Ethnographic Perspectives to Teaching and Learning in Multilingual Contexts

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Abstract: This special issue addresses the organization of teaching and learning in a variety of multilingual schooling contexts from different critical ethnographic perspectives (i.e.: critical sociolinguistic ethnography, linguistic anthropology, and language socialization). By analyzing a range of educational settings in Spain, the U.S., the U.K., Argentina, and Guatemala, the articles establish a dialogue with different ethnographically-oriented studies to understand the relationship between situated communicative practices, language policies, language ideologies, dominant discourses about bi-multilingualism, and wider social, cultural and economic processes.

Keywords: critical (socio) linguistic ethnography; reflexivity; bilingual/multilingual education; language ideologies; language policies.

1. Introduction: Ethnographic perspectives to the study of multilingual practices

This special issue addresses the organization of teaching and learning in a variety of multilingual schooling contexts from different critical ethnographic perspectives. Particularly, this monograph is framed within the latest research on the «sociolinguistics of multilingualism» (Martin-Jones & Martin, 2017), which «takes account of the new communicative order and the particular cultural conditions of our times, while retaining a central concern with the social and institutional processes involved in the construction of social difference and social inequality» (p. 2). Critical and ethnographic perspectives are then central to understand these processes in the era of globalization, transborder migration, the institutionalization of neoliberal education and the commodification of English as a global language (Pérez-Milans, 2013; Heller, 2011, 2006; Martín-Rojo, 2010; Tollefson & Pérez-Milans, 2018). The collection of articles, each one of them addressing different multilingual teaching and learning contexts, engages in current debates regarding the contribution of ethnography to the study of multilingual practices. In addition, in line with the «sociocultural linguistics» approach put forward by Bucholtz and Hall (2008) to

understand «how the empirical study of language illuminates social and cultural processes» (p. 403), the authors challenge the conditions of teaching and learning in multilingual contexts. Thus, different European, U.S. and Latin American educational settings are analyzed from different critical ethnographic approaches (i.e.: linguistic anthropology, critical sociolinguistic ethnography, and language socialization). This way, they engage in different ontological (ethnography as theory), methodological (ethnography as method) and epistemological (ethnography as knowledge) stances to the role of ethnography (Blommaert & Jie, 2010) in bi-multiligual teaching and learning contexts.

Classic definitions of ethnography in the field of linguistic anthropology call for «the written description of the social organization, social activities, symbolic and material resources, and interpretive practices characteristic of a particular group of people» (Duranti, 1997, p. 85). A successful ethnography is one «in which the researcher establishes a dialogue between different viewpoints and voices, including those of the people studied, of the ethnographer, and of his disciplinary and theoretical preferences» (p. 87). Both the interpretive stances to understand the organization of bi/multilingual practices, and the different reflexivity practices researchers in this volume engage in, singularly contribute to the latest ethnographic and critical research in multilingual contexts (Coulmas, 2018; Martin-Jones & Martin, 2017).

In the European context, drawing on the aforementioned influential paradigm of U.S. linguistic anthropology, the consolidation of ethnography and linguistics, namely, linguistic ethnography, has strengthened significantly, particularly in the U.K., (Rampton *et al.*, 2004; Rampton, 2007) to include a wide range of out-of-school contexts (Copland & Creese, 2015; Copland *et al.*, 2016), and several volumes have addressed the study of multilingualism from an ethnographic perspective (Gardner & Martin-Jones, 2012; Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Martin-Jones & Martin, 2017).

In the U.S, the ethnographic perspective in education has also been emphasized from different paradigms such as the linguistic anthropology of education (Wortham & Rymes, 2003; Wortham, 2008) and language socialization, which addresses the relationships among language, culture and learning in first and second language learning settings (Garrett & Baquedano, 2002; Watson-Gegeo & Bronson, 2013; García-Sánchez, 2014). This way, this monograph includes a «diversification of ethnographic approaches» (Martin-Jones & Martin, 2017, p. 11) to critically address the study of multilingual practices in relation to wider social and cultural processes.

Moreover, even if the central role of ethnography as an interpretivist view of linguistic practices in multilingual contexts has been addressed in recent publications (Gardner & Martin-Jones, 2012; Martin-Jones & Martin, 2016; Codó & Relaño-Pastor, forthcoming), it is still necessary to establish a dialogue among different ethnographic perspectives in these contexts. That is, if, as Heller (2008) points out, ethnographies of bilingualism are very much needed «to tell a story» that would give insight into the social processes of inequality, social categorization and unequal access to material resources, it is also essential to establish a dialogue with different ethnographically-oriented studies from different disciplines to understand the relationship between language policies, language ideologies, dominant discourses about bi-multilingualism and situated communicative practices. The authors

then situate their analyses in relation to wider institutional, social, and ideological processes: (1) the institutionalization of CLIL-type bilingual programs in Spain (Poveda, Fernández-Barrera, Relaño-Pastor, Codó and Moore); (2) transborder intercultural educational practices among Guatemalan migrant communities in the United States (Reynolds); (3) intercultural bilingual education in indigenous contexts in Argentina (Unamuno); (4) university researchers' identities and post-field knowledge-production (Giampapa).

Furthermore, the articles of this special issue deal with different ethnographic perspectives, which are critical of the underlying inequalities emerging among social actors in multilingual education sites. All the articles are committed to expose them by addressing key issues among educational ethnographers: 1. Attention to the triangulation of different data sets, that is, interactional data, interview data, and circulating policy discourses on situated multilingual education contexts. The authors focus on the understanding of participants' multilingual repertoires and language ideologies regarding which languages to use, when and how when doing multilingual education across different ethnographic contexts, as well as how these practices and ideologies inform fieldwork practices; 2. Commitment to interpretive analyses of situated practices in different ethnographic contexts, which are undertaken from different perspectives, specifically, critical educational ethnography, critical sociolinguistic ethnography, language socialization and the linguistic anthropology of education; 3. Reflexivity practices and researcher identities «while-in-the-field» as well as in «post-field» activities. Particularly, the articles by Reynolds, Codó and Moore, Unamuno and Giampapa analyze the different types of fieldwork collaboration regarding the development of inclusive ethnographic methods that take into account participants' local bodies of knowledge. These articles also illustrate the different «epistemic processes» (Blommaert & Jie 2010, p. 36) the authors engage with to interpret the connections generated while in the field as well as those emerging in post-reflexive practices.

2. Overview of the special issue

The first three articles (i.e. Poveda, Fernández-Barrera & Relaño-Pastor) unravel the complexities of different salient processes of identity-making among students and teachers in CLIL-type bilingual schools in Castilla-La Mancha. Framed within the same research project, the APINGLO-CLM[1] project, these three articles focus on processes of becoming a CLIL teacher/student and doing CLIL (i.e. doing being a bilingual student/teacher) as well as the language socialization processes involved in the making and implementation of bilingual programs in different state-funded (public) and state-funded private (semi-private) schools in this region.

The first article, by David Poveda, examines bilingual students' language ideologies regarding bilingualism, bilingual education, and the role of English in

students' lives, future work prospects and international mobility. These ideologies are analyzed in different data sets collected as part of the APINGLO-CLM project. Poveda sheds light on the methodological power of ethnography to bring together students' voices emerging in different classroom activities (i.e. workshops and group discussions), with wider socio-educational ideologies and neoliberal discourses on English language learning. The main contribution of this article relies on the clear articulation of the importance of triangulation and the interpretive gaze in educational, linguistic ethnographies of bilingualism. Poveda discusses the co-construction of bilingualism and bilingual students' identities by triangulating different data sets and ethnographic techniques (i.e. extended participant observation in different public and semi-private schools, students' interviews and informal talks, classroom activities and materials, as well as policy and institutional documents). Bilingual students' voices are complexified by situating them in relation to the local contexts of the studied bilingual programs in Castilla-La Mancha and the dominant circulating discourses about neoliberalism and the global commodification of English in this region.

The second article, by Alicia Fernández-Barrera, addresses the importance of interactional classroom analysis to understand the organization of CLIL-type bilingual programs in Castilla-La Mancha. Fernández-Barrera discusses how CLIL-science teachers in two bilingual schools deal with the challenge of integrating language and content in daily classroom practices. The article advocates for the importance of critical sociolinguistic ethnography (CSE) to understand the co-construction of meaning in first year of secondary education bilingual science classes in relation to CLIL teachers' language ideologies and language learning beliefs. Framing these in a political economy perspective she explores the material conditions (i.e. lack of professional development opportunities, bilingual schools' scarce economic investment in CLIL teachers, time constraints, among others) under which teachers and students participate in what she defines as the «bilingualism movement» in Castilla-La Mancha (Fernández-Barrera, 2019). In this case, interpretive stances are key to understand how the analyzed classroom interactions identify the conflictual significance of «doing bilingual teaching» from the point of view of CLIL-teachers in relation to students' needs and regional language-in-education policies. The CSE perspective Fernández-Barrera puts forward stresses the importance of ethnography to reveal the specific conditions in which these science classes take place and further explain larger social processes such as the investment in CLIL teachers' professional development opportunities.

Similarly, but this time from a language socialization perspective, the third article, by Ana M. Relaño-Pastor, offers an intrepretivist stance to CLIL teachers' agency in bilingual programs in Castilla-La Mancha. The analysis of agency in the emerging narratives of «being» and «becoming» a CLIL teacher in a set of interviews with CLIL teachers from one of the religious semi-private schools studied in the APINGLO-CLM project, shows the different types of language socialization processes at play to belong to the bilingual school communities under study. The article analyzes how CLIL teachers take different agentive roles in these language socialization processes, that is, how they position themselves towards the socialization «to» English required at the bilingual schools in this region, as well as the socialization «through» English that the practice of doing CLIL demands from them. These processes are documented

ethnographically to illustrate the tensions and dilemmas teachers undergo to to ultimately belong to these bilingual school communities.

The second set of articles consists of four papers centered on reflexivity at different stages of the ethnographic fieldwork. Reynolds and Unamuno's articles include a reflection about on-site reflexive dialogue with participants to address more inclusive bilingual education practices in two indigenous contexts (i.e.: Wichi communities in El Chaco, Argentina, and Guatemalan transborder Mam communities in Saluda county rural schools in South Carolina). Codó, Moore and Giampapa engage in post-fieldwork reflexive discussions involving participants in 'giving back' sessions at a secondary school in Barcelona as well as the development of fieldwork relationships as an «unfinished journey» worthwhile revisiting to further understand the co-production of knowledge in multilingual/multicultural schools in Bristol. The four articles rely on different data sets to illustrate the need to establish a consistent mutual dialogue with the field.

The fourth article, by Jennifer Reynolds, analyzes the importance of using ethnographic techniques, such as the production of ethnographic films to engage transborder Guatemalan kindergarten teaching communities in the U.S. and Guatemala in reflexive, multivocal work about intercultural, bilingual education across borders. Reynolds advocates for the importance of ethnographic films, in this case a video-production of a typical day in a U.S. preschool and a Guatemalan kindergarten, as «a rich audio-visual stimulus» to generate reflexive practices during ethnographic interviews, which would allow for a safe discursive space to discuss central pedagogical concerns in both school communities. In the case of the U.S., the dominance of monolingual language ideologies that would fail to value Latinx students' translanguaging practices in ESOL teaching contexts continue to be an unresolved challenge in Latinx communities, including the Guatemalan one described by Reynolds, where the ideology of English-only shapes the multilingual repertoires of indigenous students. In Guatemala, the use of the video technique engaged social actors in different interpretations regarding how bilingual education is being implemented in kindergarten teaching communities. The analysis illustrates how the knowledge generated around the film in both communities is polyphonic and can serve to better educate U.S. teachers about the linguistic and cultural context of Guatemalan families in the U.S. preschool programs, and, in the Guatemalan case, how to counteract Spanish purism and validate Mayan communities' linguistic and historical knowledge.

The fifth article, by Virginia Unamuno, problematizes ethnographic research in indigenous, multilingual communities in Argentina from a sociolinguistic ethnography perspective. Unamuno discusses the different registers emerging in the linguistic practices she engaged in with Wichi mothers to co-produce the children's book «N'ku Ifweln'uhu» (my mother taught me). Unamuno anchors her research in what she defines as collaborative sociolinguistic research (*investigación en co-labor*) to emphasize the need to include linguistic and cultural practices of Wichi communities in urban schools in the province of Chaco. She advocates for the role of ethnography in the co-production of bilingual and intercultural knowledge, bilingual materials, and bilingual practices as a compelling process of transformation and inclusion of Wichi linguistic practices and cultural knowledge in the Argentinian education system.

The sixth article, by Eva Codó and Emilee Moore, discusses the process of reflexivity the teaching staff at a state-funded faith school in Catalonia (Spain) underwent with critical sociolinguistic ethnography researchers in a «giving-back» session regarding the teaching of science in English. The authors analyze the whole process of preparation, implementation and discussion of the giving-back sessions with the participating teachers as a «joint problem space» that generates transformational, dialogical knowledge and validates the co-production of expert knowledge. The «field», as identity researchers like Giampapa (2011; this issue; England, 1994) point out, is in constant change and we, as researchers, are the ones who can shape new methodological possibilities leading to the transformation of our communities. In this article, Codó and Moore insightfully analyze the discursive practices emerging in the joint negotiation and implementation of the giving-back session. The power of ethnography as an epistemic process (Blommaert & Jie, 2012) offers in this case new interpretive new interpretive frames and discursive spaces to analyze the teaching of science, which Codó and Moore collaboratively constructed with the teaching staff of Santa Creu to ultimately understand, give voice, and validate teachers' expertise in the hope of changing the organizational culture of English-language learning at this school.

By the same token, the last article of this special issue and set of papers on reflexivity, by Frances Giampapa, guides us through what she defines as «an unfinished critical ethnographic journey» to understand the «complexities of field relationships» as opportunities to create new identities among researchers and participants in the field. The critical ethnographic approach adopted by Giampapa allows, allows for a reflection on how communicative practices emerging in post-field on-going relationships with field participants at Arco Nursery, re-create a new habitus of epistemic reflexivity in this multilingual community. That is, Giampapa, in line with her previous research on teacher identities and researcher reflexivity (Giampapa, 2011, 2016) proposes to interpret the ethnographic knowledge produced in the field by taking into account the collaborative alliances among researchers and participants with the aim to subvert traditional power relationships and, instead, open new spaces for social action based on the understanding of communities' values, beliefs and historical knowledge.

Overall, this special issue is committed to making visible the role of ethnography to understand situated meaning-making bi-multilingual practices in relation to the myriad social processes interplaying with the use of language in social life. In addition, the articles embrace the role of ethnography as theory and method to better grasp, as Heller (2012) points out, «the processes of social construction and the [linguistic] practices that constitute them» (p. 25). The power of ethnography, as anthro-political linguist Ana Celia Zentella (2018) defends, resides in «exposing the ways in which language is falsely constructed as the root of educational, cultural, social, and political problems» (p. 189). We hope that the articles in this special issue will illuminate the readers in this direction.

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