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Title: Fostering Social Cohesion and Empowerment Through Artistic and Collaborative Language Practices

Abstract

In this paper, I present a cooperative action-research project currently underway involving educators, students, and community actors, specifically the Centre Académique pour la Scolarisation des Nouveaux Arrivants et des Enfants du Voyage (CASNAV[1]). This initiative focuses on developing critical multilingual language awareness and plurilingual repertoires among students and teachers. The overriding long-term objective is to foster social cohesion by developing innovative teaching-learning practices that span diverse publics, with a view to countering the effects of polarising discourses in times of uncertainty. This is achieved by organising creative workshops designed to make it possible for individuals from very diverse social backgrounds to meet and transform their *perception of the common* (Rancière, 2004) through working together on creative productions. Like Rancière, the Joint Action Theory in Didactics Collective (AdFE, 2024), of which I am a member, clarify that what we perceive is not merely an act of viewing, but rather a politically configured system that defines the boundaries of shared experience and participation. The workshops in this project seek to transform "the system of a priori forms determining what presents itself to sense experience" (p. 13) so as to challenge dominant language representations and amplify previously invisibilized voices and knowledge. The goal is to counter colonial legacies (Graeber & Wengrow, 2021) and to contribute to emancipation (Moore and Sabatier, 2014; Razafimandimbimanana, E. and Fillol, V, 2022). Our hypothesis is that cooperative creation has the potential to enlarge and transform participants' perception of the common by rendering experiential traces more sensible and in this way contribute to redefining identity and learning territories.

The work in this action-research includes experimenting with and refining various creative workshops that elicit autobiographical language (Cummins & Early, 2011). This paper will present an example of such a workshop entitled "Plurilingual Weaving", designed for a group comprised of newly arrived allophone pupils in France (UPE2A) and student trainee language teachers. The workshop had a twofold objective: first, to help the newly arrived pupils overcome any underlying feeling that their heritage language was of less intrinsic value than dominant languages (Greaves & De Mattia-Viviès, 2022); second, to sensitise future language teachers to the wealth of prosody and culture inherent in plurilingual classrooms. The workshop began with a sharing of heritage languages and ended with a final collaborative tableau where participants explored connections: connections between feelings and words, pupils and future teachers, languages and cultures. This paper will conclude by presenting some of the emerging insights and challenges of the project in language didactics (Bloor et al, 2023).

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