

Parelles Lingüístiques

Analysing the cross-age teaching methods using plurilingual poetry to promote plurilingualism/pluriliteracies in teaching additional languages in a secondary school in Barcelona

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Introduction

This poster describes the development of a plurilingual and collaborative poetry project in a secondary school in Barcelona where young people assume the role of “teachers” of host languages (Catalan and Spanish) for adult migrants in a project called “Parelles”. A plurilingual poetry workshop was offered to analyse the roles and social interaction between the secondary school students and the participants in a plurilingual context.

The workshop we present was developed within the framework of the AFEX-AFFM program of Casa Asia and FAPAES, an intergenerational, plurilingual, and inclusive linguistic education project in which adult migrants participate and whose objective is to bring them together in educational centers and promote learning of the host languages.

The program suggests several events for World Poetry Day each year as the *Mostra de Poesia Plurilingüe* (Plurilingual Poetry Display), organized by Casa Asia, is a collection of plurilingual poems that participants compose around a given theme. The session we are reporting on in this poster took place in 2022, and the theme was *El meu primer dia* (my first day). This aim of this poster is to examine the interactional place of the student teachers and the different roles they take on during a poetry activity in which students in a high school teach Spanish to adult migrants.

Methodology

The research adopts a collaborative linguistic ethnography (Lassiter, 2015) and creative inquiry or art-based methods (Bradley & Harvey, 2019). The data considered were collected within the framework of the CULT research project and were collected ethnographically during the poetry workshop (i.e., through participant observation, field notes, conversations, videos, and photographs) allowing the exploration of processes and results.

The participants of the project were a facilitator from Casa Asia, two school teachers, a facilitator from Casa Asia, ten students “teachers” from 9th grade, and eleven adult migrants, ten women, and one man from Pakistan, Morocco, and India.

To assist the adult learners in writing their poetry on the theme of *El meu primer dia* (My first day), three days of workshops were arranged and the activities were: *First Words*, *Collage* and *Writing your own poem*.

The interactions have been transcribed using basic conversation analysis conventions (Jefferson, 2004) to comprehend and analyse how the students interact, taking on the role of “teachers” and explaining the activities to the adult migrants.

Analysis

Extract 1: Bete (student “teacher”) is helping Zaya (adult migrant) to complete her first task, the activity “First Words”. Adults were instructed to write four first different words in four different languages. In the end, they need to write a sentence combining all of them. Zaya’s words were: *madre, hola, eid, activa*. Bete does not know how to help Zaya to write a sentence in Spanish. Bete asks Jessica (another student “teacher”) to help her.

BET: Bete (student “teacher”), **ZAY:** Zaya (adult migrant), **JESS:** Jessica (another student “teacher”)

01 BET: yo no sé como ayudarte a hacer una frase.
I don't know how to help her make a sentence

02 cómo la ayudo?
how do I help her?

03 JES: ((incomprehensible))

04 BET: pero cómo se las explico?
but how do I explain them to her?

05 no se lo puedo escribir yo tiene que escribir ella
I can't write it for her she has to write it

06 JES: qué palabras son?
which words are they?

07 BET: estas.
these ones

08 JES: hola . madre . activa . es el día de.
hello. mother. active. it is the day of.

10 BET: eid.
eid.

11 JES: eid. eid. qué es eid?
eid. eid. what is eid?

12 BET: una cosa de su país.
a thing from her country.

13 JES: ah vale vale. hola mi madre es activa.
ah okay okay. hello my mother is active.

14 ZAY: fiesta.
party.

15 JES: ah una fiesta vale.
ah a party okay..

16 hola. soy. activa.
hello. I'm . active.

17 BET: hola soy activa.
hello I'm active.

18 JES: y celebro el día de eid con mi madre.
and I celebrate the day of eid with my mother

In Extract 1, we can see the actions of the two students as they try to help Zaya create her sentence in Spanish. We see how Jessica brainstorms words, trying to formulate a sentence that makes sense. When faced with the word “Eid”, the student “teacher” asks her colleague the meaning. In line 14, we notice that Zaya is paying attention to the conversation between the students and explains that it is a party, thus helping the participants to formulate the sentence: *Hello, I am active and celebrate the day of Eid with my mother*.

Extract 2 - Arial is trying to explain to Zaya they will change from a grammar activity to activity 3 “Writing their own poem”. As Zaya does respond, Arial realises that she did not understand and calls Saima, another student “teacher”, who is fluent in Urdu.

ARI: Arial (student “teacher”), **ZAY:** Zaya (adult migrant), **SAIM:** Saima (another student “teacher”)

01 ARI: Ahora vamos hacer una otra actividad.
(Now let's do another activity.)

02:ZAY: (silencio)
(silence)

03: ARI: Saima.

04:ZAY: Saima.

05:ARI: Le pode decir (en urdu) que ahora vamos a hacer una otra actividad.
(You can tell her (in Urdu) that now we are going to do another activity.)

(Saima le explica la actividad en urdu).

(Saima explains the activity in Urdu to Zaya).

We see in Extract 2 how the two secondary students “teachers” take on the role of supporting Zaya in translating the task. As there was a change in activities, Arial tried to inform Zaya in Spanish (line 1) about the new activity, but the participant was unable to understand. Therefore, Arial (line 2) and Zaya (line 3) call Saima, who is fluent in Urdu, to translate it. Saima, in addition to being a “teacher”, also takes on the role of translator and mediator in the interaction between Arial and Zaya. We can also deduce, since Zaya also calls Samia along with Arial, that it is common for Samia to serve as a mediator and translator in the project.

Discussion and conclusions

One of the primary goals of the project *Parelles* is to introduce students to the concept and importance of volunteering and enhancing the lives of others. Students also gain awareness of their knowledge and their capacity to impart it to others. The teenagers are not just assisting an adult teacher or informally sharing experiences; they are facilitating an entire learning experience by teaching a language or languages and fully managing a group of adults. The project provides teenagers with the opportunity to make decisions because they are performing as teachers rather than “teacher helpers”.

According to the analysis, we can observe from the interaction between the students that they had space and voice to explain the exercises and to help the participants with language-related concerns. We can also identify the students performing different roles as teachers, translators and mediators. Additionally, we could note in extract 1 that the students take an active role not only as teachers but act as agents being part of the participant’s construction process. The process helped students to develop self and social awareness, self-management, relationship and leadership skills, oral communication, and responsible decision-making.

Regarding the adults’ migrant language acquisition, a deeper analysis of the project and the poetic process, as well as the analysis of the poems was done by Albuquerque & Moore (2024) where they concluded that the improvised exchanges throughout the lessons facilitated language acquisition. The study indicated that the students’ guidance encouraged the participants’ use of the host language in their poems.

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