THE CHALLENGE OF TEACHING SPANISH L1 AS PLURICENTRIC LANGUAGE FROM A CRITICAL LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT. The aim of this article is to outline an overview and to discuss some constraining factors related to teaching Spanish as L1 in the context of linguistic diversity in Argentina. The underlying argument of this paper is that diverse school materials and teaching methodology involved in teaching Spanish as L1 neglects linguistic diversity. Instead, they subscribe to discourses that reinforce a pyramidal normative structure where the Spanish Royal Academy is the apex, and therefore, so is its linguistic authority. Our suggestion in this regard is that the diversity of voices must have a space not only in the classroom and materials, but also in research processes and academia´s knowledge management. For this purpose, and framed within a glotopolitical approach, this paper analyzes, firstly, the obstacle represented by the fixed categories included in school curriculum such as "language", "variety", "standard", and even "national language"; secondly, the paper reviews the role played by grammatization instruments (such as dictionaries and school textbooks, among others) and their monologic discursive wording. Finally, the article suggests didactic strategies to analyze linguistic varieties in class, and to reinforce a critical reading of norm distribution instruments.

Keywords. Non-dominant standard; pluricentric language teaching; Spanish varieties; Spanish normative instruments

RESUMEN. El propósito de este artículo es exponer y discutir algunos de los factores que condicionan la enseñanza de español L1 en Argentina en un contexto de diversidad lingüística. La hipótesis de base del trabajo es que los distintos soportes empleados, así como las prácticas de enseñanza de español L1, operan en torno a discursos sobre la lengua "correcta" que refuerzan y perpetúan la estructura normativa piramidal que ubica a la Real Academia Española como ápice o centro de distribución de norma. La propuesta que desplegamos en el artículo es que la diversidad de voces debería tener representación en el trabajo áulico y en los materiales de consulta, así como en la gestión de conocimiento en el contexto académico. A estos fines, y enmarcado en el enfoque glotopolítico, el paper analiza, en primer lugar, el obstáculo que representan las categorías fijas incluidas en el currículo escolar tales como "lengua", "variedad", "estándar lingüístico" e incluso "lengua nacional"; en segundo lugar, el trabajo repasa el rol que desempeñan los instrumentos de gramatización como diccionarios o manuales escolares, y el estilo monológico en que están gestionados. Finalmente, el trabajo sugiere algunas estrategias didácticas para analizar las variedades lingüísticas en clase y para alentar una lectura crítica de los instrumentos de distribución de norma.

Palabras clave. estándar no dominante; enseñanza lengua pluricéntrica; variedades del español; instrumentos normativos del español

1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to review some historical and social conditions of the teaching of Spanish as a mother tongue in Argentina and their current impact on the classroom.[1] Specifically, we are interested in showing that certain materials and actions involved in teaching Spanish as L1 (such as: school curriculum, grammatization instruments -among

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them: schoolbooks and dictionaries- and grammar teaching practices) sustain discourses on "correct" and "incorrect" forms of language. As we will examine, the language form called "standard", the desired language for the nation, is taught in schools as a fixed and a-historical category, and this condition has repercussions on different teaching processes.

In former analysis and observations that came out in the context of teacher training courses we offered (López García 2015, 2020, 2023), we demonstrated that the school curriculum, textbooks, dictionaries and other grammatization instruments (Auroux 1992) proclaim their respect and valuation of diversity but, paradoxically, school practices also reinforce the pyramidal normative structure (Alvarado 2023, Greusslich 2022, Méndez Gª de Paredes 2012) where Real Academia Española [the Spanish Royal Academy, hereinafter RAE] is the apex, and therefore, so is its linguistic authority and the variety of Madrid Spanish represented in its instruments. This situation replicates the mode of operation of late capitalism: celebrating identities and diversity while, in parallel, unifying cultures, labor markets and territorial exploitation; whereby, from this perspective, language is part of the exchange of goods and services (Blommaert 2010, Duchêne & Heller 2012, Gal 2012).

In order to analyze in detail some of the limiting factors of teaching Spanish as L1 from a linguistic diversity perspective, the article is organized as follows: in the first place, the paper shows that the fixed categories that are included in school curriculum and are taught to our students could be considered as obstacles, and advocates for the need to reconsider concepts usually taken as discrete categories such as "language", "variety", "standard", and even "national language". Moreover, the article shows that not only does the fixed delimitation of categories define the ways-of-saying of the nation, but they also assign the complementary linguistic and social roles to other discrete categories such as "native language", "dialect", or "incorrect uses", among others. This paper suggests instead that it might be useful to recategorize the standard as a construction, as a dynamic phenomenon, gradual within a continuum in its different aspects; and alternatively, to start by including, as a school concept, the "non-dominant standard" or "non-dominant variety" (Muhr 2015), which also involves the idea of power behind the standardization.

In the second place, the paper states the need to train our students in critical reading of norm distribution instruments (such as dictionaries and school textbooks among others) and, additionally, the need to develop didactic strategies to show and analyze diverse voices in the classroom and school materials.

Thirdly, the article proposes the necessity to reorient, not only school practices towards language diversity, but also communication of academic research developed and managed both from and for educational contexts. Our suggestion in this regard will be that the diversity of voices have a space not only in the classroom and materials, but also in research processes and academia´s knowledge management.

1.1. Theoretical framework and methodology

This research is framed, on the one hand, within glottopolitical approach (Arnoux & Del Valle 2010, Del Valle 2021, Guespin & Marcellesi 1986). This discipline considers that public and private interventions in language are expressions and articulations of social, political, historical and economic processes. According to this disciplinary framework, language is a flexible variable that reflects tensions and disputes to establish a certain social order, and therefore language must always be analyzed with attention to social phenomena. On the other hand, this article is based on a critical linguistics perspective (Andrade & Zavala 2019, Bucholtz et al. 2014, Flores & Rosa 2015, Leeman 2018, Pennycook 2008), which

examines, through discourse analysis (Angenot 2010, Arnoux 2006, Orlandi 2009, 2012), the language ideologies underlying certain postulates or actions. Both disciplines will help us to analyze the material and historical reasons that enable the representation of Argentina as a monolingual country and the lack of didactic resources to consider linguistic diversity, especially in elementary and secondary classrooms.

The methodological strategies of glotopolitical perspective combine research on language ideologies (Pennycook 2008, Swiggers 2019, Woolard 2016) and models of critical discourse analysis (Blommaert 2010). Several investigations (see Arnoux 2016, 2022; Zavala 2021; Alvarado 2023) show how this combination of theoretical and methodological tools make it possible to comprehensively examine various sources of information linked to the school system: curriculum, schoolbooks, dictionaries, Grammar, etc. And, most importantly, it also allows us to recognize and weigh those school materials as instruments managed in a historical, political and technical environment.

From this interdisciplinary perspective, this article will analyze a series of discourses in order to highlight the political condition of linguistic features and categories endorsed by the school. The corpus is composed by a sequence of diverse documents and genres (Glozman 2018, 2020): tweets, dictionary entries, surveys, graffiti. They were collected based on the fact that all of them share strong representations (Bein 2021, Kronsnick et al. 2005) of school regulations and / or the status of Argentinian Spanish. Indeed, according to glotopolitical perspective, the relevant aspect of a linguistic phenomenon is not its material identity. Glotopolitics considers linguistic features as traces that reveal simultaneously the historicity and current tensions among varieties of the same language. The feature of a linguistic variety should be analyzed as part of a system composed of several linguistic and social conditions; in that sense every linguistic sign is a "linguistic fact" ["hecho lingüístico"] (cfr. Österreicher 2002, also Lara 2015, López Serena 2017, Méndez García 2012 and Méndez García and López Serena 2019). Due to these conditions, the analysis of linguistic features should take into account the complexity of the "linguistic fact". We consider the glotopolitical perspective as the most appropriate to articulate factors of the linguistic system (always regional) with the political and material context of Spanish as a pluricentric language. Especially because the school should reflect on the linguistic ideology behind the standard it promotes. Glotopolitics emphasizes the interpretative analysis of school materials (dictionaries, school curricula, grammars, school textbooks, etc.), and allows us to compare the relative value of actual uses of language.

2. Monolingualism and fixed linguistic categories

Argentinian school, established within the ideological frame of the 19th century state nation, tends to consider Argentina as a monolingual country (Bein 2012). Most recently, the struggle for the rights of indigenous speakers (Gandulfo 2018, Unamuno et al. 2020), the encouragement of immigration (which is included in the Argentinian 1853 Constitution), and the implementation of progressive didactic approaches, among other conditions, forced schools to review linguistic biases and become aware of the fact that students are always speakers of languages in contact. But even despite the awareness about linguistic diversity, languages are being presented in school as if they were clearly differentiated from each other and hierarchized by some kind of natural rule. In this logic, the arbitrary concept of national language is usually interpreted (inside and outside schools) as the linguistic form of "national being" and schools avoid (or forget) to present it as a result of political operations.

Most Argentinian citizens are far from thinking beyond the Spanish cage (see surveys in Bein 2012, López García 2013) because in Argentina Spanish is spoken in the administration and in almost all the schools of the territory. Due to this fact, even people who know little about South America and, surprisingly, a large number of Argentinians used to think that Spanish was the only language in the territory.

In agreement with this representation, the Argentinian population census has never, since the first one taken in 1869, included questions about languages.

Image 1: Censo Nacional de Población, Hogares y Viviendas [National Census of Population and Residences], Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INDEC) [National Institute of Statistics and Census]
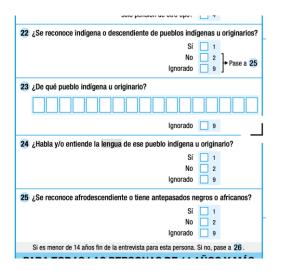

Image 1 shows questions 22 to 24 from the last Population and Residences Census, taken in 2022, which actually include for the first time in its history a question about languages. However, Question 24 "Do you speak and/or understand the language of such indigenous or original people?" could only be answered by those who identified themselves as part of a "special" group: indigenous or aboriginal (see question 22 "Do you identify yourself as an indigenous person or descendant of an indigenous or aboriginal people?").

At this point we should remark that asking (or not) about languages across the territory, and fixing national identities in relation with some languages or some features are political decisions in the sense that they follow a political agenda.

This census asks about "lateral" languages only to "lateral", "special", inhabitants, which is an action that conveys the representation according to which the national language is Spanish. Indeed, Argentinian institutional education takes place in a single language and in a single language form: Buenos Aires standard, despite the fact that over fourteen vernacular languages (such as Guaraní or Quechua, cfr. Censabella 2010) and several immigrant languages (like Wolof, Syrian, Korean, Russian) are spoken and full of vitality in Argentina.

2.1. Argentinian 19th-century political program

In Argentina, the political project has associated the concept of a national language with Madrid linguistic standard, and has called the European culture "civilization". Complementarily, it has called indigenous languages and local varieties "barbarity" (Lojo 1994). Indeed, the worldview reproduced in "national" literature, music, painting, history, and geography (among other representations of nationality) bring together two

complementary-opposite series of words which activate *memoire discursives* (Angenot 2010): barbarity vs. civilization, nature vs. culture, dialect vs. language, variety vs. standard. These discursive series were disseminated since the beginning of the Argentinian administration, in the early 19th century, with the aim of imposing a model of occupation of indigenous territories and adapting the country to the global production system. These discourses are present in current school curriculum and textbooks (López García 2015), in speakers' survey answers (López García 2013)[2], and in the media. In these series, the school variety still remains on the side of civilization, related with other variables such as: correct norm, reasoned rules, or prestigious speakers.

In sum, a national language involves a set of concepts, marks, features and representations. Therefore, a way to unveil these linguistic-politics operations is, on the one hand, to consider the standard as a relatively stable system of linguistic features and uses which emerge and circulate within a "variational space" (López Serena 2022), on the other, to dismiss the usual consideration of standard as a discrete, binary and fixed concept.

Additionally, we have to take into account that the frequency of occurrence of certain linguistic features (and their associated social representations) move along a continuum involving other standards with which they are, in some way, in tension, whether due their coexistence (in the media, in the territory, in public administration), or due to the fact that they occupy different places along the historical evolution of the language. Precisely in relation to this multiplicity of possible forms, Jennifer Leeman (2018) suggests:

> Crucially, while advocates of Critical Language Awareness do not reject the expansion of student's linguistic repertoires, they do reject the acquisition of prestige varieties and practices as the primary goal of language education (Leeman, 2018, 349).[3]

With regard to Leeman´s statement, we would like to point out two concerns. On the one hand, it is important to highlight that our suggestion on including other languages and other varieties in the classroom does not pursue the goal of improving the standard. On the contrary, we argue that categories such as "standard" or "national language" should be seen in the school as historically and politically situated instead of being taught as binary phenomena (correct/incorrect, appropriate/inappropriate). In other words, we convey that it is not a matter of using variation as a step towards the acquisition and improvement of (the) standard, conversely, the goal of suggestions we make is to interpret critically linguistic categories such as "standard" or "correct uses".

On the other hand, it should be noted that school activities on language varieties (and/or on minoritized languages) in the Argentinian education system are usually interpreted as a matter of attitude such as "respect", "consideration", "recognition", rather than a cognitive

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[2] The surveys analyzed in López García (2013) show the persistence of these discourses on linguistic correctness and exemplarity in the attitudes of Argentinian speakers. However, these attitudes are not only registered in Argentina. Just to quote the most recent research: Alvarado (2023) collected the same attitude from Chileans towards the Río de la Plata (Argentina) variety. For her part, López Serena (2022) corroborates the discredit of the Andalusian variety among its own speakers; and Saborido Beltrán (2022) finds the opposition language/variety in ELE students in the United Kingdom.

[3] However, it should be considered that students and their parents share schools´ (and society's) representations. Furthermore, they request to be educated in the prestigious standard. Moreover, parents often make the effort not to speak to their children in their own mother tongue in order to help them adapt to the national desired language. (López García et al. 2023)

operation. In fact, when it comes to teaching of linguistic varieties, Priority Learning Contents [Núcleos de Aprendizajes Prioritarios, NAP] (hereafter PLC) prescribes attitudinal activities:

> La escuela ofrecerá situaciones de enseñanza que promuevan en los alumnos […] El *reconocimiento* y *valoración* de las lenguas y variedades lingüísticas presentes en la comunidad, en los textos escritos y en los medios de comunicación audiovisuales. (NAP 2006, 26. Destacado nuestro)
> [The school will offer teaching situations that promote in students [...] The *consideration* and *appreciation* of the languages and linguistic varieties present in the community, in written texts, and audiovisual media.] (PLC 2006, 26. Italics ours)

In the PLC and school exercises, the peripheral normativities are interpreted in a pathemic key, whereas the teaching of the "grammar system" is always linked to cognitive operations:

> La escuela ofrecerá situaciones de enseñanza que promuevan en los alumnos […] La reflexión sistemática, con ayuda del docente, sobre distintas unidades y relaciones gramaticales y textuales […] así como en situaciones específicas que permitan *resolver problemas, explorar, formular hipótesis y discutirlas, analizar, generalizar, formular ejemplos y contraejemplos, comparar, clasificar, aplicar pruebas, usando un metalenguaje compartido.* (NAP 2006, 26. Destacado nuestro)
> [The school will offer teaching situations that promote in students [...] Systematic reflection, with the teacher´s help, on different units and grammatical and textual relations […] as well as in specific situations that allow *solving problems, explore, formulate hypotheses and discuss them, analyze, generalize, formulate examples and counterexamples, compare, classify, apply tests, using a shared metalanguage*.] (PLC 2006, 26. Italics ours)

This representation is consistent with Argentinian 19th national foundational discourse, that is built over two discursive series: the so-called "native" (Blanco 1995) that gathers "dialect", "sensibility" and "barbarism", in opposition to the complementary, modern, series that pieced "language", "reason" and "civilization" together (AUTHOR 2023).

3. Norm distribution instruments
On a paper about French language, Sylvain Auroux (2013) claims that

> Le mythe de la pureté, […] de la clarté et de la précision de la langue française est, initialement, moins un prédicat imaginaire quasi naturel d'une langue donnée qu'un programme de travail et la désignation du résultat attendu. (Auroux 2013, 21)
> [The myth of the purity, [...] clarity and precision of the French language is, initially, less an imaginary quasi-natural predicate of a given language than a work program and the designation of the expected result]

Indeed, language politics implemented by the 19th century nation-states unified the linguistic diversity through a monolingual, monocentric and monoglossic norm. As proved in López García (2015 and 2019), school materials have been, since the mid-19th century, a determining variable for the transmission of representations of language. In the aforementioned research it was proven that a constraint factor for those who teach Spanish as L1 and foreign language is the lack of written school materials which subscribe to a pluricentric and plurilingual perspective.

An example of this major conditioning factor is the lack of dictionaries. In fact, there are a few general monolingual dictionaries for the entire Hispanic area, and just two of them are made by Latin-American authors: *Diccionario del español de México* [Dictionary of

Mexican Spanish], which is currently online, and *Diccionario Integral del Español de la Argentina* [General Monolingual Dictionary of the Spanish of Argentina], which had a heavy paper edition in 2008 (with a non-transportable weight of 2.5 kg.), is not kept up to date, and does not have online edition. Nevertheless, the best known and most quoted is *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* [Spanish Language Dictionary, also known as "the Royal Academy Dictionary"], which has been under development since 1780 in Spain by Spanish authors.

This absence of consultation materials is the result of multiple reasons. Two of them, linked to each other, and valid for the Argentinian case are:
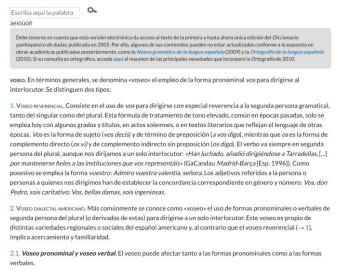
(a) Material production and purchase have a direct impact on linguistic identity but are dependent on a global economic system. In fact, there is a sophisticated machinery through which the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank grant loans to third world countries for the provision of school textbooks (see AUTHOR 2017, 2019 for details of the procedure). These banks impose such conditions to bid for the purchase so that only large transnational corporations can sell textbooks to the Argentinian State. For example, to bid it is mandatory to submit 30 printed copies exactly as they would be published if chosen by the State (which requires the financial resources to cover the costs of content, design, paper, etc.). This results in the fact that small publishing companies do not have the productive capacity nor the economic means to bid under conditions like these. Predictably, international publishing companies win the bids, and they obviously use a language form that avoids variety in order to be able to place the material in a larger number of territories, and thus amortize the investment. The profits are obtained by using linguistic forms compatible for different regions, and even by presenting and promoting the consultation of Spanish (i.e., from Spain) instruments.

(b) As referred to in note 2, former colonies still maintain discourses that imply that some varieties are more correct or more appropriate than others (Flores & Rosa 2015), which disqualifies non-dominant varieties from executing regulatory actions, such as distributing language patterns. Therefore, school students consult the exocentric norms indicated in dictionaries, grammars, and style books to reflect on their own language, and thus they become accustomed to what could be called "oblique" reading: an uncritical approach to the fact that the language represented in those texts does not show their language uses, the features of its region.

In addition, when frequent regional uses do appear on the instruments, they do so in side sections, as specific words, footnotes, asterisks. The variety can be found in the margins, not only geopolitically, but literally: they are, as RAE calls them: "particularismos" [special or particular features] (this specific point has been analyzed in Lauria and López García 2009).

Speakers of non-dominant varieties get used to recognizing the features that the language adopts in those instruments as both their own and (kind of) a foreign language at the same time. They do not perceive that the ordering of entries, and the exemplar or modelic sentences do not reflect their own dialectal forms. Readers are used to this gap. Actually, that distance is already part of the linguistic instruments' "genre". Let us examine 3 different examples of this kind of "reading":

Image 2 "Voseo", Real Academia Española (2005) *Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas* [Panhispanic Doubts Dictionary]

The *Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas* [Panhispanic Doubts Dictionary] developed by the RAE for the entire Spanish-speaking world, lists the no-longer-in-force "reverential" use of "voseo" (use of "vos" as 2nd sg. person pronoun) as the first entry, corresponding to a historical dictionary, and current use of 'voseo' is only listed as a second entry, despite the fact that "vos" is the pronoun and verbal conjugation used in almost all Latin-American countries except for Equatorial Guinea and Dominican Republic. Additionally, the normal use of voseo is defined in contrast to the reverential use: "al contrario que el voseo reverencial, implica acercamiento y familiaridad" ["unlike reverential voseo, it implies closeness and familiarity"].

Another example of that gap featured in this dictionary is the definition of "papa" [potato].

Image 3 "papa", Real Academia Española (2005) *Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas* [Panhispanic Doubts Dictionary]

The potato has its origin in the South American Andes area, and there are 4.000 varieties of this tuber, but the first entry in *Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas* is "pope", "head of the church", the second one introduces "papa" as a synonym of "papá" [dad], and the third entry, used in Latin-America, Canary Islands and southern peninsular Spain, does not explain the definition: "tuber of American origin..." but proposes a synonym, the term used in Madrid to designate it: "patata".

Another evidence of the same problem is that speakers reject translations and dubbing that reproduce their own norm -in Coseriu´s (1962) sense- and claim for (just because it is frequent) the norm of the linguistic market (which, in the case of the Spanish-speaking world, naturalizes "español neutro" [neutral Spanish][4] or Madrid written standard). In fact, it is very common for native speakers to consider that their own variety sounds strange when it appears in the media.

This gap, illustrated by the examples above, usually results in the varieties being interpreted as deviations from the correct language, the desired language, the one that is depicted in books, dictionaries, and media. Due to this situation, teachers usually adapt,

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[4] As it can be seen on this twitter thread:

Spanish original versión (spelling mistakes maintained)

Pablo: una ¿amiga? me dijo que no piensa ver argentina 1985 porque le molestan las peliculas con ese acento aaaaa qué acento el tuyo pedazo de cipaya

Azul: A mí me molesta como actores argentinos doblan las películas animadas, tipo no puedo ver metegol porque me jode ese acento, y no hablo así carajo.

Diego: pero metegol es una película Argentina… o sea que es el "idioma original" el acento argentino

Juan: Habra querido decir ese acento horrible que tienen los porteños… shoo… shuuuvia… rrrrrrojo… rrruuuuta… dios… me pone loco.

[Pablo: a 'friend' of mine told me that she isn't planning to watch [the movie] argentina 1985 because she finds annoying those movies with that accent aaaa what accent, your accent, you piece of cipayaaa

[Cipaya/o: Person who serves foreign interests to the detriment of his country's interests.]

Azul: It bothers me how Argentinian actors dub animated movies. I mean, I can't watch [the animated movie] Metegol because I hate that accent, and I don't speak like that.

Diego: But metegol is an Argentinian movie... so the ´original language´ is the Argentinian accent.

Juan: She must have meant that horrible River Plate accent... shoo...(I) shuuuuuvia... (rain) rrrojo… (red) rrrruuuta... (road) god, it drives me crazy.]

compose, patch up school texts in order to make these more suitable to their metalinguistics needs and sociolinguistic consciousness.

The monocentric source of instruments is not only pointed out by Argentinian teachers and researchers. For example, Parapatic (2020) conducted an analysis of 170 surveys about The Hungarian language, taken not only to teachers of Hungarian as native language, but also to teachers of different subjects. The researcher founds, exactly as for the Argentinian case, that:

> While students are taught to be proud of their regional dialects, insufficient information about dialectal variety leads to problems of acceptance, although the study of one's own regional background could be an advantage for developing metalinguistic awareness. (Parapatic 2020, 59)

Additionally, in the case of teaching Spanish as a foreign language, Méndez García de Paredes (2023) weighs the materials, proposed by Instituto Caro y Cuervo, developed from the Colombian variety and culture:

> No basta, pues, con reconocer y admitir las diferentes normas, hay que decidir la manera en que ha de producirse su contacto dentro de las labores de planificación lingüística para un contexto común de enseñanza del español a hablantes no nativos y armonizar el estatus ejemplar de las variedades, para que la visión de la norma centropeninsular deje de ser prominente en materiales y libros de texto, como suele ser lo acostumbrado. Esto evitaría que el aprendiente rechazara otras variedades y normas ejemplares guiado por creencias infundadas sobre la estabilidad y validez en exclusiva que pudieran tener unos usos lingüísticos del español por estar ligados a su origen. (Méndez García de Paredes 2023, 168)
> [It is not enough recognizing and admitting the different linguistic norms; it is necessary to decide and to plan how their contact should take place in a common context of teaching Spanish to non-native speakers, and also to harmonize the linguistic status of the varieties, so that ceases the prominence that the Madrid norm have in materials and textbooks, as is usually the case. This would prevent the learner from rejecting other varieties and exemplary norms guided by unfounded beliefs about the exclusive stability and validity that some Spanish linguistic uses may have because they are linked to their origin.]

Precisely, related to the need to "armonizar el estatus ejemplar de las variedades" [to harmonize the exemplary status of the varieties], Saborido Beltran (2022), notes the importance of both materials and teaching training being committed to equal treatment of linguistic varieties. His research, carried out on students of Spanish in Edinburg, insists on the importance of students' awareness of the pluricentric and plurinormative reality of Spanish language.

Finally, let us reflect on another aspect: the schooling "processing" of contents turns the naturally acquired linguistic rules (such as meaning of usual words, regular verb conjugations, or grammatical "correctness") into school knowledge, creating an unbridgeable gap between what the speaker knows by being a speaker and what the speaker learns at school or consults into texts. For example, it is not rare that Argentinian textbooks present tables of Spanish regular verb conjugations even though consultants are native speakers, and already know how to conjugate the regular verbs. Paradoxically, in Argentinian schools, tests are given on regular verb conjugation, and the students, native speakers, actually fail. (cfr. López García 2015)

4. Monological construction of concepts

The discursive wording in which school texts are written seeks to attenuate the traces of the dialogism inherent in the development of scientific knowledge. School textbooks´

wording erases subjectivity marks, alterity, argumentativeness, or conflict. It solves contradictions in order to present a unique and indubitable voice. In Orlandi's (2009) terms, school texts´ style eliminates the hesitations and limits polysemy with the aim of achieving an effect of neutrality, of "scientific credibility".

Furthermore, school texts and other instruments expose the language. They do not establish a dialogue, but instead implement one way transmission of knowledge that goes from teachers to students; from educative-administration to curriculum; from school textbooks (i.e., publishing companies) to teachers and students. Due to this Orlandi (2009) refers to the pedagogical discourse as "authoritarian" in the sense that it is unidirectional.[5]

This effect is also reflected in the graphic layout of concepts, where the overflows, the "disruption", do not appear in the main body of the text. The graphic distribution of the information places the mainstream curriculum in the main places, devoid of other discourses. That is also the case of variety in grammatization instruments: *voseo* and other varieties´ features are relegated to footnotes, to a second place from central discourse, as special marks, and for this reason are considered by speakers as deviation from the "general" language. For example: it is not common to see *voseo* forms in dictionaries' verb conjugation tables or even in Argentinian schoolbooks. This could likely explain why, notwithstanding the fact that *voseo* is part of Argentinian Spanish pronoun paradigm, it is considered by speakers a deforming feature of the "correct" language.

5. Discussion

It is clear from these findings that schools should review didactic strategies related to teaching linguistic diversity, especially in the case of pluricentric languages. What this paper seeks to add to the debate is that, far from being a conditioning factor, language diversity could be taken as an input to develop new ways to deal with the language forms and the grammatization instrument ideologies in class.

Several specialists in teaching Spanish as L2 and foreign language have noted that "panhispanic" discourse is not supported by materials that show the diversity of standards and they have therefore proposed different solutions for both classroom activities and material development (Acuña 2005 and 2015, Ariza Herrera et al. 2019, Domingues Cruz 2021, Méndez García de Paredes 2023). However, in the case of teaching to native speakers, the learning of metalinguistic concepts or interdialectal understanding is not related to materials being reflective of linguistic diversity, since students speak (or know) many different varieties. This fact might lead us to think that there is no need for specific didactic resources (such as materials representative of linguistic diversity), and no need to train teachers on critical positions about the standards reflected on such materials.

Regarding this point, we agree with Domingues Cruz (2021) in his recommendation that "el punto de partida deben ser las muestras vivas, o sea, los recursos reales que el profesor selecciona para la clase, las que van a dictar el tipo de trabajo que se va a desarrollar en el aula con las variedades del español" (Domingues Cruz 2021, 417) [the starting point should

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[5] The attitude towards one-voiced materials is so receptive that, even with adequate and sufficient training, consultants expect the word of specialists. About a year ago, at the end of a presentation on linguistic authorities in which I was arguing about the need to approach the materials critically, a colleague of mine, Bachelor of Arts, head of the language department of a prestigious teaching training college told me: "Me quedé con ganas de preguntarte cuáles son los sitios legitimadores de lo que se puede decir y lo que no se puede decir" [I was left wanting to ask you what are the legitimizing sites of what can be said and what cannot be said].

be the real samples, that is, the real resources that the teacher selects for the class, which will guide the kind of work that will be developed in the classroom using the varieties of Spanish]. We argue that this Domingue's statement applies not only to Spanish as foreign language students, but also to native learners of Spanish, who are likewise affected by the centralizing representations and attitudes of these materials.

Moreover, didactic initiatives based on linguistic diversity require, as Domingues Cruz points out, teachers who are aware that language they teach always have dialectal features. Teachers should also have theoretical and methodological skills to focus on linguistic diversity:

> [un docente] "integrador de la diversidad de españoles, desde una perspectiva verdaderamente pluricéntrica y rentable para el alumnado. En este contexto no es importante que el docente domine todas las variedades del español, sino que desarrolle una capacidad de búsqueda y de análisis de los materiales respecto al tema." (Domingues Cruz 2021, 418)
> [(a teacher) who can integrate the Spanish diversity, from a truly pluricentric perspective that could be profitable for the students. In this context, it is not important that teacher masters all Spanish varieties, but rather that he/she develops a capacity to search and analyze the materials regarding to topic.]

Given the need to show and validate linguistic diversity among L1 Spanish learners, we would like to highlight the value and benefit of teaching that language and linguistic regulations are always political. This strategy will make our students think about linguistic identities as a fluid concept, as a part of a continuum in which language is linked with some regional or even global project. In order to achieve this purpose, we would like to suggest a few didactic approaches.

5.1. Reconsidering monolingualism and fixed categories

It would be necessary to consider categories such as "national language", "mother language", or even "language" and "bilingualism" in line with the political needs that gave rise to them. Paraphrasing what Virginia Zavala (2019) has already proposed: it should be made explicit in schools that the terminological discretionality, the delimitation of a language or a dialect, the sharp separation between languages which coexists in the same territory is the result of an operation with specific interests. As stated above, the standard is a relatively stable system of linguistic features and uses, linked with a diverse universe of needs and conditions. For this reason, it might be useful to consider the concept of non-dominant varieties in order to include uses that are not necessarily endorsed by state institutions and / or grammatization instruments.

5.2. Training critical analysis of norm distribution instruments

One step towards training critical analysis in class might be to show students these adaptive operations that teachers do, and even submit these adjustments to a classroom debate. One metalinguistic activity that might be productively encouraged and practiced at school is judging the relevance, accuracy or effectiveness of the information presented in language regulation instruments. An assignment can be simple as "look it up in the dictionaries" (not "in the dictionary") and the whole class can decide which entry is more useful for a certain use, or they can build a new definition by choosing the best fragments of different dictionaries. This will help with training a distant, analytical, reading and consulting of the (usually monocentric) materials, and developing sensitivity to ideological aspects, such as: (a) social representations that instruments generate about linguistic diversity or/and, (b)

lexical and syntactic strategies underlying school texts wording. As we discussed in paragraph 3, school knowledge is presented in a wording that eludes, hides, the polyphonic condition of scientific knowledge´s development. We argue that the monophonic phrasing is functional to the monocentrical ideology and so are the set of concepts involved within, such as "linguistic unity" and "linguistic purity".

This is why, in order to make a critical reading of instruments in class, it is suggested to restore the dialogical condition of the construction of knowledge, and offer opportunities to integrate other voices, not only in the sense of other ideas, but other voices literally: other features of language and other languages. This return to polyphony can begin by exposing the "other voices eraser operation" in the discourse.

This kind of practice could start through a sociolinguistic diagnostic (Ballena & Unamuno 2019, Capstick 2019). By beginning with activities such as games and debates, it will be possible to get to know the students' voices and representations of languages and varieties. In parallel, the classroom will be installed as a "safe space": a space where languages are not judged and where there is a collective construction of knowledge; a space where school knowledge is learned and managed by appealing to non-monolingual and non-monological discourses. This approach will also allow us to become aware of the different voices involved: teachers, students, school texts, dictionaries, curriculum, or community members.

5.3. Analyzing "real" language

Another didactic strategy that could be implemented to validate linguistic diversity is to analyze regional language uses.

Let us see an example of such an activity on two uses of the plural marker in authentic Spanish usage. In the pictures below, taken on a bus and at a train station hallway, the same use of the plural morpheme can be observed. In Spanish the *s* is taught in the school as a plural marker, and teachers make sure students do not forget to write it down. But speakers from the Río de la Plata ("Rioplatenses") and other vast Spanish-speaking regions do not pronounce it because the plural is already marked by the determiner. In the first example, "*Dos* neuronas" [two neurons] and "*do'* neurona´" [two neurons] are opposed to "*una* neurona" [one neuron].

The second example is more complex and interesting to the analysis. In "fumando 1 rikitillo x lo' pasillo'" [smoking a marihuana cigarette in the hallways] there is written "l*o'* pasill*o"* instead of "l*os* pasill*os*". Moreover, the writer did not make usual mistakes, such as misspelling "pacillo", "paciyo" or "pasiyo", three options that Río de la Plata speakers will pronounce exactly the same (that might be a trace that indicates that the eluded *s* plays a pragmatic role of transgression, along with the allusion to marihuana in "rikitillo", which additionally rhymes with "pasillo").

Any student who is familiar with word formation and uses of Spanish plural morphemes will be able to handle these cases (at least, the first, the simple one). The analysis will encourage them to recognize the difference between the school norm and the actual ways users employ language, and, additionally, they could debate which sociolinguistic representation is generated in each case.

Certainly, it should be considered that this kind of exercising requires a reorientation of classroom work methodology. It will be necessary, in the first place, to pay attention to the linguistic environment of the classroom as a source of "analyzable", "schoolable", language. However, our suggestion is not to carry out an ethnographic work with students and teachers, but to run a purely metalinguistic activity: using grammar categories -available at the school level we are working with- to analyze the real language (see AUTHOR 2020, 2023 for more details of that didactic strategy).

5.4. Reorienting practices and showing other voices

The two types of classroom activities: restoring dialogical condition to the construction of knowledge and analyzing real language should have a correlation in both school and academic ways of working.

On the one hand, these practices we suggested challenge the status differentiation of agents (researchers, teachers, students) on the management of knowledge about languages. Hence, it will be useful to apply the cooperative work models, such as that proposed by Sensevy and Bloor "Cooperative engineering refers to a methodological process in which a collective of teachers and researchers engage in a joint action to codesign, implement, and re-implement a teaching sequence on a particular topic." (Sensevy & Bloor 2019, 1)

On the other hand, adopting a critical approach to languages and instruments compels us to consider the political reasons that are at the base of school practices and of development of theoretical models. Consequently, we consider that it is also necessary to take a position in the academic field dispute, not only concerning to collaborative work methodology and/or

the type of expected results, but also relating to the role that political dimension plays in language studies, which is, by the way, not always well-received in academia.[6]

6. In closing

The objective of this work was, first and foremost, to highlight the representations and procedures that constrain the presence of Spanish varieties at school; and, second, to suggest innovative strategies to help students, teachers and community actors to deal with linguistic diversity. In this regard, the paper suggested that the school should not only teach a metalinguistic set of tools, but also it should enable students (speakers) to adopt critical positions towards the linguistic forms legitimized by the State. With this aim in mind, this paper explored the need to manage a classroom observant to linguistic diversity.

Additionally, it suggested, based on critical pedagogy framework, to strengthen reading and consulting skills, and enable students to recognize the gap between the standard reflected in the grammatization instruments and the regional linguistic norms

In this regard, the article argued that these activities could be the first step to dismantle the, in Einar Haugen´s (1962) words, "schizoglossic" representations constitutive of peripheral varieties´ speakers. In this case, "schizoglossia" entails a contradictory relationship between the language speakers speak and the instruments they consult.

While current school curriculum encourages the provision of linguistic standard forms, the article argued that curriculum and classroom activities should also reveal the political dimension of the standard, of the grammatical description, of the materials, and even of the examples that are being used for teaching languages. These kinds of activities might unveil the, in Woolard´s (2016) words, 'anonymity effect' that affects the management of the "objective" description of languages reflected in school books, and Grammar, and other supplies that we use to fix the language and distribute linguistic patterns. In sum, this paper intends to establish the need to show in the school that both language and regulation instruments are artifacts, devices, in the sense that they are constructs, they are not the representation of a language that already exists and is distributed among the speakers.

Finally, the article advocates for a collaborative intellectual production with students, teachers and other community members. This collaborative work methodology should also have an impact on scientific fields, whose methodological guidelines and publication conditions are strongly restricted. Indeed, academia decides which agents are authorized to produce knowledge about languages, imposing a gap between academic research and educational (or social) interventions.

Certainly, this work has still a long way to go. The objectives of concrete action in the medium -and long- term include reviewing conceptualizations such as "standard language"

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[6] A paper I submitted last year for publication received the following comment from an anonymous reviewer: "The author continually insists on introducing politics as the cause of all the ills that, in their opinion, afflict Argentinian schools and their teaching of grammar. It is true that language policies are responsible for certain issues, but such an extreme view as the one presented is excessive."

Our courses on linguistic diversity are often attended by speech therapists, who point out that they need inputs to work with "special" students who speak "unusual Spanish" or students that do not even speak Spanish at all. Sometimes these therapists deduce that students´ silence reflects learning deficits (Tallata 2021). These "special" students come, in most cases, from lower class backgrounds or/and are speakers of other languages or discredited varieties of Spanish and, ergo, are silent. This accounts for one of the reasons why we consider it is not an "extreme view": linguistic diversity is, indeed, a political fact and the school should have and should offer methodological tools to address this reality as a complex phenomenon.

or "correctness" or even "mother language" and defining curricular measures that make space for real language uses of as subjects of metalinguistic analysis. These purposes will naturally involve training teachers that are able to recognize ideological political issues in these linguistic facts and to manage dynamic school materials in relation to the school forms of the language.

The ultimate objective of this approach is to find ways to develop and reinforce the linguistic security of the educational agents so that they can make and communicate their own decisions about school and community languages.

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