



Intercultural Education and Language Learning in Support Measures for Cabo Verdean Students in Burela (Galicia)

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the support measures that have been put in place in recent years to facilitate the integration of immigrant students from Cabo Verde in a secondary school in Galicia. The school in question has one of the proportionately highest levels of immigrant students in Galicia. In order to preserve the anonymity of the school, the pseudonym “Mariña Secondary School” will be used. The analysis and conclusions of this article are the result of my experience and my observations in the classroom over the course of more than twenty years as a Spanish language teacher. In this article, I argue that the integration of immigrant students is biased, in that students’ lack of knowledge of the official languages of Galicia, and knowledge of academic content that diverges from what is prescribed in the Galician curriculum, is perceived as a deficit that must be addressed through compensatory measures and with resources that have been designed for students with special educational needs rather than for students from an immigrant background. This assimilationist view of integration and the absence of a critical discourse about integration in the educational sphere are also bolstered by a curriculum, learning materials, and textbooks that invisibilise and hide cultural realities that diverge from that of the white, European, middle-class man. In order to support my argument, I will discuss a digital textbook recently published as part of EDIXGAL, a digital education project run by the Galician autonomous government, the Xunta. I argue that textbooks such as these perpetuate a colonial discourse and fail to include intercultural content. Furthermore, I will refer to two social initiatives: N papia galego [We Speak Galician] and Obradoiro antiracista [Anti-racist Workshop]. While these initiatives had a positive effect on the community, I contend that there needs to be a more centralised, integrated, and funded approach in order to achieve true intercultural education.

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In this article, I argue that the integration of immigrant students is biased, in that students’ lack of knowledge of the official languages of Galicia, and knowledge of academic content that diverges from what is prescribed in the Galician curriculum, is perceived as a deficit that must be addressed through compensatory measures and with resources that have been designed for students with special educational needs rather than for students from an immigrant background. This assimilationist view of integration and the absence of a critical discourse about integration in the educational sphere are also bolstered by a curriculum, learning materials, and textbooks that invisibilise and hide cultural realities that diverge from that of the white, European, middle-class man. In order to support my argument, I will discuss a digital textbook recently published as part of EDIXGAL, a digital education project run by the Galician autonomous government, the Xunta. I argue that textbooks such as these perpetuate a colonial discourse and fail to include intercultural content. Furthermore, I will refer to two social initiatives: N papia galego [We Speak Galician] and Obradoiro antiracista [Anti-racist Workshop]. While these initiatives had a positive effect on the community, I contend that there needs to be a more centralised, integrated, and funded approach in order to achieve true intercultural education.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Mariña Secondary School is located in Burela, a town on the northern coast of Lugo, Galicia, that is home to a population of approximately 10,000 people. Cabo Verdean migration to Burela dates back to the 1970s. Initially, Cabo Verdeans in Burela worked in the construction industry, building a local aluminium factory, which today is known as Alcoa. Subsequently, they joined other economic sectors. For the most part, the men worked in deep-sea fishing and construction and the women in domestic care services and the hospitality industry. Over the last two decades, there have been several waves of migration to Burela—from Cabo Verde itself but also from the Cabo Verdean diaspora in Portugal. The Cabo Verdean community in Burela has gone through several different phases which have varied in terms of the size of the population but also in terms of family composition. These fluctuations have always responded to the demands and changes in the labour market in recent decades (Oca, 2006a).

The first Cabo Verdean students enrolled in Mariña Secondary School in the 1997/8 academic year. From 2007, the Cabo Verdean population experienced significant growth, reaching a total of approximately 440 people (Oca, 2015), and this is reflected in school enrolment figures, which are outlined in Figure 1 below.

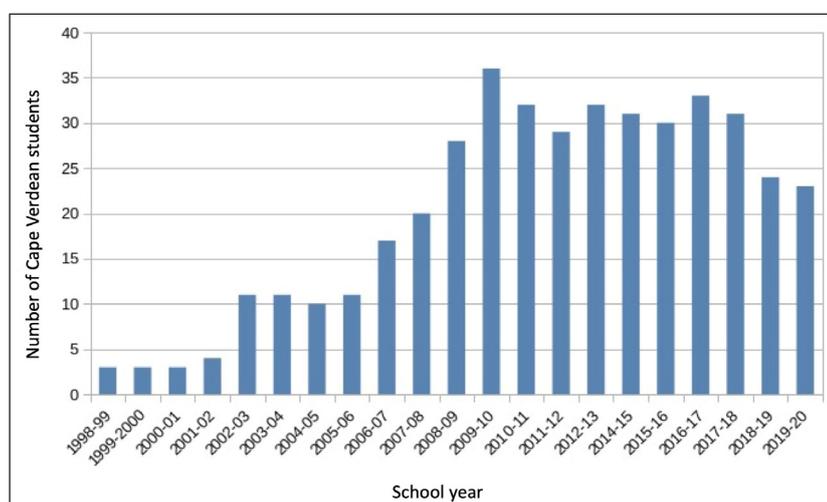


Figure 1 Trends in the number of Cabo Verdean students enrolled in Mariña Secondary School.¹

¹ All graphs are my own and are based on enrolment data that are publicly available at the school.

During the economic boom that preceded the financial crisis of 2008, there was an increased demand for workers in the fishing sector which also saw Cabo Verdean families being reunified. Given that immigrant students of Cabo Verdean origin have been attending Mariña Secondary School for over twenty years, this is an opportune moment to analyse and reflect on the various educational initiatives that have been implemented to support them, the ideologies that underpin these initiatives, and their overall impact.

If we look at the distribution of Cabo Verdean students in the school by year group over the last two decades, as outlined in Figure 2, we can see that it has been very uneven. As the number of students enrolled in the school increased, the concentration has always been in the first two years of Compulsory Secondary Education.² This is because it is not uncommon for Cabo Verdean students to repeat school years until the point at which they leave the education system or enrol in vocational programmes, known as Programas de Cualificación Profesional Inicial [Initial Professional Qualification Programmes], which provide limited employment opportunities and largely orient students towards the hospitality industry.

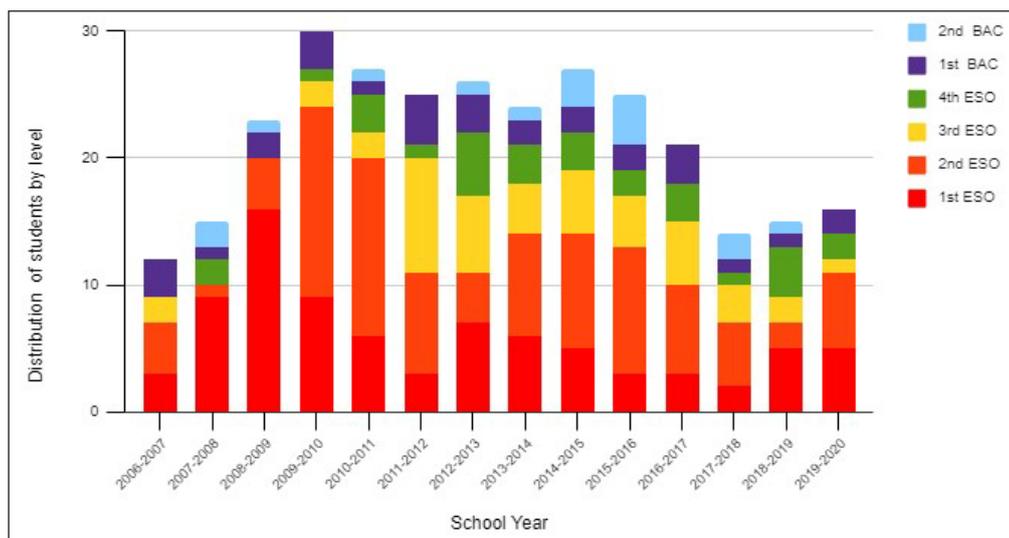


Figure 2 Distribution of Cabo Verdean students in Mariña Secondary School by year group.

The student numbers in the academic year 2008/9 provide a good illustration of this uneven distribution. Of the twenty-eight students of Cabo Verdean origin enrolled in that year, sixteen were in the first year of ESO,³ four were in the second year of ESO, four in Educación Secundaria de Adultos [Adult Secondary Education, ESA], two in first year of the Baccalaureate pathway, and another two in vocational training programmes. This distribution reflects the trajectory of the students in the school in that there is usually a high concentration of students in the first cycle of ESO and the phase of compulsory schooling, while there is a notably reduced presence in post-compulsory education. This lack of academic progress and achievement is one of the key problems facing the Cabo Verdean community. The public authorities and the media present Cabo Verdean migration to Galicia as an ideal model of integration (Oca, 2006b), but this image stands in stark contrast to the realities experienced by this community. For example, access to a range of employment opportunities continues to be a problem. Cabo Verdeans continue to work in the fishing sector and the hospitality and domestic services sectors for the most part, where particularly harsh working conditions make it virtually impossible for families to support their children’s education process.

Against this backdrop, I argue that the measures that have been put in place in the school over the last two decades have not led to significant progress in the integration of Cabo Verdean students. Notably, in the classroom and playground, Cabo Verdean students have limited interpersonal relationships with the rest of the local community, and this is also seen

² The pre-university Spanish educational system comprises primary education and secondary education. The first four years of secondary education (ages 12–16) are compulsory, and known as Educación Secundaria Obligatoria [mandatory secondary education, ESO]. The final two years of secondary education are not compulsory. Students who wish to access university follow the Bacharelato [Baccalaureate] pathway, whilst the Formación Profesional Básica [Basic Vocational Training] and Formación Profesional de Grado Medio e Superior [Intermediate and Higher Vocational Training] are two vocational pathways.

³ See n. 2 for an explanation of the Spanish pre-university education system.

outside the school. Moreover, there has been little success in reducing academic failure rates, which remain very high, with progression and completion rates far below the regional and state averages (Santos Rego, Lorenzo Moledo, & Samartino López, 2010). Between 1997 and 2020, only a dozen of the students of Cabo Verdean origin who were enrolled in Mariña Secondary School completed the compulsory secondary education cycle, and even fewer obtained a Baccalaureate qualification. As recently as 2019, the fact that a Cabo Verdean student had passed university admission exams made headlines in the local news (Rey, 2019). Paradoxically, the students who had the most academic success were the ones who were not enrolled in the school's "supportive" programmes for immigrant students, which in my opinion are segregationist and merely increase failure and frustration.

EDUCATIONAL FAILURE AND THE ABSENCE OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

The myth of perfect integration in Burela—examined extensively in the work of social anthropologist Luzia Oca (2006a, 2006b, 2015)—makes it difficult for the educational community to undertake a rigorous and critical analysis of the situation experienced by Cabo Verdean students in the town. Educational failure is often presented as the students' fault. From my extensive experience as a teacher, I have often found that colleagues note that immigrant students do not have good study habits, do not know the languages of the community, and do not have sufficient knowledge of the Galician school curriculum. Additionally, the blame is often placed on families—on their lack of involvement and dedication to their children and the low expectations they place on them (Etxeberria Balerdi & Elosegui Aduriz, 2009). Certain voices also criticise the maintenance of the Cabo Verdean language within the community. In contrast, it is very rare to come across voices that critique the education system and focus specifically on the school's educational models as the third element in this triangle of academic failure. Furthermore, discourses rarely highlight how the presence of these students in the school can be enriching, or point to the need to abandon assimilationist educational models which invisibilise the discourses of "the other" and present them as merely an object of study to be put on display on particular days in the school calendar that are designated as celebrating "multiculturalism".

The factors that contribute to educational failure are diverse. One that is not talked about sufficiently in the school community is, I argue, the absence of intercultural education. The school curriculum is underpinned by privileged voices and discourses and remains impervious to the social changes and plurality that exist in the classroom. While these voices and discourses have never been uniform—because it should be noted that even without immigrant students, the school is still diverse—at the moment they are even less so. The Lei Orgánica para a Mellora do Sistema Educativo [Constitutional Law for the Improvement of the Education System, LOMCE], a law that was in force from 2013 to 2020,⁴ echoed the neoliberal discourse that prevails in society and focuses on the acquisition of skills and the evaluation of homogenous learning standards. This discourse, I argue, is more typical of an economic system than of an education system, especially one that seeks to be equitable, inclusive, and democratic. As Fernández Suárez et al. (2018) note:

Los procesos de estandarización curricular a nivel global desprotegen a estos alumnos [inmigrantes], ya que les impiden desarrollar un proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje más flexible, donde tengan cabida contenidos y conocimientos no estandarizados. (p. 87)

[Processes of curricular standardisation at a global level leave these [immigrant] students unprotected, since they prevent them from developing more flexible approaches to teaching and learning, where non-standardised content and knowledge have a place].

The silencing and invisibilisation of the different cultures that are present in the school means that "the other" will only ever play a passive role, assimilating into the culture and language

⁴ This has now been replaced by the Lei Orgánica para a Mellora da Calidade Educativa [Constitutional Law for the Improvement of Education Quality, LOMLOE], which was approved in December 2020 and will come into effect in the academic year 2021/22.

of the “host” society, without the voice or legitimacy to participate equally. While the school could be an exceptional place for cultural and social discovery, in reality it merely plays the role for which it was created in liberal democracies: to standardise and homogenise in line with the prevailing ideology in order to produce docile citizens (Torres Santomé, 2019). Full social integration cannot be achieved without intercultural education policies that are bidirectional and take into account the immigrant population as well as the host society. As Malgesini and Giménez (2000) note, there is a need to:

renovar radicalmente los currículos monoculturales, de no separar los grupos en la escuela, de no presentar como monolíticas las culturas, de llevar al terreno educativo el enriquecimiento que supone la presencia de bagajes culturales diferenciados, y, de intervenir educativamente sobre la interacción en la escuela y de preparar para la interacción en la sociedad. (p. 254)

[radically revise curricula based on concepts of a single culture, not separate groups at school, not present cultures as monolithic, introduce into the educational sphere the enriching benefits that the presence of differentiated cultural baggage can bring, and intervene educatively in how these groups interact in school and prepare them for this in society]

This need stands in stark contrast with the educational reality, where there is a lack of intercultural training for teachers, and the rigid system is ill equipped to spearhead comprehensive and appropriate educational initiatives (Cernadas Ríos, 2011). The Centro de Investigación e Documentación Educativa [Centre for Educational Research and Documentation, CIDE], a body under the Ministry of Education and Science, acknowledged in its 2005 report on support for immigrant students in the Spanish education system that the current school system “non está feita de presupostos interculturais” [is not made of intercultural budgets] (CIDE, 2005, p. 313). The study concluded that, in general, the current integration models in schools were homogenising and viewed cultural diversity in the classroom as a problem and a deficit that needed to be solved.

Another important factor in the widespread educational failure of Cabo Verdean students that needs to be considered is the low expectations that the school places on them. I have heard teachers in the staff room commenting on the need for Cabo Verdean students to improve their knowledge of Spanish, Galician, and mathematics, as these subjects will be the most useful for working in the hospitality industry. Such unguarded comments shed light on the ideologies and discourses that govern teaching practices in the classroom (Fernández Suárez, De Palma, Sánchez Bello, & Verdía Varela, 2018). We need to have higher academic expectations of immigrant students and challenge the stereotypes we have internalised, stereotypes which deny their diversity and the complexity of each individual—we should remember that immigrant students, Cabo Verdeans included, are diverse and different from one another and, like everyone, change over time.

I think we are deceiving ourselves if, when discussing the academic results of these students, we do not highlight the failure of the education system. Rather than acknowledging that students have left the education system, we say that they have followed alternative training pathways, as if to imply that Baccaulaureate degrees and vocational training programmes offer the same opportunities and level of access. Thus, we mistake access to and participation in school as the absence of failure. Instead, the education system should ensure that students have the opportunity to achieve academically in addition to fostering equality and helping them to develop their cultural and personal identity (Santos Rego et al., 2010).

ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT MEASURES FOR CABO VERDEAN STUDENTS

The school has been adapting to legislative changes regarding support for foreign students outlined by the Ministry of Education of the Xunta de Galicia. The first set of initiatives date back to 2004 when, in addition to embedding diversity awareness activities into the curriculum, two other organisational initiatives that focused on creating separate class groups for immigrant students were introduced:

1. Curricular Adaptation Groups: ten contact hours per week for one academic year. Those placed in this group were deemed to have an achievement gap of more than two years with respect to their age.
2. Language Acquisition Groups: a maximum of twenty-four hours per week for one trimester. These groups were for students with little or no knowledge of the two official languages of Galicia.

Within this legislative framework, in the academic year 2004/5, Mariña Secondary School began to implement the first of these two initiatives: the Curricular Adaptation Groups. As they ran for the full academic year, it was decided that they would allow students more time to adjust before joining the mainstream group. In that same academic year, a working group of teachers was set up in the school in order to design a welcome plan that would bring together the various initiatives undertaken by the educational community to support immigrant students. The discussions that took place at the working group served to highlight the community's lack of awareness about the culture of Cabo Verdean students, who are still the largest immigrant group in the school and its surroundings.

The first Curricular Adaptation Groups—where I taught the components related to language—were held during the three years when the greatest levels of family reunification in Burela were happening, and were made up entirely of students who had just arrived from Cabo Verde or who were originally from there (i.e. second- and third-generation immigrants). The students were taught the two official languages of Galicia (Galician and Spanish) and basic science and maths. This took place over the course of ten teaching sessions per week which were scheduled at the same time as the classes of the core subjects of the mainstream group. These segregated groups turned into small ghettos as the opportunities for interaction between immigrant and local students were limited to classes in the subjects that they had in common. What is more, the students who participated in these curricular adaptation groups experienced complete educational failure, with the majority ultimately leaving the education system. As mentioned above, the few Cabo Verdean students who have achieved academic success have been educated in the mainstream groups.

The curricular and linguistic adaptation groups for immigrant students ran until 2009 when, due to school staff reductions and cuts to public education funding, the initiatives were discontinued, and students were instead placed in a variety of programmes which changed name with each educational reform (i.e. Specific Groups, Performance Learning Improvement Programmes). Notably, all of these programmes were based on segregating students in order to compensate for their perceived deficits. The later groups also included students from Latin America and the Roma community.

Currently, there are numerous national and international studies that recommend inclusive and non-segregating measures and conceptualise diversity as an opportunity for learning rather than as a problem. Research has shown that students who are part of groups that are segregated by academic level achieve poorer academic results (Etxeberria Balerdi & Elosegui Aduriz, 2009). The Curricular Adaptation Groups and Language Acquisition Groups in Galicia have failed (as have other initiatives such as immersion classrooms or language immersion programmes in other Autonomous Communities) as they do not take advantage of classroom heterogeneity in the construction of knowledge and improvement of social harmony. As stated in a study conducted by the Centro de Educación Infantil y Primaria Valeriano Béquer primary school (2018, p. 16):

en los centros educativos que realizan agrupamientos homogéneos en todas las asignaturas, el alumnado obtiene peores resultados académicos que en los centros donde solo se hace en algunas asignaturas o en ninguna.

[in schools where students are placed in academically homogenous groups, students obtain worse academic results than in schools where only some groups (or no groups) are streamed academically]

Cabo Verdean students themselves feel that their inclusion in segregated groups not only does not benefit them (especially in learning the languages of the community, as they do not have real examples of language use in the classroom beyond their teachers), but it creates a feeling of shame and low self-esteem that prevents them from forging relationships with their

peers and enjoying a safe space for intercultural and personal development.⁵ This view is not generally shared by teachers, who see these class groups as a way to address the diversity that exists in the classroom, which allows them to focus on the curriculum that is prescribed for mainstream groups.

Although empirical evidence demonstrates that these segregating programmes lead to academic failure and social exclusion, they are still a cornerstone of the Programa de Mellora do Aprendizaxe e do Rendemento [Learning and Performance Improvement Programme], in which since 2016/17, students in the second and third year of ESO who have academic difficulties—especially immigrant students—are placed in segregated groups that focus on sociolinguistic and scientific/mathematical content. These segregated lessons make up the majority of their school timetable and they have hardly any classes in common with the mainstream group.

LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGIES AND SUPPORT MEASURES FOR CABO VERDEAN STUDENTS

There is a broad consensus regarding the importance of immigrant students learning the languages of the host society for their academic success and social integration. However, studies carried out in Spain in recent years show bleak results in terms of students mastering the languages of instruction (Álvarez-Sotomayor & Martínez-Cousinou, 2020). We often perceive the inclusion of foreign students in classrooms as a negative factor that will lower the whole group's academic performance. As such, we do not foster interaction between all students—interaction which allows vital cultural enrichment. As previously stated, the LOMCE curriculum itself, and, as we will see later, textbooks and privileged voices within the school, complete the circle of a barely integrative and intercultural education system.

Cabo Verdean Creole (Kriolu) is the mother tongue of Cabo Verdean students, although in Cabo Verde schooling is exclusively in Portuguese. This situation is complicated when students arrive in Galicia, an autonomous community with two co-official languages: Galician and Spanish. In the case of Galicia, the language of prestige is still Spanish and, despite the Linguistic Normalisation Act of 1983, which promoted Galician in education and administration, Galician speakers are in decline. Thus, the Cabo Verdean students in the Galician education system experience a situation of *triglossia*, whereby Kriolu occupies the last position in the hierarchy in terms of prestige and esteem (Fernández González, 2006). The Cabo Verdean language continues to be the language of the family environment and is also used informally by students at school, as most Cabo Verdean students form friendships among themselves in segregated groups and have little contact with local students. Sadly, the knowledge of and interest in Kriolu that other students have does not go beyond the use of certain pejorative expressions and insults that are used as slang or for the cryptic purpose of not being understood—a practice that does not help to dignify and promote the learning of this language.

While within the Cabo Verdean community, Kriolu is the majority language, used increasingly on social media, students do not have the opportunity to study their mother tongue and deepen their knowledge of it as it is relegated to informal and oral use. Thus, intercultural education that would meet the demands of the immigrant population is particularly important, as evidenced in recent studies by other immigrant organisations and as reported informally by some members of the Cabo Verdean community. Fernández Suárez et al. (2018) note:

El mantenimiento lingüístico y cultural en las segundas y sucesivas generaciones es una cuestión que preocupa en la mayoría de las organizaciones: en un contexto donde predomina el castellano y, en menor medida, el gallego, los niños tienen el riesgo de perder la lengua materna. Los principales argumentos para la preservación del idioma son la necesidad de garantizar el vínculo con la familia de origen, así como su valor económico y cultural. (pp. 129–130)

[Linguistic and cultural maintenance in second and successive generations is an issue that worries most organisations: in a context where Spanish and, to a lesser extent, Galician predominate, children are at risk of losing their mother tongue. The

⁵ Over the course of the twenty years that I have been teaching at Mariña Secondary School, I have conducted several interviews and surveys with Cabo Verdean students about their experience in these classrooms.

main arguments for the preservation of the mother tongue are based on the need to ensure ties with the family of origin, as well as reasons related to the economic and cultural value of the language]

The methods used in Galicia to teach immigrant students from Cabo Verde rarely take into account the sociolinguistic situation in their country of origin, and the educational community often mistakenly thinks that the mother tongue of Cabo Verdeans is a dialect or poorly learned Portuguese. Nonetheless, the importance of the mother tongue in learning other languages has been widely demonstrated, so valuing the Cabo Verdean language would help empower and increase the self-esteem of the learner.

As Mijares (2009) points out, the predominant language-teaching methodologies encourage students to abandon their native language: they are not allowed to speak it in class so that, in theory, they can better learn the languages of their new community. Instead of the native language being encouraged, it is perceived as detrimental to learning other languages. Such approaches encourage frustration and marginalisation. As Etxeberria and Elosegui point out (2009):

[E]stamos atendiendo a un alumnado inmigrante de modo que no le facilitamos la integración escolar y social, empujándolos al fracaso escolar y al desconocimiento de la lengua de acogida, por un lado, y por otra parte a la ruptura con sus señas de identidad, al desprestigio o el abandono respecto a la lengua y cultura familiar. No les enseñamos de modo adecuado lo nuestro, ni les ayudamos a desarrollar lo suyo. No llegamos siquiera a la mera asimilación. La respuesta que les damos se mueve entre la asimilación y la marginación. (p. 38)

[W]e are assisting immigrant students in such a way that we do not facilitate their educational and social integration. On the one hand, we push them towards school failure and lack of knowledge of the host language. On the other hand, we push them towards losing markers of their identity and devaluing or neglecting their family language and culture. We do not teach them properly what is ours, nor do we help them develop what is theirs. We do not even reach mere assimilation. Our answer to this situation lies somewhere between assimilation and marginalisation.

The assimilationist discourse in the Plan de Atención ao Alumnado Inmigrante [Support Plan for Immigrant Students] published by the Ministry of Education of the Xunta de Galicia in 2005 views immigrant students as individuals with deficits which need to be fixed. This has significant repercussions for the design of educational initiatives as it positions compensatory education and the neocolonial perspective as the norm, as has been analysed in numerous occasions in Galicia:

These children are thus seen exclusively in terms of what they lack, rather than what they can offer in terms of enrichment. In a sense, a child who is still in the process of developing a second (or third, or fourth, etc.) language is cast as possessing less cultural capital than a monolingual one, as long as this monolingual capacity happens to be in the “right” language. Our children have language capacity; the newcomers have language deficits. From this point of view, it is difficult to imagine their integration as an intercultural, mutually enriching process. (Teasley, Sánchez-Blanco, & Depalma, 2012, p. 306)

LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY OF GALICIA

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that the teachers in charge of teaching Galician or Spanish as foreign languages are those who usually teach students with special educational needs. How many of us would learn English or another foreign language with a language therapist, a psychologist, or an academic counsellor? As for the materials used in these classes, they are generally of low pedagogic value in that they include texts and resources that do not meet quality standards, do not motivate the students and are not fit for purpose for learning a language. It must be very frustrating for immigrant students to try to learn a new language using materials designed specifically for students with special educational needs. Beyond the contact hours in school, a Spanish language teacher is sometimes available to provide two hours of reinforcement classes per week. However, this always depends on the availability

and willingness of teachers who have increasing teaching loads and cannot count on the school administration to contemplate long-term, well thought-through plans for teaching the languages of the Galician community. In the academic year 2019/20, for the first time, an expert foreign language teacher led the language support group—the use of appropriate methodologies and quality materials led to very positive results before the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted face-to-face teaching.

In practice, collaborative learning methodologies and/or other initiatives that have made it possible to incorporate all students into the classroom are very difficult to implement due to a lack of training and a general sense of inertia regarding changing already well-established dynamics. The centre's counsellor has been trying for many years, with allies in the school management team, to establish new teaching practices and get approval for a second teacher to support teachers' work in the classroom. However, the sense amongst the teaching staff is that this latter initiative could be too intrusive and might stand in the way of progress. Unlike in other schools, where it is common for support staff to work with teachers in the classroom, in this school it has only taken place on rare occasions, when certain groups required specific support measures.

It must be noted that teaching the languages of the local community is important for immigrant students' communication skills and for them to be able to access the languages of instruction in the classroom. While immigrant students are usually able to use their new languages to communicate after one or two years, it takes them longer to be able to engage meaningfully with them as languages of instruction. Cabo Verdean students in general, and those who enrol in the school when they're older in particular, will not have the opportunity to be in the education system long enough to develop their language skills sufficiently. The result is that when immigrant students leave school, they may not have mastered either of the two official languages of Galicia.

Another challenge in the teaching and learning of Galician and Spanish is the lack of an official curriculum for teaching these languages to students of foreign origin. Having a legal framework for this would help in supporting more appropriate evaluations and a more objective regulation of the content that is taught, especially as regards language teaching. Silva Domínguez (2008), discussing the case of Galicia specifically, notes:

A administración deberá clarificar en maior medida que argumentos cómpre que valoremos e en que orde, para a toma de decisións lingüísticas nos reforzos aos que enviamos algúns alumnos estranxeiros. Doutro xeito, seguirase a producir o paradoxo de que en última instancia é o profesional encargado da toma de decisións quen ten a última palabra, e o seu posicionamento non sempre está desprovisto de connotacións ideolóxicas ou percepción de carácter máis ou menos subxectivo. (p. 65)

[The administration will have to clarify to a greater extent which arguments need to be valued and in what order, when making language-related decisions with respect to the extra resources assigned to some foreign students. Otherwise, the paradoxical situation will continue in which ultimately it is the decision-making professional who has the final say, and his/her positioning is not always devoid of ideological connotations or more or less subjective perceptions]

The lack of an official curriculum for teaching Galician and Spanish to students of foreign origin means that it is more difficult to conduct rigorous and accurate assessments. Furthermore, there is no training for the teachers who are running these programmes and the teaching methodologies that are used do not take into account important issues such as, for example, the fact that making mistakes is an important and necessary part of the learning process, and that silence can also be an important phase for language learners (Méndez Guerrero, 2014).

Finally, it is important to understand the key characteristics of the native language of the students so as to be able to recognise interferences in the learning of Galician and Spanish. The Cabo Verdean students at Mariña Secondary School come mainly from the island of Santiago where, as in the southern islands of Maio, Fogo, and Brava, the Sotavento variety of Kriolu is spoken. This variety has more influence from African languages than the varieties of the Barlovento Islands, located in the north of the Cabo Verdean archipelago, which were colonised later (Lopes Filho, 2003). Although it is beyond the scope of this study to provide an in-depth

analysis of the Cabo Verdean language, I would like to emphasise the importance of teachers knowing the general characteristics of the languages of immigrant students. Understanding the interferences from Kriolu can help teachers to plan activities, and better understand the various stages in the acquisition of the host language. Among the most common morphosyntactic influences which I have seen in the written and spoken language of my students over the years, the following stand out (Santos Rego et al., 2010):

- Omission of the article. Kriolu does not have this word category. For example, students might say: *es lápiz* and *jugar fútbol en playa* for the standard Spanish *es un lápiz* [it's a pencil] and *jugar al fútbol en la playa* [play football on the beach].
- No agreement between nouns and adjectives. In Kriolu, the plural marker only appears on the determinant or the first word of the phrase. For example, students might say: *dos par de zapato* instead of the standard *dos pares de zapatos* [two pairs of shoes].
- No verbal agreement. The verb in Kriolu is not inflected for person or number and verbal endings are uncommon and are usually substituted by explicit pronouns. For example, students might say: *él vistas de blanca* instead of the standard *él viste de blanco* [he is wearing white].

INTERCULTURALITY IN TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPORT MEASURES FOR IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

Textbooks play a very important role in teaching the official school curriculum as they are used by nearly all teachers. As highlighted by Torres Santomé (2019):

No podemos ignorar el privilegio informativo de los libros de texto, teniendo prácticamente la exclusiva en el poder decir, hablando desde una posición de autoridad tan importante en la que, incluso la autoría de la información pasa a ser algo completamente secundario. (p. 24)

[We cannot ignore the privileged position of textbooks in disseminating information: they have the practically exclusive right to speak, and they speak from such an important position of authority that the authorship of the information becomes completely secondary]

It must be noted that in Spain, textbooks are the most-used teaching materials; they are used by more than 80 per cent of teachers and endorsed by families, 70 per cent of whom believe that textbooks are more important for learning than the internet (Braga Blanco & Belver Domínguez, 2015). As such, the view of society transmitted by textbooks shapes the educational reality. Thus, one might assume that the contents of textbooks would reflect the transformations that have taken place in Spanish and Galician society in recent years. However, in analysing some of the latest textbooks promoted by the Ministry of Education in Galicia, such as those published by Netex eLearning, and used for the digital education project called EDIXGAL that runs in the first cycle of ESO, we can see that diversity and interculturality are not addressed. Netex, a Galician company specialised in digital technologies, which has been listed on the Mercado Alternativo Bursátil [Alternative Spanish Equity Market] since 2017, specifies on its website its objectives in education publishing:

En el sector editorial, nos posicionamos como un partner tecnológico clave para editores, gobiernos e instituciones educativas con una solución integral multidispositivo de digitalización, distribución de contenidos y aprendizaje. Netex desarrolla soluciones de última generación para las aulas digitales, enfocando su innovación en cinco capas tecnológicas, que transforman el contenido de publicación estática en herramienta educativa a través de diferentes soluciones, para crear una nueva forma de aprendizaje, la tecnología smartED.⁶

In the publishing sector, we position ourselves as a key technological partner for publishers, governments, and educational institutions with a comprehensive multidevice solution for digitisation, content distribution, and learning. Netex develops state-of-the-art solutions for digital classrooms, focusing its innovation

6 <https://www.netexlearning.com/partners/>.

on five technological layers which transform static publishing content into an educational tool through different solutions, to create a new way of learning: smartED technology.

This apparently aseptic technological discourse, which positions Netex as innovative and supportive of individual creativity, completely obviates the role of the individuals to whom the learning materials are addressed, as well as the role of the school and education system in the socialisation of students. If we analyse the Netex Classroom book for first-year ESO Spanish language, it is clear how the images and the discourse present an incredibly homogenous society. Predominant are examples of urban areas populated by white, upper middle-class Europeans who are healthy, attractive, and thin. This Eurocentric urban space is a space for consuming products, which includes advertisements for well-known brands and shows people eager to make purchases. This opportunistic over-representation favours the construction of neoliberal individuals and obviates the social reality of the country.

The most common way to conceal plurality is to silence other cultures: the knowledge that is transmitted is that of the white western world and examples of other realities are virtually nil. We find barely any examples of racialised people in the Netex Spanish language textbook. However, the treatment of the figure of Rosa Parks, the only reference in the book to a black person, is clearly biased. Accompanying the text about the activist is a disparaging cartoon caricature which stands out in a book with so many real photos of anonymous people. Furthermore, the text itself is an excerpt written by the journalist Javier del Pino (1999), which downplays the work of Rosa Parks. The text obviates her work with voter registration, her militancy in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and does not represent the real struggle for black people's civil rights:

A sus 42 años había emprendido una cruzada contra el racismo más simbólica que ambiciosa: cuando entraba en un edificio con ascensores separados para blancos o para negros, se negaba a tomar el que le correspondía por su color de piel. Consciente de que no sería admitida en el ascensor de los blancos, prefería subir por la escalera en lugar de tomar el ascensor para negros; pensaba que si lo hacía reforzaba la segregación.

[At the age of forty-two, she had embarked on a crusade against racism that was more symbolic than ambitious: when she entered a building with separate elevators for white people and black people, she refused to take the one that was for people with her skin colour. Aware that she would not be allowed to take the elevator that was for white people, she preferred to go up the stairs instead of taking the elevator for black people as she thought that doing so would reinforce segregation]

As part of this activity, the textbook also includes a photo of former US President Barack Obama recreating the Rosa Parks rebellion episode on a bus in Alabama. It is an image that once again hides the great collective struggles for the vindication of social rights. An alternative image, such as that of Rosa Parks receiving the US Congress medal in 1999 for her fight for civil rights, or a photograph of Selma's marches to Montgomery, would contribute more to historical and cultural recognition.

The non-majority cultures featured in this textbook suffer from what Torres Santomé (2019) calls the "Benetton" approach, where images of "the other" are used in a decorative way. For example, images of poor African children looking sad, lost, and inviting compassion and Asian women working in idealised rural Asian areas are contrasted in a decontextualised way with images of white, western girls reading and playing in an urban, clean, and orderly world. In the former, what is reflected is passivity—they are static and immobile beings—while the latter have agency and are socially and professionally dynamic. This depiction of other cultures, especially African ones, causes Cabo Verdean immigrant students not to feel represented in the curriculum and even to feel ashamed of the image that is given in general of the African continent. As noted by Torres Santomé (2011):

Cualquier estudiante europeo que sólo accediera a informaciones sobre países africanos mediante los libros de texto nunca podría imaginarse que en esos países hay casas semejantes a la suya, carreteras asfaltadas y autopistas, rascacielos, centros comerciales, coches de las mismas marcas [...] que entre sus habitantes hay

muchos que comparten con él las mismas aficiones culturales, musicales y artísticas y que disfrutan con idénticas películas. (pp. 255–256)

[Any European student who accesses information about African countries only through textbooks could never imagine that in those countries there are houses just like his, paved roads and motorways, skyscrapers, shopping centres, cars by familiar brands (...) that amongst the population there are many who share with him the same cultural, musical, and artistic interests and who enjoy the same films as him]

Unfortunately, this superficial and biased approach to cultural diversity is not only typical of textbooks. It is also widespread among teachers and the educational community and is one of the most decisive challenges in educational practice. As Sánchez-Bello (2018) states, school is an exceptional place for fostering mutual understanding and constructive dialogue:

Es innegable que la escuela no puede enseñar todo lo que la complejidad del mundo actual exigiría, pero sí es necesario poner los pilares para que el alumnado sea capaz de hacer interpretaciones más críticas y exactas acerca de la realidad social en toda su complejidad (p. 37)

[It is undeniable that school cannot teach everything that the complexity of today's world would require, but it is necessary to lay the foundations for students to be able to make more critical and accurate interpretations of social reality in all its complexity]

She also reflects on the need to create a shared, co-constructed curriculum, a notion closely linked to Fraser's concept of recognition (2006, p. 40), whereby learning cannot be defined from a single perspective; rather, it must be diverse and inclusive of non-hegemonic cultures.

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES OF RECOGNITION IN THE MARIÑA SECONDARY SCHOOL

Educational initiatives to support Cabo Verdean students have been taking place in Mariña Secondary School for more than two decades. In this next section, I discuss on two of these initiatives.

N PAPIA GALEGO

In 2008, in partnership with the Asociación de Cooperación con Cabo Verde [Association for Cooperation with Cabo Verde, ACCVE] and anthropologist Luzía Oca, I undertook two trips to Cabo Verde, motivated by the increasing numbers of Cabo Verdean students in my school and what I saw as a lack of knowledge about Cabo Verde amongst members of the educational community. My aim was to learn more about the education system and school curriculum in Cabo Verde. Following those two trips, I developed *N papia galego* [We Speak Galician], a teaching guide which included information about Cabo Verdean language and culture, the educational system in Cabo Verde, as well as units on teaching Galician as a foreign language. The guide also included a section aimed at students, which introduced basic vocabulary and useful expressions in Kriolu, Galician, and Spanish. These materials were disseminated in the media and in other schools in the region, with the main objective of offering a more realistic and complete view of Cabo Verde, which was primarily associated with poverty and backwardness. The construction of “the other” through poverty, colonial discourses of “they are poor, but happy”, and paternalistic attitudes do not support the Cabo Verdean community and rather serve to legitimise inequality. The *N papia galego* initiative, which has not been developed any further, was well received in the local primary schools, although it is not known if it went on to be implemented in classrooms.

ANTI-RACIST WORKSHOP

In 2018, the council of Burela organised anti-racist workshops for local schools. The workshops were led by anti-racist activist, black feminist, and founder of Afrofeminas,⁷ Antoniette Torres Soler. Seeing this psychologist and pedagogue had a great impact on immigrant and Cabo Verdean students as it was the first time that a black woman had been invited to the school

⁷ Afrofeminas is a group of Spanish-speaking Afro-descendant women who are anti-racism and feminists. On their website (<https://afrofeminas.com>), they make visible and give voice to black Afro-descendant women in Spain, analysing racism and power relations in depth.

as an expert speaker. The workshops took place over the course of a week, and included sessions with ESO students and open meetings with teachers, members of the public, and the local equality committee, the Observadoiro da Mariña pola Igualdade. These events served to highlight conflicts and prejudices, such as the racism that is still present in the host society, and offered a space to reflect on how, in discourse, the voices of others can be appropriated when they are denied recognition.

This initiative clearly demonstrated the need to have positive role models in the school, which include racialised people and people from different cultures and societies so as to help empower individuals. However, as Torres Soler has stated in interview, such initiatives cannot be isolated, one-off events; education should be truly intercultural:

El pensamiento crítico tiene que desarrollarse. Burela se hubiera podido convertir en un pueblo que habría creado un modelo de educación decolonial y diferente al resto de España. En un sitio que posee hasta una cuarta generación de afrodescendientes, las actuaciones no pueden quedarse en un taller suelto, sino que fuese una manera de cambiar el sistema educativo y que personas racializadas hicieran propuestas para que esto cambiase. (Torres Soler, personal interview with the author)

[Critical thinking has to be developed. Burela could have become a town that could have created a model of decolonial education different from the rest of Spain. In a place that has up to four generations of Afro-descendants, these initiatives cannot be merely one-off workshops but rather a mechanism for changing the education system and one in which racialised people make proposals for this change]

As Soler notes, the creation of a shared, co-constructed curriculum, as was noted above, in which the various cultures of the school are recognised, would go some way to compensating the assimilationist model in which students are currently immersed and would help to promote the integration of students in society. In the same interview, Soler also made the following observation:

¿Queremos tener relaciones entre iguales? Lo primero que tenemos que hacer es que el otro esté en el mismo sitio, a la misma altura y dándole la misma importancia. No tiene ningún sentido que cuando llega un alumno caboverdiano se le ponga en un sitio aparte y allí le ponga un mapa de Cabo Verde. El mapa debe estar en la biblioteca del instituto.

[Do we want to have peer-to-peer relationships? The first thing we have to do is make sure that “the other” is at the same level, at the same height, that we give them the same importance. It makes no sense that when a Cabo Verdean student arrives (s)he is put in a separate room and there we put up a map of Cabo Verde. The map must be in the school library]

N Papiá galego and the workshop of Antoniette Torres Soler show us that it is not only essential to know “the other”, but also to recognise them. It is a matter of social justice, because as Mbembe (2017) rightly says, there is only one world, in which we all have rights and desires, no matter how many borders are imposed. Human beings will continue to migrate, and classrooms will continue to be diverse. This mix of cultures who are in increasing contact are in need of a common citizenship project:

To build a world that we share, we must restore the humanity stolen from those who have historically been subjected to processes of abstraction and objectification. From this perspective, the concept of reparation is not only an economic project but also a process of reassembling amputated parts, repairing broken links, relaunching the forms of reciprocity without which there can be no progress for humanity. (Mbembe, 2017, p. 182)

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