom two or
                classroom three/ not this card not these children because they're linguistically
                diverse/|
485   (…)
486   TCHR: right/ what kind of children would this would these classes fit?|
487   DAN: well I said that people from from here that have the same level and_|

One language in the classroom: vehicular, target or heritage language?

Interestingly, despite the fact that all the teachers and teacher trainees from Catalonia are well aware of the bilingual situation of the classrooms and most of them are bilingual themselves (or in some cases plurilingual), they attributed "having one language in common" or "having the same level" as a necessary feature for a class to function properly. Moreover, in the category work of the in-service teachers, not only was "one language in common" an important element for a language classroom, this one language was not necessarily the target language of the class (in most cases, English was being taught as a foreign language).

The category construction of a *successful foreign language class* for the language teachers included the attribute of Catalan or Spanish speaking students for the classroom management to function properly, despite the fact that the class was not a Spanish or Catalan language class. Many of the teachers felt it was necessary to 'translate' the target language (English) into Spanish or Catalan, while at the same time, claiming that language immersion

programs for the immigrants was the best way to teach them the vehicular language. In other words, foreign language classes for Spanish and Catalan speaking students should include translation into the students' mother tongue, while vehicular language classes for immigrants should not.

(8) In-service group (Sandra, Lisa, Maria)
428   SAN: when you are explaining grammar for instance\|
429   MAR: mm\|
430   SAN: and you are looking [at their] faces\|
431   [laughter]
432   SAN: you speak in English and after the explanations sometimes they need another explanation a bit translation of little parts of the definition | I don't know well | English maybe is not the most difficult\|

On the other hand, for the teacher trainee and intercultural groups, one common language was also a part of the category construction of the successful language classroom, but quite often the attribute of one common language was associated with the target language rather than the school's vehicular language. In fact, the use of the target language was constructed as a positive feature of the linguistically diverse classroom by the teacher trainee and intercultural groups as it could serve as a means of balancing out the advantages and disadvantages between the students. If the target language (English) is used "all the pupils have the same problem" (line 54).

(9) Teacher Trainee Group (Francesc, Moira, Chris)
48   CHR: but in English anybody the language XXX is a foreign language XXX\|
49   FRA: XXX she has problems with Catalan and Spanish it's another XXX 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\|

Interestingly, the use of immigrant students' first language at school (outside the language classroom) was met with ambiguity. Some of the categorizations were positive and some were categorized negatively. In the examples where the use of the heritage language was seen negatively, the reason for negative categorization was often due to the "official" discourse (school policy, for example) which was part of the participants' dialogic "common sense knowledge." Garfinkel calls this "motivated compliance with background expectancies" (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 54). Because the conversation participants perceive certain "institutionalized" features as salient, accountable, and natural attributes of reality, they will often produce and re-produce them. In the following example, Jill reproduces the predominant perspective about heritage language use in her school system. The "official" discourse is picked up by Ann and confirmed as a valid reason to "forbid" the heritage language of students "who speak in their language."

(10) Intercultural group (Jill, Kelly, Annabelle)
287   ANN: […] 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_|
288   KEL: I don't know\|
289   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 […] other children then don't
                know when they are laughing they don't know what they say and if they say
                something
[…]
304   KEL: not allowed to do that no\|
305   JIL: and in some schools_|
306   KEL: XXX\|
307   JIL: oh yeah in some schools in Holland it is also forbidden to speak on the
                playground | in your own language\|
 […]
314   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_|
315   ANN: they have to practice XXX\|
316   JIL: you have to practice and practice and when it's for the children too easy to
                speak their own language_ and that's why they_ it's forbidden to speak their own
                language and there were also people in the class with another eh language so I think
                then you can say you_ it's forbidden because otherwise_|
317   ANN: yes I think it's good_|
318   JIL: other children can play with XXX persons because they don't understand
                what they mean\|
319   ANN: and then you you you your own_|
320   JIL: you isolate XXX\|
321   ANN: XXX isolate from the group and that's not good\|
322   JIL: so this is why I think it's good to forbid it\|
323   ANN: ok\|

    It is notable that both trainees in the above fragment construct language learning as sequential (first one language then another). The students who do not speak the school's vehicular language must not be allowed to speak their mother tongue because it will interfere in the learning of the school's vehicular language; besides that, because they "don't speak Dutch at home" they do not practice the school's vehicular language and therefore it is assumed that they will not learn it.

    When the student's mother tongue is not the school's vehicular language, it is often denounced, as can be seen in the above extract as well as the following example (extract 11). Sara constructs the use of the mother tongue as a negative attribute of the newly arrived students; it is not acceptable 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, reinforcing the categorization of an illicit language (line 78).

(11) In-service group (Sara, Cristina, Mariona)
76   SAR: I observe_ I I say that in a playground on different times if they are_ for
                example two are XXX and they are friend they speak Arab\|
77   CRI: mm\|
78   SHA: more times yes XXX don't know speak in Catalan but X apart from sisters
                and brothers they try to to use their mother tongue\|

     In almost all the constructions of the category heritage language speakers (or speakers of
languages different from the vehicular language), the most relevant features were the inability
to understand anything at all and the need to learn the school language first.

(12) In-service group (Sara, Cristina, Mariona)
426   KIM: of the school | they get lost | it's like they don't know anybody they don't
                have friends and they [laughs] then cannot understand so they are | maybe they they
                take a a book and they are looking the pictures and_ but they are not really making
                an effort to understand the language_

     There are several incidences of the categorization of language learning as a sequential
process (school's vehicular language first, then a foreign language), rather than a parallel
learning process (multiple language competences).

(13) In-service group (Anita, Samantha, Orlando)
261   ORL: they try to learn Spanish or Catalan they try to learn language to use
                everyday and they when they eh they are able to understand and talk Spanish or
                Catalan then try to learn another subject and another thing\|

     Rarely is the students' ability to communicate in their mother tongue taken into account
as a possible learning tool, in fact it is often constructed in a way that closely parallels the
"bilingual paradox" (Ovando & McLaren, 2000) – the assumption that learning another
language would prove to be too much overload. In effect, this categorization appears to be
actually silencing the linguistically diverse students – the teachers claim to know what is best
for them, as was seen in extract 10 ("when it's for the children too easy to speak their own
language …it [should be] forbidden to speak their own language," (turn 316)). Similar
"silencing" of the heritage language speaker can be seen in the next extract (14). Because the
student cannot communicate with the teacher "in any language," the student does not "really
need to learn English – they have to communicate" (lines 280, 285, 287). One is left with the
question of why English is not seen as a tool for communication.

(14) In-service group (Anita, Samantha, Orlando)
280   SAM: I think in this case for example eh they don't need really to learn English
                they have to communicate and they have to get some strategies to communicate with
                the other students and with the teacher\|
281   TCHR: in which language? Spanish or Catalan/|
282   ORL: yes\|

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283   SAM: in Spanish in Catalan_|
284   ORL: in one\|
285   SAM: eh yes more than in English because at this moment they don't need real
                English because they XXX\|
286   TCHR: when will they get the English then? XXX/|
287   SAM: no yes yes XXX 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\|

However, there was one incident of categorization of the heritage language as an important feature to the students' confidence and self-esteem. In turn 357, Amanda constructs the categorization of the vehicular language as an important part of the student's confidence.

(15) Teacher Trainee group (Amanda, Helena, Lori)
357   AMA: and I think 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\|
358   LOR: no but_|
359   HEL: if the teacher don't take into consideration their language | I mean_|
360   LOR: yes but maybe she knows speak English but there are some of them that
                doesn't know speak English or they don't know XXX\|
361   AMA: then he will feel more confident in English lessons

As can be seen by the comparisons of dialogues between in-service and teacher trainees discussed earlier, while all three groups categorized multilinguistic classes as being difficult to some degree or another, the reasons and intensity of the categorization of "problem" were quite distinctive. The in-service teachers were more prone to classify the entire situation as extremely difficult or even "horrible," while the teacher trainees were more inclined to see it as "difficult" but attenuated by a wider range of possible advantages such as providing "rich" material for teaching. Maud says, "but it depends if you're an English teacher it's ok because they are in the same level in a way so it's we discussed last time (...)" (line 190, Teacher Trainee group -Maud, Julia, Susana).   For them, the use of English as the vehicular language of the classroom helps put everyone on equal footing, including the recent arrivals. This conception of equality is supported by their journals written in the same class.

In article 1 you ask us if a child that doesn't dominate Catalan or Spanish should be retained from learning another foreign language. I think it should be able to learn another language. It's a new language for every single pupil in that class so they all start at the same level. There is no reason why a child wouldn't be allowed to learn a 3rd language (Julia, student journal).

Conclusion

Because teachers' perspectives towards various languages and language speakers directly influence the success of their pupils (as well as the fact that these pupils' own expectations about their use of language and culture is influenced by the interrelations in the classroom),

teachers must be responsible for helping students "examine the origins of their attitudes towards various languages and cultures" (Goodman, 1985, p. 181). However, to do so, language teachers should be aware of their own attitudes about languages and cultures. Considering that many language classes are already centred around the study of English-speaking countries and their cultures, this could easily be expanded to include more cultures. By doing so, language teachers and their students will be able to better understand how they assign values on the basis of languages and cultures. They may discover that the linguistic diversity existent in their classrooms can "potentialize" the overall language learning of the classroom, rather than hinder it. At the same time, teachers will be better equipped to help all their students understand and accept the cultural and linguistic differences existent amongst themselves. As teachers' interviews have revealed (Martín Rojo, 2003, p. 192), teachers are not usually willing to incorporate foreign students' language or culture into the class curriculum, despite the fact that this type of knowledge has been shown to be an excellent springboard for learning on all levels (especially languages), as well as being both intrinsically and extrinsically motivating. By becoming aware of the inherent advantages, teachers may be more willing to do so.

If language teachers see themselves only as language teachers with no connection to the social and political issues outlined here, they are implicitly propagating hierarchical relations within the class and the school. They are also more likely to concentrate only on sequential, structured learning of the target language and will not see the sociolinguistic and sociocultural knowledge of a language as being as important as the linguistic knowledge of a language. It all seems to come full circle: the language teacher who is aware of the need for multicultural awareness both in and out of the language classroom is more likely to be aware of the advantages of linguistic diversity within the classroom.

Notions about cultures and identity are largely created through many different sources of knowledge and information and often provide a basis for teachers to define and interpret "classroom reality." There are different available models for explanations of reality which not only influence teachers but also the students they are teaching. By highlighting how these personal and professional discourses combine to create common-sense-notions (Gee, 1990), teachers may be better prepared to see how these notions are embedded in their understanding of "classroom reality" and consequently influence the way they teach.

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[i] This name comes from a study called *Pygmalion in the Classroom*, by Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) in which the researchers *randomly* identified some students as "bloomers" according to "tests" and told the teachers who they were. At the end of the year, Rosenthal and Jacobsen gave a second test that indicated that the "bloomers" had indeed increased significantly in the test. The results of this study provide powerful evidence of a self-fulfilling prophecy. In education theory this process is sometimes called teacher expectations. In order to simplify, the author of this article employs the term in a general way to denote the affect of teachers' expectations on students' results, behaviour, own expectations, etc.