

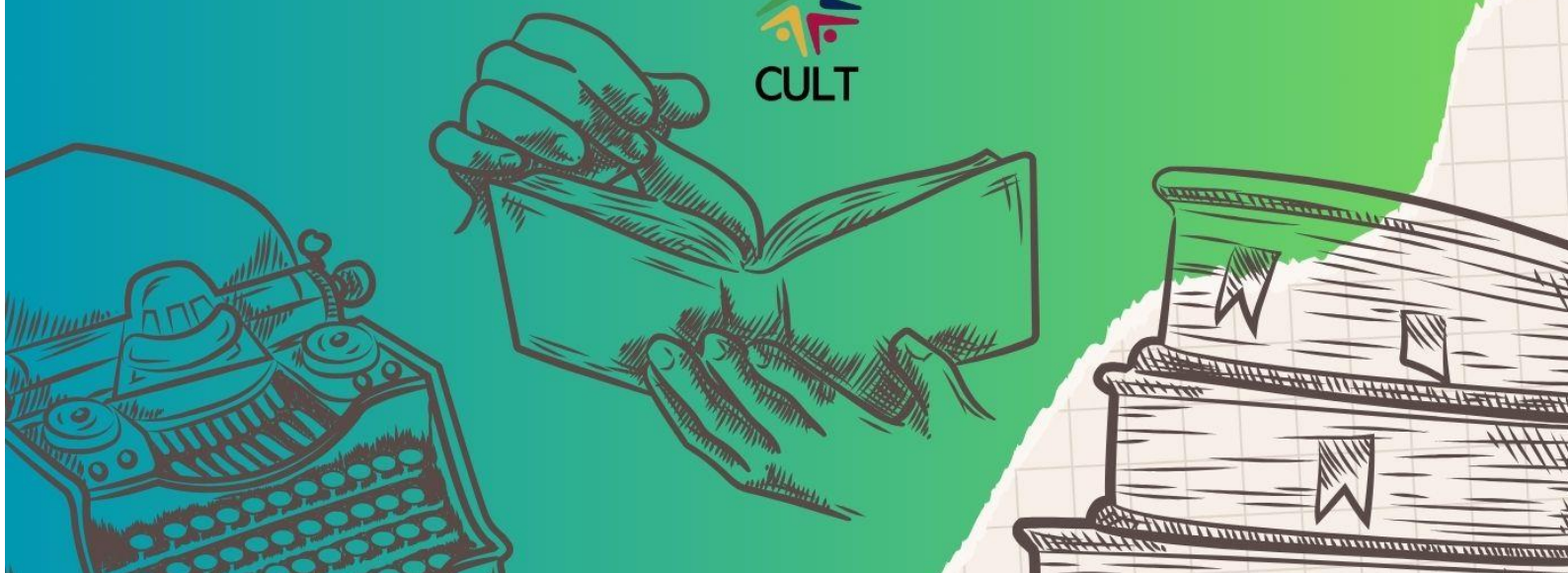


# LA POESIA DARRERE DE LES LLENGÜES

PLURILINGUAL POETRY WORKSHOP

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Constructing a collaborative understanding of language  
teaching and learning for the XXI century (CULT)

Aprenem. Famílies en Xarxa (AFEX)

Actividades Formativas para Familias Migradas (AFFM)

III Muestra de Poesía Plurilingüe (Casa Asia)

Instituto Barris Besòs

## ***La poesia darrere de les llengües - plurilingual poetry workshop***

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## 1. Context

Founded in 2015, The AFEX and AFFM "Actividades Formativas para Familias Migradas" ("training activities for migrant families") programs are intercultural and inclusive education programs from the social entity Casa Asia and The Federation of Associations of Parents of Secondary School Students (FAPAES) with the support of the Barcelona "City Hall", Generalitat de Catalunya (Aprendemos. Familias en red, 2018). The program is intended to promote the integration of people from diverse cultures that have made Catalonia their home by teaching Catalan and Spanish in a pluricultural and plurilingual educational context. The project model involves facilitators, volunteers, and participants. In these programs, adults learn Spanish and Catalan mainly with their own sons and daughters, students of the primary and secondary schools where these programs are implemented. The program is carried out in approximately 30 centers in the province of Barcelona.

In 2020, the program created the first Poetry Exhibition to celebrate the linguistic diversity of its participants. The aim of the project was to recognise the importance and value of the plurilingual and cultural knowledge of migrants as well as to improve their language skills (Casa Asia, 2020). In their first year, the theme was "Dream in times of lockdown," and they had plurilingual poems mixing Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, Deutsch, and Afrikaans.

In 2021, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Casa Asia, the II Poetry Exhibition wanted to recognise the joint work between schools and institutes and their intercultural and inclusive education programs to promote knowledge of the Asian continent and the Pacific region between students and teachers (Casa Asia, 2021). For its second edition, the chosen theme was "Successes", to appreciate the challenges and difficulties achieved by students and families having the opportunity to learn new languages and new cultures. Twenty-three secondary schools have participated, writing 125 plurilingual poems showing a great diversity of languages.

With the theme "The First Day," the third edition aimed to encourage the participants to write about their memories. In the context of this proposal, I was invited to give a plurilingual poetry workshop for one of the centre of the program, an

institute in Barcelona. The aim was to develop activities to help the participants write their plurilingual poems. The difference of this specific center is that the AFEX-AFFM program is done during school hours and the "volunteers" are high school students. In addition to the program facilitator, there are also two teachers from the institute who help secondary school students teach Spanish and Catalan classes to adults.

The workshop was developed in a collaborative way between two teachers from a secondary school in Barcelona, a facilitator from the AFEX-AFFM program, ten secondary school students, and this author as part of his PhD project. It is important to mention that in carrying out the activities, we had the assistance of the professors Dr. Clàudia Vallejo and Dr. Júlia Llompart Esbert from the CULT Project.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Objectives

- To encourage students to write plurilingual poems to increase their linguistic competence.
- To improve the participants' pluriliteracy skills by helping them write poems about their personal, social, and cultural contexts.
- To allow participants to foster creativity, critical thinking, and logical reasoning using their whole linguistic repertoire through poetry writing.
- To promote the interaction between secondary students and participants in building a plurilingual poem in a plurilingual context.

## 3. Participants

The adult participants in the workshop were ten women and one man from Pakistan (7 people), India (2 people), and Morocco (1 person). Among the languages of the group, we find Darija, Arabic (standard), Urdu, Punjabi, English, Spanish, and Catalan (mainly among the secondary school students and the teachers of

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<sup>1</sup>This Ph.D. project is inserted within CULT ("Constructing a collaborative understanding of learning and teaching for the XXI century"), a project that is a partnership between teachers and researchers from the UAB (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), a non-formal plurilingual educational program AFEX "Aprenem. Famílies en xarxa" ("We learn. networked families") and FAS "Fundació Autònoma Solidària de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona".



the institute). Some of the languages of the adults – Urdu, in addition to Catalan and Spanish—are shared with the secondary school students.

#### 4. Activities

Three activities were designed to help the participants write their plurilingual poems. 1. first words; 2. collage; 3. writing in your own poem. Each activity can be done separately, and they are not connected with each other. At the end of this project, an extra activity is also attached because we believe this task can be a powerful tool to inspire students to reflect on their linguistic repertoire. This project can be adapted for elementary, middle, and high school students as well as corporate settings.

##### 4.1 First words

Divide a piece of paper into four parts:

<i>Write here your favourite word in your mother language</i>	<i>Write here a word that describes yourself in your second language</i>
<i>Write here the first word that you learned in Spanish/Catalan</i>	<i>Write here a word that can describe the best day of your life (in any language)</i>

At the end, write a sentence using all four words and make a drawing that represents the sentence.

**Comments:** This is a starter activity to help participants write using their entire linguistic repertoire. This activity was designed for people who speak up to five languages, but it can be adapted for people who speak more than five.

##### 4.2 Collage

This activity requires a sheet of cardboard, glue, and scissors. It carries poems in Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic, English, Spanish, and Catalan.

Students have to read the poems and cut out words/sentences with the intention of expressing their feelings in the last activity. Before gluing the cardboard sheet, ask the students to play with the different words/phrases and languages. Ask them to try different arrangements. When they find an arrangement they like, they find their first poem.

Below are the suggestions of poets and poems indicated by the teachers and facilitator of the group.

#### **4.2.1 Catalan**

Josep Palau i Fabre - Jo em donaria a qui em volgués

(Link: <https://www.lyrikline.org/es/poemas/jo-em-donaria-qui-em-volgues-13388>)

Màrius Torres - Els núvols

(Link: [https://llettra.uoc.edu/uploads/20180220/poesiadibuixada\\_els\\_nuvols.pdf](https://llettra.uoc.edu/uploads/20180220/poesiadibuixada_els_nuvols.pdf))

Montserrat Abelló - Cadascú ha de tenir..

(Link: [https://llettra.uoc.edu/uploads/20170105/poesiadibuixada\\_cadascuhadetenir.pdf](https://llettra.uoc.edu/uploads/20170105/poesiadibuixada_cadascuhadetenir.pdf))

Joana Raspall - Geometria

(Link: <https://www.calameo.com/books/000083716b4c86a3be704>)

#### **4.2.2 Spanish**

Joan Margarit - Recordar el Besòs

(Link: <http://sopadepoetes.blogspot.com/2010/11/recordar-el-besos-1980-joan-margarit.html>)

Lope Félix de Vega y Carpio - Desmayarse

(Link: <https://www.poesi.as/lvps054.htm>)

#### **4.2.3 Urdu**

Allama Iqbal - Sense title

(Link: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Allama\\_iqbal%27s\\_poetry.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Allama_iqbal%27s_poetry.jpg))

#### **4.2.4 Punjabi**

No author's name - Sense title

(Link: <https://br.pinterest.com/pin/657314508087018794/>)

**Comments:** As the participants who speak Arabic and Darija arrived on the day of the collage activity, we cannot provide the printed poems in Arabic. Thus, the participants had to write phrases and sentences in their languages.

#### **4.3 Writing you own poems**

In this activity, cardboard sheets, pencil colours, and crayons are necessary. Ask students to think about their first day. Do not explain too much; let them choose a day that they did something good, bad, unforgettable, etc. Ask them to write a poem describing that day.

**Comments:** Students can check out the previous activities to feel inspired, but encourage them to write their own poems using their own words.

### **5. Results**

Four plurilingual poems were created by the participants. In the poems, the participants wrote about the first day they arrived in Spain or when they became mothers for the first time. This workshop project was presented to other AFEX-AFFM program facilitators so that it could be replicated by them in the other centres of Casa Asia.

After the three days of workshops, the teachers, the facilitator, and I had a meeting to discuss the workshop. As much as we had a positive result, we thought of adding an extra activity that would serve other future workshops. We decided to incorporate an extra activity - the linguistic autobiography.

### **6. Linguistic Autobiography - Extra activity**

For this activity, we need pens, coulored pencils (optional), and A4 sheets with silhouettes, as shown in the example below.

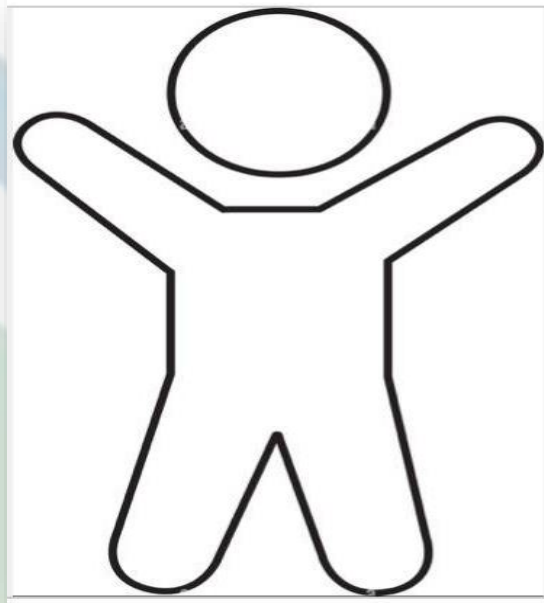


Figure 1: Silhouette of a human body

In the silhouette, students must put - either in writing or by drawing - the languages and varieties they know and the uses they make of them. The colored pencils serve as a guide to indicate the linguistic diversity and variety of each participant, as in the example below.

The languages I speak: **red**  
The languages I don't speak, but I understand: **blue**  
The languages I can read and understand: **green**  
The languages I don't speak, but I have heard: white  
The languages I don't speak, but I've seen written: **yellow**  
The languages I would like to learn: **orange**

Table 1: Guide made by researchers from the research group GREIP<sup>2</sup> and the CULT project at UAB

<sup>2</sup>GREIP (Research Group for Education, Interaction & Plurilingualism) is a research team in plurilingual education with researchers from different parts of the world with the intention of advancing knowledge about language education in the twenty-first century.



Afterwards, participants should write a brief reflection on the choices (colours, languages, etc.) they made.

**Comments:** This is a very common activity used in the projects of the GREIP research group and the CULT project. We highly recommend starting the plurilingual poetry workshop with this activity so that the teacher will know which languages the students speak and write. Just as this activity can help participants reflect not only on the languages they speak or write but also on their experiences with these languages.

## 7. Conclusion

In this workshop project, we have shown, in a summarized way, the importance of using poetry as a didactic tool in the teaching of languages in contexts of diversity. The collaborative work created a space to learn and contribute to the learning of others, and the importance of this collaboration for the acquisition of new linguistic resources is manifested in the poetic results. The proposal of this workshop has been to recognize the didactic possibilities of poetry as a means of inclusion in the linguistic training of students and to propose a work scheme to work on plurilingualism based on poetry. The proposed activities allow the mobilization of diverse linguistic resources in a meaningful and freely creative environment, and the collaboration with people more expert in Catalan and Spanish allows access to the host languages in this process.

## 8. References

*Poesia plurilingüe confinada*. (2020, June 6). Casa Asia. [https://www.casaasia.cat/actualidad/poesia-plurilingue-confinada/?fbclid=IwAR1AfWg11DNgU8rVtX\\_C\\_Q4a4pTe300USea2gz8r7hHS9yNkzVU-BM8MIRQ](https://www.casaasia.cat/actualidad/poesia-plurilingue-confinada/?fbclid=IwAR1AfWg11DNgU8rVtX_C_Q4a4pTe300USea2gz8r7hHS9yNkzVU-BM8MIRQ)

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PROYECTO CULT I+D+i PID2020-115446RJ-I00 financiado por MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033



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