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Teachers' Discursive Practices: Co-Construction of their Group Voices

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This study focuses on teachers' group identity, seen as a process of co-construction of their group voices, as those voices emerge, are constructed or reconstructed in large-group dialogues. The participants were 28 experienced teachers who were engaged in an innovative 14-month mid-career program. The whole-group dialogues held in the second half of the program were tape recorded and transcribed and constitute the discourse basis for analysis. The contextualization of this discourse was supported by field notes and background information. Discourse analysis was carried out at macro and micro level and led to the following results: 1) There were identified three types of dialogues: conversation, discussion after a presentation, and reporting small-group conversations, which differ in structure and interactional dynamics, allowing more or less expression and development of teachers voices. 2) There were four types of teachers' voices: pragmatic, multiculturalist, critical, and socio-constructivist. These were deeply linked to the voices of the tradition of thought and discourse in education. 3) Teachers' use of personal pronouns index their social relations in the dynamics of the dialogue, through which teachers construct their group voices and identities. The opportunities for all the voices to be raised, heard, and developed is discussed within a cultural and sociopolitical context of teacher education.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

When experienced teachers get together in small groups, in the context of a mid-career program, they often miss the opportunity to engage in academic-theoretical discourse and they avoid falling into open disagreement regarding any issue. However, they may develop a very strong group identity and a commitment to help each other and to listen to what any member of the group wants to share (Torres, 1995a). The present study focuses on this issue of group identity, seen as a process of co-construction of their group voices, as those voices emerge, are constructed or reconstructed in a large-group dialogical interaction. These voices are analyzed in the context of the dominant ideologies of teacher education using both Bakhtin's and Freire's notions of dialogue. The context of this study is a master's program in which experienced teachers engage in conversations among themselves about their concerns, experiences, work conditions, and common endeavors.

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: A DIALOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON TEACHERS' CONVERSATIONS

This study is framed within a dialogical perspective. Dialogue is understood in the sense developed by Bakhtin (1981,1986) and his followers (Todorov, 1981; Clark & Holquist, 1984; Rommetveit, 1990, 1992; Wertsch, 1990, 1991; Markova, 1990a, 1990b, 1991, 1992; Luckmann, 1990, 1992; Linell, 1990; Drew, 1991; Graumann, 1989, 1990)—a notion of dialogue that is highly compatible with that of Freire (1992 [1970]). For these theorists, dialogue goes beyond the mere verbal face-to-face interaction between two persons, to involve several persons whose utterances may be distant in time and space. Bakhtin attributes to the utterance a dialogical character. Thus, each utterance is a response to prior utterances and is also a generator of future utterances. Meanwhile, Freire defines dialogue as "the encounter between men [women] mediated by the world in order to name the world" (p.76, brackets added). Whereas Bakhtin's notion of dialogue with regard to the nature of utterance is descriptive, Freire's is prescriptive. At any rate, Bakhtin's and Freire's understanding of dialogue is concerned with the sense and reality of human existence. Hence for them, *to be* as human beings is *to-be-in-relation*, that is, in an ongoing dialogue. Consequently *knowing*, even the knowing of oneself, is a dialogical process. Markova's (1990a) distinction between *dialogue* and *dialogism* helps us to understand the depth and extent of meaning and implication of a dialogical perspective. She points out the difference yet complementarity of the terms 'dialogue' and 'dialogism'. Thus 'dialogue' is specific and is referred to as: "symbolic communication that is face to face" (p. 4); whereas 'dialogism' is a philosophy, which she defines as: "an epistemological approach to the study of mind and language as historical and cultural phenomena" (p. 4).

In the empirical world, including interaction among teachers, there are different types of dialogue with distinct social functions and different degrees of asymmetries in knowledge, participation, and contributions to the unfolding of meaning. Conversation is one of those types of dialogue. Luckmann (1990) distinguishes between dialogue and conversation, characterizing the latter as a kind of dialogue in which participants tend to have equality in their participation, relatively low institutional and social constraints. It is important to indicate that dialogue is for Freire (1992) what conversation is for Luckmann. Freire emphasizes the horizontality or symmetry of power in the relationship among dialoguers to attain true communication, which is the basis of an authentic education. In the context of teacher education programs and that of school organization and culture, teachers do not have the opportunity to engage in dialogue (Freire's sense) among themselves and even less with university educators or school administrators. Hence, teachers have little chance as a professional group to "name their world" (Freire's expression) or to have a distinctive group "voice" (Bakhtin's term).

Co-construction of individual and group voices

Inspired by Bakhtin's dialogism, Wertsch (1991) and Grauman (1990), among others, characterize dialogue as a 'polyphony of voices': "The polyphony of dialogue originates in the variety of voices both between and within interlocutors" (Grauman, 1990, p. 122). Through the voices of the actual participants in the dialogue come the voices of the tradition of thought and discourse in a community or in a society. Linell and Jönsson (1991) interpret Bakhtin's (1986) notion of voices as the "ways of articulating perspectives and concerns that are prototypical of different traditions of thought and discourse in modern society" (p. 77). Thus, voice and dialogue are relational terms, as is perspective. Regarding voice, Wertsch (1991) considers that Bakhtin's notion of voice "cannot be reduced to an account of vocal-auditory signals....It applies to written as well as spoken communication, and it is concerned with the broader issues of a speaking subject's perspective, conceptual horizon, intention, and world view" (p. 51). Thus, individual voices are socially originated, maintained, or silenced. Although the pervasive character of structures and ideologies over individual voices is real, as Linell and Luckmann (1991) point out, it is important to consider also the reciprocity of this influence; that is, the influence of some individual voices in the transformation of those social structures and ideologies to improve human living. In this pursuit, Fairclough (1992) proclaims the power of the discourse and Freire (1992 [1970]) proclaims the power of the pedagogy of dialogue.

Concerning teachers' voices, Elbaz (1990) identifies 'voice' as one of the three major concepts in the discourse on teacher's thinking: "the term is always used against the background of a previous silence, and it is a political usage as well as an epistemological one" (p. 17). Teacher's voice is a commitment "to return to teachers the right to speak for and about teaching" (p. 17). She then describes what she means by teacher's voice: "the first is the power to name, to define one's own reality and to determine, at least in part, the way the rest of the world must relate to that reality; the second is the power to care for and sustain oneself and others, to maintain the dignity and integrity of those named" (p. 17). For Elbaz, to have a 'voice' is to have a language for articulating our own concerns, to recognize those concerns and to have an audience who will really listen to us. Meanwhile, O'Loughlin (1990) frames teacher's voice within a social constructivist perspective and maintains that acknowledging voice "is also an affirmation of the diverse cultures, languages and perspectives that students [and teachers] hold" (p. 13, brackets added).

The advocacy for teacher's voice within a psychological framework stresses the individual voice; however, from a dialogical perspective "the speaking personality, speaking consciousness" (Holquist & Emerson, 1981, p. 434), although unique as an individual utterance, echoes other utterances written or spoken in the past and also addresses known or unknown others. Hence individual voices develop as group voices develop. Neither one is previous to the other. They mutually constitute and influence one another. That is, their relationship is dialectical. In the context of the situation of this study, when teachers meet together to talk about their work and their feelings, they are building both their individual voices and their group voices through each others' ideas and perspectives.

Identity and personal/group voice

Speaking of construction of personal and group voices is similar to talking about identity as Taylor (1989) understands and develops it in depth. First of all he considers that what defines our identity is "whatever gives us our fundamental orientation" (p. 28). Thus the question of identity, 'who am I?', is based on what has crucial value for me, gives sense to my life and orients my thoughts and actions:

> To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame and horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose (p. 27).

For Taylor the *self* is inherently social, therefore he rejects the notion of a disengaged image of the self: "one is a self only among other selves" (p. 35). Hence, *self-definition* can happen only in interdependence with others: "The full definition of someone's identity thus usually involves not only his stand on moral and spiritual matters but also some reference to a defining community". Interlocutors and dialogue partners are essential for achieving *self-definition:* "The self exists only within what I call 'webs of interlocution'" (p. 36). Hence, *self-definition* or *self-interpretation* is both a constitutive part of the self and inherently social. Taylor's notion of the *self,* as constituted by and constitutive of cultures and social structures of which it is a part, is related to Bakhtin's notion of utterance/voice. In Bakhtin's (1986) words: "each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication" (p. 91).

Language and co-construction of voices

The study of teachers' discourse allows us to look into their perspectives on education as they are reflected, constructed or reconstructed in dialogue with other teachers. The language used in any educational community may index social practices that are in their turn constitutive components of community voices. In this regard, Rymes (1995) examines closely the language that high school dropouts use in constructing their self-agency: "The language these young men and women use provides a window into the way they perceive themselves and their place in the social world" (p. 495); and Wortham (1996) points out the role of language in creating, maintaining, or transforming positions taken by participants in a dialogue. Regarding personal *pronouns* he indicates: "speakers often use these forms to establish what roles they are playing with respect to each other." Thus the use of pronouns in a dialogue may index "participants' interactional positions" (p. 333).

The notion of *indexicality* is considered in this study not as a simple one-to-one association, *i.e.*, words or grammatical structures that represent specific identities. Rather, the sense of *indexing* taken in this study is that of specific characteristics of language as *indirectly constitutive* of those social identities through social practices. Ochs (1992), discussing the relation between language and gender, illustrates how indexing can be a constitutive relationship: "By positing a constitutive relation between language and gender, I mean that one or more linguistic features may *index* social meanings (e.g. stances, social acts, social activities), which in turn helps to constitute gender meanings" (p. 341).

By specifically examining pronouns and their indexical function, Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990) analyze the connections between language and the construction of self, social relations, and interpersonal attitudes. "We try to show that there are distinctive senses of self identifiable in diverse cultures with languages that differ in just the dimension of indexicality of the first person" (p. 18). They point out the lack of distinct pronouns in English for distinguishing between a dyadic or dual 'we' and a 'we' that includes many; or for indicating inclusiveness or exclusiveness of the interlocutors. Such distinctions are found in some Australian Aboriginal pronoun systems. Concerning the pronoun 'we,' these authors indicate it is used to signal "group indexicality," whereby the speaker establishes a connection with his/her interlocutors, sharing responsibility with them and consequently attenuating his/her responsibility. The fact of conceiving 'we' as indexing 'belonging' or 'groupiness' places on this pronoun a sort of intimacy that 'they' does not have. However, the transition to the indeterminate pronoun 'one' diminishes this intimacy.

The role of pronouns in indexing social relations has also been examined by Birch (1989). He analyzes a poem in which the author (a Native American) transforms the relationship 'we-you' to a more distant relationship 'we-they.' By substituting the pronoun 'they' for 'you' the author not only distances himself from the others but excludes 'them' from the dialogue. In this respect Benveniste (1966) considers the third person as a 'non-person' because it is outside the relation 'I-you.' Asymmetries in dialogue may be indexed by switching participants in the dialogue from active to side participants; from 'you' to 'he' (third person) (Aronsson, 1991), or from 'you' to 'it' (Rommetveit, 1991). In conversations the use of pronouns, especially 'we,' allows participants to introduce distancing, manipulation, bonding, etc. This function will be very relevant to the analysis of teachers' dialogues in this study.

METHOD

Context of the situation

Participants: This study looks at dialogue among twenty-eight experienced teachers who were attending a 14-month mid-career program while teaching at different academic levels from kindergarten through high school. With respect to their cultural background, there were 14 European-Americans and 14 participants from minority groups, including Chicanas and Mexican-Americans, two Native Americans and one self-designated 'Afrolatina'. Some of the weekly activities of the program, those involving whole-group dialogical interaction, were tape recorded and transcribed; these constitute the corpus of discourse. Field notes of the setting and institutional context complemented the transcribed recordings.

Context of the dialogues: The dialogues which form the basis of this study took place in the second period of the mid-career program teachers were attending. These whole-group dialogues were planned to provide teachers with opportunities to share classroom experiences and professional concerns, and to comment and reflect on educational issues considered to be relevant for most of them. These situations are relevant to the philosophy of the program, which encourages teachers to study their own teaching by means of self-reflection, sharing experiences and knowledge with other teachers and participating in construction of pedagogical knowledge while building community and networks with other local and distant teachers. Part of the program is carried out by peer support teachers (PSTs), fellow teachers who had participated previously in the program. Their main role is to support participants in the study of their own teaching and to help them find ways to engage in such study. Additionally, this is a collaborative mid-career program between the state university and local public schools.

Discourse analysis

In this study, the analysis of teachers' voices is based on their discourse, complemented with field notes and information about the context of this discourse including the situational, institutional and broad cultural and sociopolitical context. The focus on teachers' discourse is founded on the poststructuralist recognition of the interdependence between discourse and social practices. To mention some of its major exponents: One of the insights of Foucault (1972) is his view of discourse as constitutive of social identities, subject positions, types of selves, social relationships, objects of knowledge (disciplines) and systems of beliefs. All of these are constructed according to certain rules and orders of society and discourse, and determined by forms and relations of power (cf. Lynch & Hilles, this volume). Bourdieu (1977) maintains that through discourse or symbolic power dominant views are embedded in the system of beliefs and taken-for-granted assumptions of a culture and a society. Inspired by Foucault's thought, Fairclough (1992) states that: "Discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (p. 64). In like manner, for Bakhtin (1981) language is 'ideologically saturated', 'a world view' as opposed to an abstract system of signs. Concerning educational discourse, Bernstein (1990) argues about the crucial role of pedagogical discourse as mediating power, knowledge and formation of consciousness. Meanwhile Cazden (1988) considers education, as any other social institution, a 'communication system'. Hence, she points out: "The basic purpose of school is achieved through communication" (p. 2). Therefore, she maintains "the study of classroom discourse is the study of that communication system" (p. 2).

By looking closely at teachers' talk, this study proposes to see how voice and perspective are expressed and/or constructed in discourse. The notion of *voice* has been developed as opposed to prior silence within the context of a critical and liberating tradition of thought and discourse, whereas *perspective* has been defined as a viewpoint or orientation toward certain objects, relations or actions, within the phenomenological philosophy. In this paper voice, voices and perspective are used as interchangeable terms, although in the analysis of texts the term perspective is most often used. As indicated above, voice and voices have been defined in terms of articulation of perspectives and concerns about a specific issue.

Graumann (1990) introduces the concept of perspective for the study of the structure and dynamics of dialogue. He means by *perspective* a point of view, a frame of reference, a professional framework of knowledge and interests. Perspective for him is an interactional, hence dynamical phenomenon, as are dialogue and voice(s). *Setting a perspective* is an invitation to dialogue. In a similar way, Linell and Jönsson (1991) conceive of perspective as a particular orientation of one or more of the participants in a dialogue toward an object or topic. Actually, this understanding of perspective as *orientation* is similar to Taylor's (1989) basic definition of *identity* as a fundamental orientation in our lives. Graumann (1990) emphasizes the evolution of the mutuality of perspectives: "Whatever I present as my view on a given matter, I offer as a potential perspective for others" (p. 112). Therefore, Graumann indicates, this perspective may be accepted, rejected, transcended, negotiated or ignored. Graumann's analysis of the perspectival dynamics is oriented toward establishing the sequence of arguments which shows the perspectival unfolding of the shared topic even in the case when a perspective is rejected. Perspectival unfolding implies development and choice, both within each participant's and among many participants' perspectives regarding the same issue. Graumann states this as follows: "The act of making an aspect a subject of discourse is an act of selection and an effort to structure (control) the next phase of the dialogue in accordance with one's *values*" (p. 117). Hence setting or taking a perspective on a given matter involves also an attitude expressed by evaluative comments and/or by using specific linguistic devices. "Sometimes the distancing or identifying attitude is recognizable (perhaps involuntarily) in the choice of pronouns or of personal versus impersonal forms of immediacy vs. non-immediacy" (p. 120).

The analysis of the text and its context, including the context of the situation and the institutional and sociopolitical context of education, is directly linked to the fundamental principles of a sociocultural approach to the study of language and its function in society (Halliday and Hassan, 1985). Hence, the analysis of discourse produced in a specific situation should include the specific characteristics of the language in use and its situational, institutional and societal context

(Fairclough, 1989, 1992). This may imply at least two levels of analysis: the micro or the analysis of the text (the *minutiae* of the language used) and the specific context in which it is produced, and the macro level on which the analysis focuses on the institutional and sociopolitical context of education.

In this study the macroanalysis consisted of a holistic examination of the corpus of discourse, by which main types of dialogues or speech genres as well as the most persistent teachers' voices were identified and interpreted within the institutional and sociopolitical context of education. This analysis was based on the transcriptions of the dialogues, field notes and context information. The "overwording" (dense use of related terms as defined by Fairclough, 1992) of teachers' discourse was helpful also in the identification of their voices.

The microanalysis of the discourse focused on two main aspects: 1) Perspectival dynamics and divergence of perspectives on a given topic, including connections of these specific perspectives to the most representative types of teachers' voices identified. 2) Some linguistic features indexing participants' perspectives on a given matter, such as: a) personal pronouns, and the role they play in creating and transforming social relations in the dynamics of the dialogue; and b) "overwording" of teachers' perspectives on education.

The microanalysis was carried out for only 8 dialogues, which were selected according to the following criteria: they represent the typical dialogues of each speech genre, and in those dialogues participants continued at least ten minutes talking about and jointly developing the same topic.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA: GROWING AND SILENCING VOICES

Three main types of whole-group dialogues

Throughout the corpus of discourse I distinguished three different types of dialogues or speech genres (cf. Bakhtin 1986): *conversation, discussion after a presentation,* and *reporting small-group conversation.* These genres correspond roughly to different purposes and types of group interaction, loosely set up by the program staff, and the evolving dynamics of the dialogical interaction as well. There were also situations in which these three main types of dialogues were combined. It is important to note that the nature of the whole-group dialogues changed over the semester: the dialogues become less focused and shorter.

The distinctive characteristics of each of these types of dialogues or speech genres are summarized in Table 1. It was possible to identify five categories upon which these three types of dialogues may be compared: 1) Openness of agenda; 2) Introduction of the topic: staff or participants; 3) Necessity of staying on the topic; 4) Role of staff; and 5) Structure of interaction. By and large *openness* may be a dimension to consider in comparing these dialogues. They went from relatively open conversation to less open, report-type. Openness means participants' freedom to initiate conversations, to introduce new topics, and to engage in discussing educational issues among themselves with no direct intervention by the program staff. This kind of openness was determined to a great extent by the structure of the meeting as set up by the program staff (purpose, time allowed, topic, role of the staff in introducing topics, readdressing the flow of the dialogue, commenting on and evaluating participants' contributions). The less structure set up by the program staff, the more open were the dialogues that took place.

Dialogues also differed in the structure of the interaction considering two basic groups: staff on one hand and participants on the other. In the *conversation* type of dialogues, staff members and participants approached symmetrical rights of speakership; whereas in the other two types of dialogues, *discussion after presentation* and *reporting small-group conversation*, the staff had more control over the course of the dialogue. In Table 1 under the category *Structure of the interaction*, in the *conversation* type of dialogue the staff and participants approach equal rights of speakership; staff members were equal participants in the conversation. On the other hand, in *discussion after presentation* and in *reporting small-group conversation* staff and participants had asymmetrical rights of speakership. The staff coordinator of the dialogue alternated turns with participants, had more control over the subtopics to be discussed than the participants and had more opportunities to respond, comment and react to participants' comments.

The differences among these three types of teachers' dialogues, *conversation, discussion after presentation* and *reporting small-group conversation,* highlight the role of external control over the structure and dynamics of the dialogues among teachers: the more open (less external control), the more fluid the dialogue, the closer to a conversation. This insight is not only important for teacher education, to encourage true dialogical encounters (Freire's, 1992 sense) or true conversations (Luckmann's, 1990 sense) among teachers; *i.e.*, approaching symmetrical rights of speakership. As teachers experience in their education the benefits of having dialogues among peers, they transfer these strategies into their classrooms (Torres, 1996).

"Polyphony" of teachers' voices

We may describe teachers' dialogues as a 'polyphony' of their distinct individual voices, their group voices and those coming from the traditions of thought and discourse in education and school culture. In the dynamics of the dialogues, a teacher's utterance (an expression of her/his voice) was followed by other teachers' utterances (expression of their voices) that united or counterposed to the previous utterances, configuring in this way group voices. In other words, once a voice was raised, it interanimated other voices to address the same issue, resulting in a polyphony. *Voice* as defined above is a perspective, an orientation toward a given subject matter, which in this study was an educational issue. Thus different voices in the dialogues were identified as different perspectives on education, on the basis of a holistic analysis of the corpus of discourse, field notes and context information. Different voices or perspectives emerged from the discourse analy-

Table 1: Types of teachers' dialogues in a large group

Openness: ________ More____Less_____________

Categories	*Conversation*	*Discussion after presentation*	*Reporting small-group conversation*
agenda	open	open, but limited to the general topic of presentation	more restricted
who introduces topic	primarily participants	staff	staff sets up general topic or task, but small groups determine focus
necessity of staying on topic	no necessity	participants required to say on general or related topic	participants required to stay on topic
role of the staff	to give turns to self-selected participants within flow of conversation	to answer questions, comment and evaluate participants' comments, readdress focus, give turns	to moderate: assign turns to each small group relator, comment and evaluate participants' comments and readdress the focus.
structure of the interaction	approaches symmetrical rights of speakership	staff moderator controls rights of speakership	staff moderator controls rights of speakership

sis by looking through the 'overwording' (Fairclough, 1992) or 'overlexicality' (Fowler & Kress, 1979): a group of synonyms and related expressions to refer to or to predicate a specific educational issue. From the dialogues examined it was possible to identify four prototypical voices: the *pragmatic*, the *multiculturalist*, the *critical*, and the *social constructivist.*

In general terms the type of voice was related to the ethnic background of the participants. Thus European-American participants aligned more frequently with the *pragmatic voices* whereas participants from minority groups aligned more frequently with the *multicultural* and/or *critical voices*. This distinction was pretty obvious. Nonetheless, often the same teacher spoke explicitly with different voices, in the way she or he contrasted different viewpoints regarding the same issue. As Graumann (1990) indicates for this case, the speaker could use linguistic devices such as *for one thing... for another thing, on the one hand... on the other hand,* etc. The taking of alternative perspectives by the same speaker in the same utterance is called by Graumann (1990) "mental reservation" and marked in discourse by conjunctions and adverbs such as: *but, yet, however,* etc. Other teachers also used these markers to bring up a different perspective from that set up by previous speakers in the dialogue. Torres (1995b) found that teachers in dialogue very often use the discourse marker *but* to disagree and eventually state an alternative perspective to the one they disagree with.

The pragmatic voices

These voices were identified by the 'overwording' of *practice.* Teachers who most identify with this perspective focused strongly on the *how to* of their work. Their discourse on educational issues is full of expressions such as: *"How can **we** do"*, *"How to do"* and *"**We** need to do"*. Thus, the *how to*s or *practical* things are what is important and relevant to them. Pragmatic voices are quite salient in the following excerpts.

On one occasion teachers were discussing a presentation about portfolios and process-folios, since they were invited to participate in refining the idea of process-folio based on a diagram that contained the different aspects to consider. After a short discussion on why process-folio and not portfolio, Bob argued strongly to look at practical implications rather than talking on a conceptual level:

> "Everyone has a different process to acquire knowledge... So this diagram may work very beautifully for someone else... But that does not help everyone. **We** are looking for WHAT **WE** CAN DO (stressed) as teachers; and how **our** students learn better".

From this perspective, what matters for teachers in this kind of academic situation is the practical implication for the classroom. Bob continues:

> "Changing to the word process-folio rather than portfolio, that's totally irrelevant. How this diagram is set up and the information in it is totally irrel-

> evant... What's relevant is *how can we apply* the idea of this paper in **our** classroom settings... What's relevant is how **we** can try it out and say this is the way **I** will apply it in conferences with parents... To **me** that's the important thing".

Bob's use of the pronoun **we** and the corresponding possessive pronoun **our** allows him to portray teachers' needs and interests as different from those the program staff is selecting for them. By using **we** in this strategical way, his critique of the staff is framed as a critique of a 'group' of teachers and not his alone. Actually he is gaining allies and therefore power to oppose the staff. Bob's opposition is not only a result of the dynamics developed in this specific dialogue; it also has to do with gender issues. A more holistic examination of Bob's behavior allowed me to tie this incident to his systematic opposition to whatever issue was presented by the female staff members. This opposition did not take place when the staff member was male.

Although Bob was one of 28 teachers in the room, and one of only two male participants, his *pragmatic voice* was very salient. He usually participated several times in the same conversation topic and his utterances were almost always longer than those of the other participants, who paid attention to him and rarely disagreed openly with him.

Actually, Bob's *pragmatic voice* is his appropriation of a very deeply rooted orientation of teacher education by which teachers are trained to be *practitioners*. Consequently, they are not given many opportunities to engage in theoretical discussions, and even fewer to establish ongoing theory-practice connections. On the contrary, they are often induced to divorce themselves from theories that are not expressed in terms of *how to do* or the direct *practical application* in their classrooms. Thus their perspectives on education are essentially instrumental or technological. Stressing procedural types of knowledge, the *how to*s preempt even reflection on their practice, as in the previous situation when Bob referred to comments on a written piece as "intellectual and humorless".

It is important to note that the two men in the group were identified the most with a *pragmatic* perspective on education. They best articulated the basic premises of this perspective. Many women teachers in this group sympathized with the practical implications of the issues they were discussing but they were also concerned with other issues beside the practical ones. Lola, for instance, shared a valuable experience in a conference on teaching science. She highly valued that conference because of the immediate applications to the classroom:

> "They didn't talk about methodology. They didn't talk about educational philosophy. They talked about REAL SCIENCE (stressed) that you can apply immediately to your classroom. I don't mean to put down teachers but... Yeah, this was different and was incredible."

Although Lola is contrasting methodology and educational philosophy with

REAL SCIENCE *applicable* in the classroom, her emphasis was on the relevance of the curriculum to students, specifically to ESL (English as a Second Language) and Chicano students. I had access to this context information since I was sitting at the same table with her and heard the small-group conversation.

In a longitudinal study with student-teachers McWilliam (1994) identified some metaphors used by them such as: 'therapy talk' and 'managerial talk' among others. For instance, in talking about pedagogical issues, these student-teachers change over time: from 'egalitarian' kind of talk to 'expert-need-talk', 'how to', 'managerial talk', passing through several other kinds of talk and metaphors. McWilliam's study is a clear example of the process of socialization of teachers at college and in schools, on this kind of *pragmatic* perspective on education.

The multicultural voices

In general terms the program endorsed the multicultural voices and also began to develop a *socio-constructivist voice.* These are actually complementary rather than opposing perspectives of education. Most of this group of teachers had already been socialized for and were working somewhat with a *multicultural perspective.* Demands for *diversity* considerations were very often the basis for criticizing certain programs, attitudes, actions and perspectives. There was an 'overwording' of synonyms such as: *diversity, cultural* or *ethnic background, multiple perspectives, multiple ways of knowing, multiple intelligences,* etc.

In accordance with the *multicultural* perspective on education, teachers brought up the differences in needs and interests of students as well as teachers as a necessary condition to engage in some academic activities. In this respect Gladys reports the discussion of her small group about the conversation the staff group modeled for participants. This conversation was about a pregnant adolescent's academic behavior in the classroom:

> "One of the things **we** talked about was... how irrelevant was the reading, how irrelevant it would seem to a pregnant adolescent. **We** don't know the ethnic background of the young women. But.. you know those writings are wonderful, but **we** have to have a cultural context for it, and **we** thought that, you know, who would want to read that (classic literature) in view of that particular situation... **We** also talked about what is the value of free writing... who said writing is so important... Maybe some of the *people* have oral traditions and listening for them is much more important than writing".

Since this was a situation of reported speech, Gladys was expressing what her group said. Her peers in the group articulated best the multicultural perspective on education. She used the pronoun **we** to index her small group as co-responsible for such a perspective, excluding the other teachers and the staff. In her categorical statement "**we** have to have a cultural background for it" the use of the pronoun **we** helps her more to attenuate the demanding tone of the statement rather than to index a specific group. It is not clear who is included or excluded from that group. This is interesting since Gladys is a Native American, with a long history of oral tradition; however, she refers to them as *the people,* characterizing herself as a reporter without referring to her own history.

Compatible with the *multicultural perspective* is the idea of *democratic education* expressed in terms of *participation, choices* or *alternatives* given to students. Martha criticizes the DARE program (see below) concerning the key phrase "Just say NO", arguing against the negative emphasis:

> "**We** *need as teachers to* teach 'em how to say yes and to give 'em choices. **We** take away things that *people* want them to keep away from, but **we** don't give 'em things that they should turn to either. **We** *need to* give 'em alternatives".

Martha is setting up her perspective with respect to the program DARE. Her use of the pronoun **we** helps her to establish bonds with others and to commit themselves to give *choices* to children. At the same time she separates teachers (including herself) from others she calls *people*. In using the common noun *people* in contrast with the personal pronoun **we**, she actually gains support to voice a commitment statement on behalf of teachers, "we as teachers".

The critical voices

Critical voices in this group became silent as the program went on. At the very beginning of the program they were among the most active participants in the whole-group discussions by bringing to bear issues of *inequity, injustice, racism, sexism, oppression, irrelevance* of the curriculum to some groups of students, etc. As time went by, precisely when their conversations began to be tape recorded, they clustered together in a small group. They talked among themselves rather than voice their ideas in the whole-group conversations. Gladys was the one in this group who participated the most from a critical perspective in the whole-group conversations in the second semester. On one occasion, when teachers were talking about the 'burning questions' they have as the basis of their inquiries and reflections, Gladys questioned the roles of minority women in the educational system:

> "Since it's clear that many of **us** are aware of the triple oppression (gender, race, social class), then how come **we** continue to work within and for an educational system that is not **ours**? A system that, until recently, has consciously omitted or inaccurately presented **our** voices in textbooks? A system that is dominated by male administrators and female educational assistants?"

Actually this text was part of her journal entry for that day, and she read it for the group because the staff were asking participants to think about 'burning questions'. The 'burning' and 'explosive' nature of Gladys' statements were attenuated by at least three factors: first, they were very relevant to the situation;

second, she uses questions rather than declarative statements; and third, she uses the pronouns **we, us, our** which bond her with the minority teacher-participants, but at the same time distance her from the non-minority participants.

The socio-constructivist voices

These types of voices could be considered as the program trademark. Although the concepts were not completely new for the participants, the terminology was new for most of them.

The notion of social construction of knowledge was worked out in operational terms by means of a small group called a 'response group' or 'interpretive community'. Participants had to bring descriptions of what they were noticing in their classrooms to share with their interpretive community. Carole (a staff member) described the process by which teachers may be able to engage in social construction of knowledge as follows:

> "If **we** can take the situation **we** are in, learn to notice what's happening in that classroom, take that information and bring it to *a group of people* who have similar knowledge and interests, and share that information, **you** will be *socially constructing new knowledge* that **you** can take back to **your** classroom, back to **your** (school) system and improve it".

Carole's description of the process of social construction of knowledge in which these teachers are expected to engage is in the form of a demonstration/demand to them. Her switch in the use of pronouns to address teachers, from **we** to **you**, indicates a change of roles from being one of them (colleagues) to distancing herself from her interlocutors using **you**, **your**, as students, and **I** as a teacher, who am demanding that you do this. In using the conditional *if* and the pronoun **we** at the beginning, she attenuates the demanding tone of her statement. In describing the process of social construction of knowledge Carole is valuing social processes such as: *sharing, response group, interpretive community, socially constructing knowledge, mutuality of support and help, sharing experiences,* etc.

This notion of social construction of knowledge began to be appropriated by this group of teachers in the ways their own frameworks allowed them to assimilate (the Piagetian concept) this new paradigm of knowledge.

Monica brought what she believed was a "good example" of how she, as a teacher, engaged in constructing knowledge with a child's parent. She narrated the story of her interaction with the child that led her to call and talk with the child's mother. "**We** started talking, and **we** starting sharing my philosophy, how **I** believe in... in equality in **my** classroom and so **we** really *constructed this knowledge* base".

Monica is really interpreting her experience in terms of the paradigm of social construction of knowledge; thus her use of the personal pronoun **'we'** implied not only that they share the situation but also are developing a joint cognitive understanding of the situation. She contrasts this joint process with the statement of her belief in 'equality' which she indexes by using the first person **'I.'**

Summing up, the types of teachers' voices, *pragmatic, multiculturalist, critical,* and *socioconstructivist,* represent old and new perspectives on education in general and on teachers' culture in particular. However, these voices were constructed and reconstructed according to the specific conditions of the situation and of the participants in the dialogues. Thus, gender, race and cultural background were playing out in the formulation, alignment with or opposition to a given perspective of participants concerning their different voices. The fact of having silenced some voices over time is evidence of the distinct maneuvers of power relationships between staff and some participants, as well as among participants, despite the apparently symmetrical power relationships. Personal pronouns used by participants indexed some of the characteristics of the dynamics of social relationship generated in the conversation and/or brought up by participants as part of their ideological and cultural background. Their predominant use of the pronoun **we** is a clear indication of group identity as teachers and as colleagues sharing specific ideologies and perspectives on education. As Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990) indicate, beside the feature of social bonding between the speaker and the interlocutors, the pronoun **we** had other functions such as the attenuation of responsibility of the speaker for what she/he said by sharing it with the interlocutors and the attenuation of control exercised by the speaker over the listeners. Another aspect of the use of **we** is the introduction of ambiguity (regarding who **we** are) which may attenuate control and diffuse responsibility. In addition to the functions of **we** that Mühlhäusler and Harré describe, sometimes **we** was used to create allies and therefore gain control over the *other* whom the speaker was trying to oppose. At other times the speaker's strategic use of **we** allowed her/him to attenuate control of his/her utterance and consequently to diminish the probability of facing disagreement. Actually, avoidance of disagreement is a distinctive characteristic of teachers' dialogues (Torres, 1995b).

Divergences between different voices

Confrontation and the subsequent negotiation of perspectives among participants were quite rare in the whole-group dialogues. Most of these events occurred in the *conversation* type of dialogues. Meanwhile, episodes of divergence of perspectives between the participants and the staff were more frequent. These took place during the staff presentations and to a lesser extent in the dialogues called *reporting small-group conversations.* As a way of illustration of the perspectival dynamics in these dialogues there was selected a fragment from the longest and the most fluid *conversation* type of dialogue in this group of teachers. The analysis of the dynamics of perspectives consists of following the movements in the dialogue as a participant introduces a new topic and sets up his/her perspective, and the ways by which other participants react to the topic and perspective: accepting/taking, rejecting, reformulating the topic and the perspective already set up, or bringing in new perspectives and topics. In this analysis of the dynamics of the dialogue, the personal pronouns teachers use indicate alignment-distancing, responsibility, 'groupiness', control, and even ambiguity.

> *Context of the situation*: This conversation took place at the beginning of the second semester. Mary (01-05) (a staff member) brought up the most widely heard word at that epoch, "change", and related it to drug prevention, and specifically to the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program. In the contextual frame for this activity called "Open Invitation", participants could reject or ignore this topic and introduce any other topic. They showed their acceptance of the topic by engaging in the discussion. This was a *conversation* type of dialogue.

Conversation on "DARE" program (fragment)

01 Mary: ... They all talked about practice of prevention programs. They were talking about change also.
02 **We** *need to* talk about drug prevention in schools and strategies for saying NO and how children need to
03 develop these skills. **We** have other ways of approaching this development of skills in schools. **We** *need*
04 *to* teach kids *skills*. This idea of preventing drug problems and other kinds of problems that are present in
05 ***our*** schools.
06 Martha: All of **you** talk about change and .... most of the time it's not for the better. In **our** neighbor-
07 hood, in **our** *community* **we** see a lot of change in families and change... in our schools but it's been for
08 the most part worse more often than... than better. Here, in the DARE program, **they** go into the class-
09 room for the first graders. For the most part it just sounds like a joke: "Say NO to drugs". Another
10 thing, to say no to strangers, it's usually brother, sister, friends. I think **we** need to teach the children
11 how to say yes and how to have some dreams and hopes. **They** don't know how to dream, **they** don't
12 know how to have hope for anything. **They** don't look ahead into the future anymore. **We** need to give
13 them some choices. **They** need to say yes too as well as say no. The kids know how to say no. **They**
14 say no all the time when **they** don't want to do anything. **They** know how to say no. **We** spend too much
15 time ah... **We** need as teachers to teach 'em how to say yes and to give 'em *choices*. **We** take away the
16 things that people want them to keep away from, but **we** don't give 'em things that they should turn to
17 either. **We** need to give 'em *alternatives.*
18 Mary: **They** must be looking for hope.

19 Bob: It's funny. In **my** previous school there was a huge banner for the DARE program. **I** walked in one
20 morning and there was this eight foot long banner and in letters this high it said JUST SAY NO. **I**
21 thought it was... what kind of... it really looked awfully negative when **you** walk into **your** school
22 and see such a big word NO! **I** wish **you** would say YES to something. Just a stupid person, just pick-
23 ing on the phrase. I hope they're thinking of something more than just the phrase.
24 Liz: Hopefully, **I** just want to say ONE [stressed] good thing about the DARE program. **They** targeted
25 my daughter's class in kindergarten. She's in fifth grade right now. There is quite a unique thing. *The*
26 *kids* are really involved. She's really, you know, behind the program. It's in Montezuma. It's over
27 Indian School and Carlisle. And all...
28 Chorus: Leena, Leena's school!
29 Liz: Leena's school... And basically what they're doing, since **I** work in middle school, is starting the
30 kids learn... teaching refusal skills, which are really important because they feel peer pressure. It's
31 collaborative for drugs. And... those kids don't know how to...to use refusal... you know... refusal
32 skills. They don't know refusal skills at all. So... it's interesting, I found this interesting.
33 Teresa: **I** was in () and he talked about refusal skills and **we** all have to also teach refusal *skills*. The
34 officer there is very, very positive and students are very interested, and he has been teaching a lot of role
35 playing of refusal skills and... and **I** feel that in **our** school it's effective [a lot of talking].

Looking at this dialogue in terms of the dynamics of perspectives that teachers bring to bear, Mary (lines 01-05) invites the dialogue by setting her perspective toward drug prevention: "**We** *need to* teach kids *skills*" (03-04). This perspective is actually a commitment as a teacher: "**We** *need to teach...*". The pronoun **we** injects a sense of intimacy that balances somewhat the obligatory tone of her perspective. The word *skills* is key in the educational approach of this prevention program, indicating that it is the individual in whom lies the capacity to refuse to engage in drug abuse. Mary is really echoing what different speakers on educational issues were saying in that epoch.

Martha's (06-17) reaction is complex: a) Relativizing change (06-08). This is actually a subtle disagreement that becomes more obvious as we look at her use of personal pronouns. First she addresses the interlocutors with **you**, which is accentuated *"All of* ***you***", which she opposes to **we** and **our** (neighborhood, community), excluding of course the interlocutors. b) Criticizing the negative impact of the catch phrase of the DARE program "SAY NO TO DRUGS" for the community with which she works (09-10). The use of the pronoun **they** to refer to DARE expresses pretty much her distance with regard to the program strategy. c) Stating teachers' commitments: "I think **we** *need to* teach the children how to say yes and how to have some dreams and hopes" (10-11). She is actually referring to the specific needs of the children of the community she works with: "**We** *need as teachers* to teach 'em how to say yes and to give 'em choices" (15). Martha's call to teachers to be the children's advocates is reiterative (10,12,14,16). These are really a 'display of commitments', as Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990) describe them, which are attained by **we**, a group indexical. The reiterative aspect adds force to these commitments. However, her systematic use of **we** may be seen as a way of attenuating control and consequently protecting herself from possible opposition.

Mary (18) accepts the commitment that Martha is calling for: "They (the children to whom Martha refers) must be looking for hope". Meanwhile Bob's (19-23) perspective on the DARE program is a sort of *yes/but* reaction. He agrees with Martha regarding the negative impact of the catch phrase of the program. However, he diminishes this negative impact by a self-deprecating remark: "*Just* a *stupid* person, *just* picking on the phrase. I hope they're thinking of something more than just the phrase" (22-23). The use of *just* and *stupid* as mitigators allow him to surface the positive aspects of the program. The narrative character of Bob's utterance allows him to use **I-you** where **you** really implies not his interlocutors but an indeterminate **one.**

Liz (24-27) defends the program, "Hopefully, I just want to say ONE (stressed) good thing about the DARE program" (24), by pointing out its positive results in her daughter's school: "There is a unique thing. The kids are really involved" (25-26). Liz' defense of the program, for which she assumes full responsibility by using the pronoun **I**, comes at a moment when there was a rise in criticism of the program. So she uses linguistic resources to disagree politely and to prevent reactions: "Hopefully" which gives a sense of possibility; "just ONE thing", stressing ONE which implies a sense of permissibility — if there are bad things, there can also be good things. In line 28 some people in the group identify the school to which Liz is referring as the school in which one of the participants (Leena) is working. Liz (29-32) aligns with the basic strategy of the program by justifying the felt need of *refusal skills:* "Teaching refusal skills which are very important because they feel peer pressure" (30).

Teresa (33-35) aligns with Liz' defense of the program on the basis of the need for refusal skills on the part of students: "*We* all *have to* also teach *refusal skills*" (33). However, like Martha (10-17) and Mary (3-4), Teresa states a commitment including the interlocutors as she uses **we.** Thus she shares responsibility and control due to the obligatory tone of her statement. She also defends the program because of its positive results in her school: "I feel in ***our*** school it's effective" (35). Teresa here uses ***our*** in an exclusive sense, to differentiate her school from others.

So far two perspectives of the DARE program are at play: 1) The program's catchword is too negative and therefore not relevant for students of Martha's school and community; and 2) The program is effective in Liz' and Teresa's schools. Meanwhile, Mary (line 18) is acknowledging Martha's suggestion about teaching something positive also. Bob, in turn, is aligning with Martha regarding the negative impact of the phrase "Just Say NO", although he mitigates this negative aspect of the program. Unlike Martha, he does not go on to consider the differences in the impact of this phrase for different communities. In the analysis of the dynamics of perspective, personal pronouns play an important role by indexing characteristics of the social relations relevant to the situation, facilitating the understanding of the perspectives or voices at play.

At any rate, the two perspectives set up so far are really the expression of two voices: 1) the *pragmatic voice* uttered by Liz and followed by Teresa, who identify themselves with the program's basic format of 'refusal skills', connecting the program in this way with a pragmatic stance on education; and 2) the *multiculturalist voice* uttered by Martha in complaining about the lack of responsiveness of the DARE program to the specific needs of the community she is working with.

As the participants move on in the conversation, they negotiate their perspectives on the negative as well as the positive aspects of the program, and the possible explanations of those results. The discussion continues on the reasons why the program works or does not work in some communities, and the pros and cons of the program: credibility, lack of teaching skills, managerial skills, role of teachers, etc. In general terms the negotiation of their divergences is founded on the notion of *diversity:* different needs and different ways to meet those needs. Little by little *diversity* becomes the convergent point since both parties base their arguments on the issue of *diversity*: On the one hand Martha indicates the irrelevance of the program because it does not consider *diversity of needs* in the target population. On the other hand, Liz and Teresa also take *diversity* as their reason why the program is effective in their specific cases.

By analyzing the perspectival dynamics and the role of personal pronouns in indexing the ongoing configuration of the social relations constructed or reconstructed in teachers' dialogues, I was able to identify in this specific context, first of all the high use by these teachers of the pronoun **we** and the co-associated **our, us** for self-reference and for referring to their interlocutors. Secondly, as Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990) indicate, the pronoun **we** may index social bonding or 'groupiness', for sharing responsibility or control of the illocutionary force of the speech act, when it includes the interlocutors, while distancing from others (**they**). These authors also indicate another function of the pronoun **we**, which is not precisely indexical. In some cases **we** is used to create ambiguity and vagueness, thus it helps the speaker to attenuate responsibility and control. In this case **we** and the *other* are unspecified. In addition to these functions, teachers' strategic use of the pronoun **we** helped them to avoid facing disagreement from the interlocutors. Finally, **we** can also be used to gain control and power to oppose the *other.* This is the case when by using **we** as self-reference, the speaker excludes his/her interlocutors or a defined group of them, to whom s/he refers as **you** or **they**. In using **we** in this strategic manner, the speaker not only gains allies but also some control over the *other*, from whom the speaker distances herself/himself.

DISCUSSION

When this large group of teachers got together, they engaged in a *conversation,* a *discussion after a presentation,* or a *report on a small-group conversation.* These types of dialogues developed within certain frames set up by the program, the evolving characteristics of the interaction dynamics among teachers, and the specific conditions of the situation in which they took place. These three types of dialogues differ one from another in several respects: a) Agenda openness; b) Who introduced the topic, one of the participants or the staff; c) Perceived necessity of staying on the same topic; d) Role of the staff member who coordinated the meeting; and e) Structure of the interaction. Across these categories of comparison among dialogues there is the *openness* dimension that has to do with the degree of control the program held in terms of structuring the conditions in which these dialogues occurred. The more open (less external structuring), the more probable it was for participants to have a true conversation (a true dialogue in Freire's sense), talking among themselves with relatively symmetrical rights of speakership. The *conversation* type of dialogues in this study may be called, from the Freirean perspective, authentic opportunities for dialogue among teachers: authentic spaces and times for growing their genuine voices and developing their identities. *Genuine voice* seems redundant, unless we oppose this expression to that in which a teacher's voice is more a reproduction of the dominant ideology that, unawares, pervades his/her individual voice. Therefore, becoming aware of how our voices are pervaded by dominant ideologies, and in this process to discover our genuine voices, should be a primordial goal of education. 'Learning to read the word and the world' is Freire's famous sentence that states just such a goal. The necessary condition to reach this goal is to be able to engage in authentic dialogue, since "Without dialogue there is no communication and without communication there can be no true education" (Freire, 1992 [1970], p. 81).

Teachers' dialogues may be described as a 'polyphony', a "dialogical interanimation" (Volosinov, 1973, p. 95), including an individual's different voices, the voices of different participants, and the voices of the traditional theories and ideologies of education. Sometimes all those voices were so embedded one in another that it was difficult to differentiate among them. Only by doing a close examination of the use of language and its situational, institutional and societal context (using Fairclough's, 1989, 1992 levels of analysis of discourse), was it possible to identify four types of teachers' voices: the *pragmatic voices,* the *multiculturalist voices,* the *critical voices,* and the *socio-constructivist voices.* The 'overwording' teachers used to communicate their ideas on a given educational issue was very helpful for identifying their voices. The use of many synonyms and related terms and phrases may be taken as indicator of a teacher's deepest concern, or "intense preoccupation" (Fowler & Kress, 1979, p. 211). Of course there was also information from the context of the situation and the author's own familiarity with the discourses and theories of education, that play an important role in the identification of those voices.

Although there were identified four prototypical teachers' voices, this is not to say that a given participant's voice is merely a repetition of one or more of those four voices; each participant's voice is a unique appropriation and configuration of pervading traditional voices in a specific area, as well as his/her own creation. The multi-voiced quality of an 'individual' voice is captured poetically in this well known sentence by Bakhtin (1981): "The word in language is half someone else" (p. 293). The appropriation of this word, he continues, is a matter of intentionality, accent, expressivity and adaptation: "It becomes one's own word when the speaker populates it with his [her] own intention, his [her] own accent, when he [she] appropriates the word adapting it to his [her] own semantic and expressive intention" (p. 293, brackets added). A dialogical interpretation of the relation among individual voices, group voices and the voices of tradition of thought and discourse, is that of dynamic and evolving interdependence among them; because of this interdependence they grow and change. Thus, culture and traditions influence individual and group voices. Since the influence is reciprocal and evolving, individual voices and above all group voices could change cultures and historical conditions. This is one of the main premises of critical pedagogy founded in Freire's seminal book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1992). Similarly, Fairclough (1989, 1992) proclaims a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structures, which may transform each other depending on the access to power, including the new modalities of power in which the power of language has been enhanced. The change of social structures may be initiated as a "Critical Language Awareness" (Fairclough, 1995) to unveil the language of power and become 'empowered' by the power of language. This critical language awareness is key in the development of both individual and group voice and identity.

Gender, race and cultural background of the participants were somewhat connected to the type of predominant voice of the different subgroups configured according to these factors. In the present study, there was a quite obvious association between the race and ethnic background of the participants and the kind of voice with which they tended to be most identified: the European-American participants were more identified with the *pragmatic voices* and the 'minority' groups with the *multicultural* and/or *critical voices.* With regard to the *socio-constructivist voice*, it mostly reflected the orientation of the program, and the participants had just begun to make sense of it, except for one participant who really got the essential idea of this perspective. This association is not uncommon given the origins and history of the perspectives on education such as the *multiculturalist* or the *critical* which represent and are part of the ideology, values and struggles of the minority groups as Sleeter and McLaren (1995) point out. The *pragmatist voice*, on the other hand, is the hallmark of the European-American culture and longtime dominant ideology, which underlies apparently 'new' perspectives on education.

Something similar happened in this group regarding gender. The only two male participants in the program, from the European-American culture, were the most obviously identifiable as *pragmatic voices*. In addition, when female members of the staff were orienting an activity for the participants, often the male participants disagreed openly with the presenter or tried to criticize the activity based on minor details rather than on a comprehensive consideration of it. Since they did not do that in similar situations when the presenter or coordinator was a male staff member, and their obvious discomfort in the aforementioned situations, one could see this as a power struggle. The most common situation in the school culture is that by which the male (teacher, administrator or any position of power) is leading female teachers. The inverse roles were something 'unusual' and represented something to try to tear down. Apparently unsubstantiated disagreement and critique constituted their "counterscript", using Gutierrez, Rymes, and Larson's (1995) terminology to describe the construction and configuration of relations of power in the classroom, albeit a very typical classroom.

One of the objectives of the program these teachers were attending, was to encourage and support the growing of teachers' own voices. In doing so, the staff fashioned curriculum activities aimed at that purpose. The whole-group dialogues were part of those activities. Nonetheless there were some teachers whose voices were not heard in the large-group dialogues. There were various motives and conditions which prevented teachers from participating in them. For instance, some teachers preferred to remain silent, or they did not find it worthwhile to speak in the large group, and/or they did not want to 'monopolize' time. Other teachers were simply afraid to talk in the large group. However, when one remains in silence, this does not imply that one does not have a perspective on the given matter. At any rate, raising voice or keeping silent is not only a matter of personal characteristics or will, it is also a matter of the context of the situation which privileges some voices and discourages others. As a matter of fact, the program framework, enacted by the staff, displayed and endorsed the development of the *socio-constructivist voices* and a mainstream view of the *multiculturalist voices* or perspectives on education; but discouraged the expression and development of the *critical voices* by avoiding those situations and topics (controversial and 'hot' topics such as racism or inequality) where those voices could be raised or were beginning to be heard.

The endorsement of the development of the different teachers' voices and identities implies the fashioning of opportunities to allow those voices to be expressed and also to grow, necessarily including the opportunity to examine them critically in terms of the ideologies that underlie them. Thus teachers can determine how much they recreate or reproduce dominant ideologies and imposed identities, for example accepting without hesitation their identity as 'practitioners' as opposed to theorists or an "intellectual humorless" type of person, as referred to by one of the participants. Giroux (1988) calls for changing the teachers' role from merely 'practitioners' to also 'intellectuals'. Actually, he devotes one entire book entitled *Teachers as Intellectuals* to the elaboration of this perspective. The pervasive character of the dominant ideology and the unawareness of it by teachers facilitates their acceptance of imposed identity, diminishing thus their possibility of developing or constructing their authentic voices and identities. *Authentic* refers to the type of teacher's voice that Elbaz (1990) is advocating: "to return to teachers the right to speak for and about teaching" (p. 17); or the type of identity that Taylor (1989) is talking about. Despite the efforts of the program staff to build opportunities to allow the growth of teachers' voices, actually there was no "third space", as Gutierrez, Rymes and Larson (1995) call the classroom in which teacher and students (in their case) may engage in a true dialogue: "a place in which a Bakhtinian social heteroglossia is possible... a site where no cultural discourses are secondary" (p. 447). In the same vein, feminist 'voices' such as Belenky's *et al* (1986) study of women's development of *self, voice* and *mind,* and Gilligan's (1982) study on women's *moral development*, among many others, are well documented claims of women's *'distinct voices'* regarding knowledge and moral issues, which have always been ruled by male standards and their distinctiveness ignored. In Freire's terms, true dialogue implies not only equal rights and symmetrical relations of power among speakers but their engagement in 'reading the word and the world': "true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in *critical thinking*" (Freire, 1992, p. 80-81, italics added). Hence true dialogue is a necessary condition for the growing of authentic voices since these are always in a process of transformation. Therefore we constantly need to engage in an ongoing dialogue with others in order to grow: "Dialogue thus is an existential necessity" (Freire, 1992, p. 77).

At a micro level of analysis there were examined the construction and reconstruction of *voice* and *identity* along with the dynamics of the dialogue, which is constitutive of and constituted by the social relations, including power relationships. This microanalysis focused on the functions of the personal pronouns, especially the pronoun **we** (due to its high use by these teachers), as indexical of the social relations generated in the dynamics of the dialogue. As Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990) note, **we** may index social bonding or 'groupiness', sharing of responsibility and control, and also for creating ambiguity and attenuating responsibility and/or control with the interlocutors. Another function of **we** that is not contemplated by Mühlhäusler and Harré is that of gaining control or power. This happened when the speaker used **we** excluding a specific group (the listeners or a specific group of listeners such as the program staff) to whom he/she referred as **you** or **they**. In using **we**, the speaker gains power by creating some allies to oppose the ones s/he is criticizing. In brief, the microanalysis of the strategic use of language, such as personal pronouns in dialogue, sheds light on the situated construction of teachers' voices and identities in the dynamics of their dialogues.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Each day the awareness of the necessity and benefits of teachers' dialogues is growing, and so are their voices. However, not all teachers' talks are beneficial to them and not all their voices are authentic voices. Of the three types of whole-group dialogues identified (*conversation, discussion after a presentation* and *report of a small-group conversation*), the *conversation* type of dialogue, due to its openness, allowed teachers to raise their different voices or educational perspectives (*pragmatic, multiculturalist, critical* and *socio-constructivist*). Nonetheless, in order to have teachers' authentic voices and identities develop, it is necessary for the teacher education program to consciously foster true dialogues among teachers, including the critical examination of their voices and perspectives on education. This is needed in order to make teachers aware of their tendency to be mere reproducers of the dominant ideology despite their honesty and engagement in the education of their students.

The microanalysis of some characteristics of the language teachers used in their interaction with other teachers unveils the processes of construction and reconstruction of teachers' voices and identities in the dynamics of the dialogue, which is constituted by and constitutive of the ongoing social relations including power relationships. This microanalysis focused on the functions of the personal pronouns, especially the pronoun we (due to its high use by these teachers), as indexical of the social relations generated in the dynamics of the dialogue. Hence, the study of personal pronouns in teachers' dialogues sheds light on our understanding of teachers' situated construction of their voices and identities while engaging in dialogue with other teachers.

APPENDIX: CONVENTIONS IN THE TRANSCRIPTIONS

(): Empty parentheses indicate inaudible speech
(laughs): Words in parentheses: nonverbal utterances
Words in CAPITAL LETTERS: Raising the voice
Utterance with final rising intonation is marked with a question mark, continued intonation with a comma, and falling intonation with a period.
... Pause within an utterance

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