



Creating a Third Space with a Language Mind Map

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Abstract

Globalization, as the process concerning the global movement of people, goods and information, has changed the value of global actors' linguistic resources, modifying at the same time the linguistic market [Bourdieu, 1982]. Some of the consequences are, for example, that multilingual actors have benefited from globalization [Backer 2006] or how languages have become commodities [Heller, 2003]. In Europe in general and in France in particular, the same movements and effects have occurred. France knew a wave of immigration over the sixties, and recently cultural and linguistic diversity has become a reality in certain schools. As a result, the linguistic landscape in these schools would render obsolete the rule stating that no other language but French could be used as language of education.

In this presentation, I would like to show the results of one collaborative experience in a multicultural and plurilingual class of quatrième (14 years old), in a "collège" placed in Le Blanc Mesnil, one of the conflicted outskirts of Paris. The project was organized by a non-lucrative association and their objective was to bring "Scientific Knowledge", in this case "Linguistics", to disadvantaged students. The project consisted on eight courses of two hours plus two cultural excursions, always connected to the main theme of linguistics. The final project for the students was to make a language mind map [Blommaert et al., 2006] that they presented in front of their classmates. Finally, all the language mind maps were hung up on the corridors of the school. The whole project (courses, excursions and language mind maps) was considered as a success by teachers and students. In fact, through a ethnolinguistic enquiry involving a participant observation and interviews to teachers, my analysis would show how students considered the project as a collective experience where every student could express their multilingual self. Thus, the class became a third space of inclusion and multicultural communication. Actually, not only the students experienced this inspiring transformation, but the teachers as well.

References

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