Perceptions of linguistically responsive teaching in language specialist teachers and mainstream teachers

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ABSTRACT: Linguistically responsive teaching (LRT) means understanding the role that language has in building meaningful learning environments. In this paper linguistically responsive teaching is viewed as one way of implementing the notion of intercultural education. This qualitative study analysed data from 10 specialist language teachers and mainstream teachers to examine their perceptions of linguistic responsiveness in teaching Spanish as a second language to immigrant students. The findings revealed that there are differences in the perceptions of teachers on linguistically responsive teaching. Overall, the language teachers, as compared to mainstream teachers, showed a more extensive perceptions related to the LRT framework. Qualitative data suggested that training in relation to teaching L2 and previous experiences in teaching immigrant students had an influence on participants' perceptions. Finally, the study indicates that while teachers did consider several elements of the LRT framework in their discussions on their practices, much more work regarding skills and knowledge aspects of understanding second language acquisition is necessary to prepare linguistically responsive teachers.
Keywords: Language teaching, linguistically responsive teaching, teachers' perceptions, immigrant students, teacher training/development.

Percepciones de la enseñanza lingüísticamente receptiva en profesores especialistas en Lengua y profesores tutores

RESUMEN: La enseñanza lingüísticamente receptiva (ELR) significa comprender el papel que tiene la lengua en la construcción de entornos de aprendizaje significativos. En este artículo, la enseñanza lingüísticamente receptiva se ve como una forma de implementar la noción de educación intercultural. Este estudio cualitativo analizó datos de 10 profesores especialistas en lengua y profesores tutores para examinar sus percepciones de la capacidad de respuesta lingüística en la enseñanza del español como segundo idioma para estudiantes inmigrantes. Los resultados revelaron que existen diferencias en las percepciones de los docentes sobre la enseñanza lingüísticamente receptiva. En general, los docentes de lengua, en comparación con los profesores tutores, mostraron perspectivas más amplias relacionadas con el marco ELR. Los datos cualitativos sugirieron que la capacitación en la enseñanza de L2 y las experiencias previas en la enseñanza de estudiantes inmigrantes influyen en las percepciones de los participantes. Finalmente, el estudio indica que, si bien los docentes consideraron varios elementos del marco ELR en sus discusiones sobre sus prácticas, mucho más trabajo es necesario con respecto a los aspectos de habilidades y conocimientos para comprender la adquisición de un segundo idioma para preparar profesores lingüísticamente receptivos.
Palabras clave: Enseñanza de las lenguas, enseñanza lingüísticamente receptiva, percepciones de los docentes, inmigración, formación del profesorado.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the not too distant past, Spain was a country of emigration. During the last decades, the country has undergone a substantial demographic transformation. The number of immigrants nearly quadrupled in a short period of time. At present there are 5.025.264 foreign nationals living in the country (NIS, 2019).

The rapid growth in the proportion of immigrant students[1] learning Spanish as a second (or third) language is having a major effect across the country. This tendency has led to increased inclusion of Spanish as a second language (SL2) in mainstream classrooms, where they are taught by teachers who consider themselves ill-prepared for working with linguistically diverse students (Rodríguez-Izquierdo, González-Falcón, & Goenechea, 2018; Wassell, Kerrigan, & Hawrylak, 2018).

Several studies also suggest that teachers find teaching linguistically diverse students as problematic (Dooly, 2007, 2009; Gkaintartzi, Kiliari, & Tsokalidou, 2015). Additionally, teachers believe that the responsibility for language development and academic achievement lies with language specialist teachers, not mainstream, teachers (Polat & Mahalingappa, 2013). Giving these perceptions, they do not seem to perceive their responsibility in teaching language to immigrant students (Lee & Anderson, 2009; Pettit, 2011).

Nevertheless, in a democratic society, public schools must ensure that all students have equal access to quality education. The competence of schools to accomplish this valuable purpose will depend to a great deal on the manner teachers understand their mission to generate multiple learning environments for meeting the differing experiences, requirements and interests of all students from linguistically diverse backgrounds. Thus, demographic changes have raised awareness of the need for all teachers, not just language specialists, to adapt to linguistic diversity to ensure the maximum learning of their students, that is, they need to implement linguistically responsive practices (Cummins, 2002; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995a 1995b).

Despite current demographic imperatives, little is known about how teachers construct, and enact their understanding of linguistically responsive teaching in relation to teaching Spanish to immigrant students. The study might be significant considering that the perceptions of teachers towards linguistically responsive teaching can greatly affect their teaching, particularly with diverse students (Nieto, 2002, Valdiviezo & Nieto, 2017). Positive attitudes towards learning the host language will hardly be favoured if it is not based on the recognition, respect and appreciation of each one of the languages present in the classroom. Thus, a clear understanding of teachers' perceptions towards linguistic teaching practice could contribute to the effectiveness of developing a relevant curriculum for preparing pre-service and in-service teachers to work with linguistically diverse immigrant students.

The main objective of this study is twofold: a) to examine teachers' perceptions of linguistic responsiveness in teaching Spanish to immigrant students using Lucas and Villegas

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[1] In this paper, we use the term "immigrant students" to define children whose parents were born outside of Spain and who require additional teaching in Spanish. The profile is very heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, cultural background, and language.

(2011) framework as an analytic tool; and, b) to compare the perceptions of two types of teachers –specialist language teachers and mainstream teachers[2].

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Linguistically responsive teaching (LRT)

Generally, scholars emphasize the need to equip teachers with effective teaching strategies and build cultural and linguistic awareness in order to ensure that teachers meet the needs of all students (Hollie, 2018). Further, teachers must be aware of the kind of language skills the students need in order to be able to understand and follow an assignment given to them in class and to develop their academic language skills (Cummins, 2001; Lucas & Villegas, 2013).

The literature establishes a cause-effect relationship between the use of students' native languages and academic achievement (Cummins, 1981, 2002; Menken & Kleyn, 2010), and thus, the European Commission recommends that its member states develop language awareness and multilingual pedagogies, that is, linguistically responsive teaching in schools (European Commission, 2018). Other research suggests that when all languages are seen as valuable resources for literacy and learning, it affirms multilingual students' identity, strengthens their feeling of belonging in the school community, and engages them in literacy practices more actively (Cummins et al., 2005; Taylor, Bernhard, Garg, & Cummins, 2008).

Linguistically responsive teaching is a framework introduced by Lucas and Villegas and Freedson-González (2008). They claimed that insufficient attention was being given either in teacher preparation or K–12 classrooms to the linguistic needs of multilingual learners and called for "Linguistically Responsive Teacher Education", outlining education in terms of three types of pedagogical expertise teachers need: (a) knowledge of the linguistic and academic backgrounds of students, (b) understanding of the language demands of the classroom tasks students are expected to engage in, and (c) the skills necessary to offer the appropriate scaffolding for bilingual learners to successfully participate in classroom tasks.

Lucas and Villegas published expanded versions of their LRT framework in 2010 and 2011. This paper selected Lucas and Villegas's (2011) two-part LRT for further investigation as it offers a comprehensive perspective of what a linguistically responsive teacher is by combining orientations and knowledge/skills needed to work equitably with multilingual learners. Further, LRT has obtained considerable attention in the literature, but it has not yet been widely empirically investigated.

The first part underlines three linguistically orientations: developing sociolinguistic consciousness; valuing linguistic diversity and functioning as an advocate for linguistically diverse students. The second part highlights four categories of knowledge/skills that teachers need to develop LRT: learning about students' language backgrounds and experiences; identifying the language demands of the classroom tasks; applying key principles of L2 learning; and scaffolding instruction to promote students' learning (see Table 1).

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[2] Mainstream teacher in this study is synonymous with tutor, content area teacher. The specialist language teachers are defined as teachers who are directly responsible for teaching Spanish as a L2 (SL2), generally in the Temporary Classroom of Linguistic Adaptation (TCLA) program.

Table 1. Lucas and Villegas's (2011) LRT framework

Orientation	Sociolinguistic consciousness	An understanding that language, culture, and identity are deeply intertwined, and an awareness that language use and language education exist within larger sociopolitical contexts. Teachers "understand their students' experiences as speakers of subordinated languages and recognize that the challenges they face are partly political, extending beyond the cognitive difficulties of learning a second language" (p. 59).
	Value for linguistic diversity	Teachers value learning about other languages, acknowledge and praise their students´ multilingualism, and incorporate opportunities for multilingual learners to use and leverage their native languages to achieve academic success. Teachers praise students' abilities for straddling two or more cultures and languages. Teachers show "respect for and interest in students' native languages (p. 60).
	Inclination to advocate for multilingual students	Understanding of the importance of talking to colleagues, administrators, and elected officials about classroom practices and education policies that support multilingual learners´ language development. They are willing to dispute practices and policies that have the potential to harm multilingual learners.
Skills/knowledge	Learning about students´ language backgrounds and experiences.	Understanding of the need "to help students make connections between their prior knowledge and experience and new ideas to be learned" (p. 61). Teachers form personal connections, taking the time to know them, and learning their moods.
	Identifying the language demands of the classroom tasks	Skills for determining the linguistic demands of oral and written discourse, to identify key vocabulary, to understand semantic and syntactic complexity of language used in written materials, and to know specific ways students are expected to use language to complete learning tasks.
	Applying key principles of second language learning	"Teachers understand the process of learning a second language and can apply this understanding in teaching" (p. 62).
	Scaffolding instruction to promote learning for students	"ability to apply temporary support, helps a learner accomplish learning tasks beyond her/his current capability" (p. 65) including a variety of standards-based teaching strategies and techniques such as visuals and hands-on activities; supplementing written and oral text with study guides, translation, and redundancy in instruction; and providing clear and explicit instructions.

Linguistically responsive teachers value linguistic diversity as an asset in their classrooms, and they encourage their students to use their entire linguistic repertoire as a resource for learning. Therefore, they question language policies that put languages in hierarchical order, discriminate against students and their languages, and understand multilingualism as a deficit. Further, linguistically responsive education is every child's right (Valdiviezo & Nieto, 2017). According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2017) linguistic human rights are realized only when the students learn through the language of schooling, and through their own languages. This is particularly essential for multilingual learners from immigrant backgrounds. In a recent study, Tandon, Viesca, Hueston, & Milbourn (2017) compared the perspective of teacher candidates and novice teachers and found the LRT framework to be extremely useful in guiding teacher education practices. Linguistically responsive teachers understand that languages form part of identity and when immigrant students do not find their languages represented at schools, they tend to feel discouraged (Cummins, 2008). Thus, they advocate for multilingual students' language learning and view students' multilingualism as a resource and promote students' abilities to draw on all of their linguistic resources for learning content. Furthermore, they support the use of the native languages of immigrant students as didactic capital for academic performance or related to the acquisition of the dominant language (Cummins, 2011, 2013). However, few teachers have expressed an interest in learning how to teach diverse linguistic students (Lucas, Villegas & Martin, 2015).

3. Method

3.1. Research design

Data were collected during the 2017–2018 school year as part of a large-scale, mixed-method and multidisciplinary research project that investigated the views of different stakeholders' (i.e., principals, teachers, students, and families) about linguistic diversity in Andalusia (Rodríguez-Izquierdo, González-Falcón, & Goenechea, 2018).

The present paper, through a qualitative design, focusses on the perceptions of teachers towards linguistic responsiveness in teaching Spanish to immigrant students, employing semi-structured interviews (King & Horrocks, 2010), the voices of two groups of teachers are compared: mainstream teachers and specialist language teachers.

3.2. Participants

The participants in this study were 10 teachers: five mainstream teachers and five language teachers. Six were Primary (3 language teachers and 3 mainstream teachers) and four Secondary (2 language teachers and 2 mainstream teachers). Criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used in the research; in this method, researchers choose participants according to specific criterions (Patton, 2015). The acceptable criterion in this research is that participants should have taught immigrant students for at least three years, and availability and willingness to collaborate in the study. Therefore, the teachers were selected intentionally in accordance with the research goals (Olafson, Grandy & Owens, 2015). The reason for choosing this group is the supposition that they have enough knowledge on the phenomenon researched.

Six females and four males aged between 28-59 participated in the study (mean age=39). The teaching experience time ranged from 4 to 35 years. The mainstream Secondary teachers taught Mathematics (1), and History (1). Furthermore, the latter reported not having any training in teaching L2.

3.3. Procedure

Teachers were contacted by phone or email, provided informed consent, and were interviewed at schools. The interviews were conducted in Spanish and in-person over a period of 7 months. Interviews lasted between 55' and 80' and were recorded for transcription. Within the frame of research ethic, their names weren't written, participant teachers were named with the codes P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, etc. An alphabetical classification was used to refer to other characteristics: MT (Mainstream Teacher) and LT (Language Teacher) and Primary (P) and Secondary (S) teachers respectively.

The interviews started with general introductory questions about the presence of immigrant students in their classrooms, their past experiences with linguistic diversity and their training in L2. Then, guiding questions were as follows:

1. How do you value linguistic diversity in the classroom?
2. What do you think of the student's native language? Do you consider that they should be taught and use in the school?
3. How important is for you learning about immigrant students 'language backgrounds and experiences?
4. How do you perceive your role in relation to the learning of Spanish of these students?
5. How do you scaffold instruction to promote immigrant students learning? Please, describe some of the strategies you use.

3.4. Data analysis

With the purpose of learning the perceptions of teachers regarding linguistically responsive teaching, content analysis was used as a qualitative technique to analyse data collected in the interviews (Krippendorff, 2013).

For this purpose, data obtained from teachers were examined thematically using first and second cycle coding procedures for qualitative analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) using the constant comparison method (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Firstly, the interview of each participant was separately read in a comprehensive manner in order to identify data that appeared relevant to the responsive teaching and learning with linguistically diverse immigrant students as understood by the LRT framework. Secondly, after the allocation of data into significant conversion and pieces into units, the selected sentences were further analyzed by checking recurring themes or patterns that emerged from the data. Thereafter, findings were presented keeping to the original format of data collected and quoting directly from participants' words. The QSR N-Vivo 11 was used.

4. Findings

The findings are organized according to the *a priori* themes from the LRT framework and discussed in the subsequent section. To summarize the operations involved in the analysis, the segmentation and identification of units of meaning and grouping into descriptive dimensions and subcategories are presented, in accordance with the criteria of soundness and internal coherence of qualitative methodology required in this type of research. Table 2 indicates the different components that constitute the analysis dimensions of the research. In the first two columns present the denomination of the dimension under which the categories are organized, with their corresponding sub-dimensions to which correspond a series of codes, frequencies and percentages.

Table 2. Dimension, subcategory, code name, frequency and percentage of occurrence
(based on number of total references).

Dimension	Subcategory	Code	F	% MT
Orientation	Sociolinguistic consciousness	SLC	122	6.5
	Value for linguistic diversity	VLD	416	22.3
	Inclination to advocate for multilingual students	AMS	170	9.1
Skills/knowledge	Learning about students´ language backgrounds and experiences.	LSBE	288	15.4
	Identifying the language demands of the classroom tasks.	ILDLT	315	16.8
	Applying key principles of second language learning.	APSLL	197	10.2
	Scaffolding instruction to promote learning for students	SIPL	357	19.1

4.1. Linguistically orientations

4.1.1. Developing sociolinguistic consciousness

It is noteworthy that mainstream teachers did not always view the languages of immigrant students as valuable as, for example, the foreign languages studied at the schools. The mainstream teachers seemed to favour dominant languages and imposed a negative perspective on other languages, with Spanish at the top as the dominant language immigrant students have to learn, followed by foreign languages as the most important, and the native language of students trailing at the end. For mainstream teachers, the rationale was based

on the idea that access to English is essential to better integrate students in a multilingual Europe. Thus, these teachers associated bilingualism only with English, while the linguistic repertoires of immigrant students were constructed as problematic or 'useless'. One teacher expressed it this way:

> To my understanding knowing many languages is awesome. However, form a practical point of view time is limited so these students would progress more if they apply and learn English or any other European language. After all, they are going to live here, and this is what society values (P2. MT. P.).

From the above extract, it might be that mainstream teachers tended to categorize languages. In addition to the "only Spanish ideology" (monolingual language perceptions), processes of classification and symbolic power of languages seemed to be present in their discourses. Immigrant students' linguistic backgrounds did not share the same social prestige as Spanish and English. The consequences might be that students quickly internalize messages about the value of their native language.

4.1.2. Valuing linguistic diversity

Overall, teachers' perceptions towards linguistic diversity of immigrant students were rather positive in rhetoric. Though the findings indicate that were discrepancies between the two types of teachers. From the analysis of the interviews, it appeared that the language teachers recognized the importance and valued of living in two or more languages. They manifested a greater praise for the students´ multilingualism and regarded it more as a challenge and as a resource for teaching. One of them stated that:

> I marvel at how many of these kinds are able to speak several languages […]. and they are learning Spanish too. I tried to let them know how much I admire this capability. I strongly believe that they could set a very good example for all the students. I also encourage them to keep in contact with their home language as I think is very important for their cultural development (P6. LT. S)

During the interview, specialist language teachers emphasized the importance of maintaining the native language as a means of strengthening students' identity. The findings indicate that language teachers understand the importance of providing support for students' L1 not only for linguistic development but also to affirm the students' sociocultural identity. Thus, teachers expressed strong beliefs in the value of continuing to develop students' native languages.

Conversely, mainstream teachers seemed to be more concerned about teaching content and therefore tended to have a less positive orientation towards linguistic diversity, associating it with 'a problem' and barely referred to it as an asset. Noticeably, the repeated apprehension, predominantly in the case of Secondary school teachers, was that immigrant students learn Spanish as soon as possible. It is worth noting that the representation of linguistic diversity was typically linked to the poor academic performance. These participants did not seem to show that they were "sensitive to the connection between language and identity" (Lucas & Villegas, 2011: 58). For instance, one of them claimed:

For immigrants learning Spanish is a mut if they do not want to be left behind. They won´t be able to achieve academic success otherwise […]. To learn the contents of my subject they need to learn Spanish. They fail because they do not know how to handle academic work in Spanish, and this is a great concern (P4. MT. S.).

In brief, the discourses revealed a double narrative, mainly that of the language specialist teachers, who advocated for immigrant students focusing on the possibilities they have and the richness they bring, compared to the predominant tendency of a large segment of the mainstream teachers, who evaluated the deficiencies mainly linguistic like 'a problem' for their performance. Furthermore, the latter tended to reduce linguistic diversity to Spanish, which suggests a non-recognition of multilingualism.

4.1.3. Inclination to advocate for multilingual students

Endorsing the inclusion of L1 (native language) instruction and bilingual education was a type of advocacy cited by some of the language teachers. On average, the specialist's teachers supported the use of L1 instruction by allowing students to use their native language and even by learning some words and phrases in the students' languages. Teachers representing this perspective tended to be capable of speaking another language, unlike many of the mainstream teachers.

I know by experience what it is to express yourself in a language that is not your own. Therefore, I like to see them more as potential Spanish learners than as non-Spanish speakers. They are on the way and we need to provide the support they need to succeed. Sometimes I need to convince some of my colleagues that these children are quite capable (P7. LT. S.).

On the other side, mainstream teachers perceived insufficient proficiency in Spanish as a deficit of immigrant students (and their parents) and hence was identified as something needing to be answered by the families. One teacher articulated it as follows:

Parents do not know Spanish either, so they are unable to teach Spanish to their children which becomes a problem. They speak their language at home and therefore what we teach in class is not reinforced by parents. Often, I feel frustrated because I do not have the time or resources to provide language support to students as I have other kids in the class (P1. MT. P.).

The above extract shows that mainstream teachers seemed to perceive immigrant students as lacking the linguistic necessary skills to navigate the education system. Though teachers manifested that they were unable to accomplish the stipulated academic aims when teaching immigrant students, our findings showed that mainstream teachers did not connect this to their personal teaching competence. Rather the deficit approach was reinforced by the perception of not been part of their task or not having the resources. Consequently, the teachers and teaching competencies or pedagogical and didactical methods at teacher and school level were not challenged in spite of swiftly changing school composition and rising linguistic diversity.

Altogether, the findings suggest that language teachers advocated for immigrant students focusing on the wealth they bring and adapting the teaching methods and materials. These forms of advocating for immigrant students was a sign of welcoming multilingualism and implementing it in practice.

> I have learnt to be creative in creating teaching materials and activities that suit these kids, I have designed a lot of them and asked the headteacher to buy resources to support their learning. I needed to convince other teachers too but now it is clear that everything does not work for them (P10. LT. P.).

4.2. Knowledge and skills of linguistically responsive teachers

4.2.1. Learning about students' language backgrounds and experiences

Mainstream teachers indicated that they lack the necessary pedagogical and didactical training to use the multilingual background of students as an added value in the learning process. It was expressed in this way:

> Immigrant kids have a different culture and language at home. I am not prepared to deal with their families. The cultural and linguistic gap is huge. I feel very confused when they come to the classroom. I do not have the means to communicate with them at first. (P3. MT. P.).

Recurrently mainstream teachers expressed that they did not always understand the culture of immigrant students and recognize their inability to establish connections with them and their families due to lack of language skills. To examine the perceptions, a more thorough semantic content analysis was conducted. The terms that predominate in the interviews were: "confusion", "disorientation", "inexperience", etc. In addition, three of them specifically referred to how the language teacher provided guidelines on ways to work with these students.

In contrast, language teachers would take steps to increase their own competency in learning about the needs of immigrant students and finding resources, tools, and strategies to meet these needs.

> To make connections between students between content and students' lives I try hard to learn as much as possible form their parents and accordingly I modify my teaching to suit these students. I take time to make personal interactions with their families as much as I can. Through the years and having to guide my colleagues I have learnt a lot. It is rewarding to see that kids feel more engaged in the classroom (P9. LT. P.).

However, it was clear that connecting with the student backgrounds needed a level of that some teachers regarded as difficult. Some of the participants described the process of getting to know their students background as "devastating", "demanding", and "tough" Furthermore, although teachers were cognizant that students languages and experiences re-

quired to be respected and appreciated and there existed a link between their experiences and learning, there was some sort of acquaintance showed by language teachers about including this knowledge into lesson plans and content being taught in the classroom that would be helpful to students. One teacher affirmed:

> We are studying the municipalities and sometimes, I have the impression that they are not even clear about certain concepts in their own language (mayors, councillors…) […].For me it is essential to connect their own experiences with what we are studying so that they understand better what we are up to […]. Often, I tell them to ask their families to send them the message that school contents are connected to what they live at home ... Then the kid comes and tells me, which is a fantastic exercise of oral expression (P8. LT. P).

This extract shows the conviction of this teacher that the integration of students 'experiences in the language teaching process is paramount not only to develop a positive attitude towards their teaching but to make teaching relevant.

4.2.2. Identifying language demands of classroom tasks

In this category language teachers expressed their willingness to assume responsibility for teaching Spanish to immigrant students and the degree to which they viewed themselves as responsible for student learning Spanish as a second language. Generally, the analysis revealed that mainstream teachers considered that language teaching is not part of their job. Despite recognising the 'problem' of having students in their classroom who do not know Spanish, they argue that their role is limited to teaching their subject. This position is particularly prevalent among Secondary school teachers who seemed to view the learning of Spanish from a merely instructional approach in terms of access and transition to mainstream classrooms.

Thus, mainstream teachers regularly underlined the inadequate placement of immigrant students in regular classrooms and the struggles of having to work with "uneven" groups.

Mainstream teachers who have not been introduced to multilingualism, repeatedly expressed their inability to serve immigrant students. Subsequently, they recommended having special classrooms where the language teachers will support immigrant students to acquire Spanish at the curricular level of their matching group so that they can join the regular classroom later. This leaves no space for multilingual students' languages in regular classrooms. One teacher explained:

> I have not been trained to teach Spanish and I do not think is my duty to teach Spanish. My task is to teach History. For that there are experts' teachers and it is their responsibility […] Thus, I feel that the best placement for these kids is in a special language classroom. I have some immigrant students who have been put in my class who really should be placed in another class first (P5. MT. S)

Conversely, specialist teachers totally agreed that it is, in fact, their job and are happy to accomplish this purpose. They understand that their mission goes beyond teaching content,

and involves mediation, integration and emotional support, pedagogical guidance, etc. It is, therefore, a process that is strengthened: language teachers pleased with their mission, and mainstream teachers 'not willing or trained' to do it.

In brief, language teachers could be said to adopt a more pedagogical perspective of their task. By contrast, mainstream teachers, particularly Secondary teachers, identified themselves with their role as a transmitter of content which seemed to lead them to avoid responsibility for teaching Spanish.

4.2.3. Applying key principles of second language learning

Beyond developing a preliminary knowledge about linguistic demands of a classroom, could be affirmed that overall our participants' awareness remained at a superficial level, as their discourse barely encompassed reference to the linguistic and syntactic analysis of Spanish that would have facilitated the teachers to analyse, break down, and adapt activities for students.

It is worth noting that mainstream teachers expressed a lack of knowledge/skills about the process of teaching a second language and applying it. The need for teacher training in linguistically responsive teaching approach was very evident. One teacher asserted that:

> In my initial training I did not have any course about teaching Spanish for foreigners. This topic wasn't even talked about. Nor have I taken any courses in this regard in ongoing learning (P1. MT. P.)

Furthermore, as compared to mainstream teachers, language teachers had somewhat greater levels of awareness about how immigrant students were learning and how they could adapt their strategies to support their learning, nonetheless, they relied on using diverse options rather than implementing strategies and activities supported by solid empirical evidence from the domain of second language teaching research.

4.2.4. Scaffolding instruction to promote students' learning

From the analysis it emerged that the language teachers demonstrated a greater knowledge of the principles of linguistically responsive teaching and, therefore, used a greater number of strategies recognizing the possibilities of linguistic diversity, giving it a pedagogical orientation and making visible the contents related to the cultures provided by immigrant students.

Language teachers stated that they generally learned simple vocabulary in the students´ languages with which to welcome them when they did not know any Spanish. Additionally, they used *online* resources to communicate with students. As one of the participants shared:

> When these students arrived in my class, I use some basic words in their language […] I also use a lot of visuals cues as much as I can. They facilitate a lot my endeavours and kids love it. (P9. LT. P).

It must be mentioned that the main strategy stated by language teachers was to make immigrant students feel accepted and welcomed. One of the teachers reported the following:

My main concern is that students feel wanted in my class. To accomplish that I used all sort of strategies. Basically, I used body language and pictograms at the beginning. The need a lot of visual support and take time to talk about what happened in the mainstream classroom or do not understand there. I completely adapt to their rhythm (P7. LT. S.).

Another group of strategies mentioned by language teachers were extralinguistic support in the form of graphic organizers, and alternative assignments followed by modification of written texts and clear and explicit instructions.

Conversely, mainstream teachers rarely mentioned the use of supports such as native language grouping, explaining difficult ideas, pre-teaching vocabulary, and creating opportunities in the classroom for discussions. The scaffolding strategies most mentioned by many of the mainstream teachers involved using materials provided by the specialist teachers.

I understand that perhaps I should use different strategies to teach these kids but for me is troublesome. I rely on the materials that my colleagues prepared and try to use it as much as I can. I tried to take time to supervise what the kids are doing but sometimes I can´t because of lack of time (P4. MT. S).

Nevertheless, though many teachers expressed the need to scaffold instruction, they did not especially mention principles of second language acquisition. Thus, data showed that although the mainstream teachers did not explicitly make connections between theories of second language acquisition and learning, they tended to implement the initiative of scaffolding teaching to support students in ways that specialist teachers had told them to be successful.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

This article examined teachers' perceptions of linguistic responsiveness in teaching Spanish to immigrant students. Overall data revealed that language teachers expressed a greater appreciation for linguistic diversity of immigrant students and viewed it more as a challenge. Additionally, they functioned as an advocate for immigrant students and understand their role as cultural mediators. In contrast, the mainstream teachers seemed to have a less positive orientation towards linguistic diversity, associating it more with problems. There seems to be a discrepancy between the 'liberal' positions' that mainstream teachers advocate concerning linguistic diversity on a theoretical level and its categorization as problematic, burdensome, 'invisible' or 'non-existent' in terms of their everyday classroom reality (Gkaintartzi, Kiliari, & Tsokalidou, 2015). The core reason provided by mainstream teachers was that they did not receive training on teaching L2 and therefore did not see a role for themselves in teaching SL2 to immigrant students. Hence, mainstream teachers believed that educating immigrant students was difficult, burdensome and gave them "lots of additional work". Furthermore, examples of the explicit actions and advocacy that they performed for the students were less frequent in mainstream teachers' interviews. They also claimed that did not have time or experience while the specialist teachers did, thus they tended to rely on the orientations and materials provided by their colleagues (Gándara et al., 2005; Lee & Anderson, 2009).

Interestingly, the perception of Secondary school teachers tends to be that students should learn Spanish as soon as possible, identifying non-Spanish speaking students as "problematic". However, they do not normally see themselves as being responsible for this task unless they are language teachers, considering that their job is to transmit knowledge of their subject.

Our results are consistent with Rojas et al. (2012) when they refer to two different types of teachers, namely those who conceptualize their role as "teachers" versus other teachers who understand themselves much more as cultural mediators. The findings are also in line with Tandon et al.'s (2017) study where teacher candidates and novice teachers displayed a fluctuating variety of perceptions about LRT, with the maximum scores or scaffolding teaching and lowest for understanding essential values of SLL.

Cummins (2000) and Lee and Anderson (2009) indicate the effective teaching of language cannot only be in the hands of those who work on special language programs. Thus, mainstream teachers also need to take responsibility for the teaching of Spanish in their classrooms, rather than expecting the specialist teacher alone to have this role. Along these lines, Darling-Hammond (1997: 295) underlines the importance of teachers' understanding of "cultural differences, language, family, community, gender, prior schooling and other factors that shape the students' experience".

The least frequently discussed aspect by our study participants was related to the sociolinguistic consciousness and the application of key principles of L2 learning. As professionals in a changing scenario, these findings highlight the need for professional development for all teachers in LRT to better understand the critical role and functions of native languages in the personal, academic, and social trajectories of diverse linguistic immigrant students and therefore to promote a move away from maintaining monolingualism to advocating for multilingualism to better reflect the realities of the classrooms.

> Inclusion is the powerful engine driving the urgency for all teachers to become linguistically responsive and, therefore, for all preservice and in-service teacher educators to ensure they have access to the necessary preparation to help make this happen (Lucas & Villegas, 2010: 312).

Previous research shows that teachers are underprepared for linguistically diverse classrooms and follow a monolingual ideology when considering how to teach multilingual pupils (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Martin-Jones, Blackledge, & Creese, 2012). Thus, some authors such as Gay (2010), Ladson-Biling (1995 a, 1995 b), and Nieto (2002) have also alluded in their studies to the need for teacher training.

While the LRT framework specifically emphasizes both orientations and skills/knowledge and proved to be particularly beneficial in leading teacher education, in future work the skills and knowledge aspects of understanding second language acquisition could be expanded to include the translanguaging framework (García & Wei, 2014). The term translanguaging is obtaining reputation to clarify that, languages complement each other within the individual's adaptive response to the environment (Canagarajah, 2011: 1) and that immigrant students have the right to study in a context where all their languages are considered as a resource for learning (García & Kleyn, 2016). This way, teachers would be more aware to view immigrant students not as children 'who lack a language´ but as 'emergent bilinguals´ (García,

Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). Furthermore, teachers trained in LRT would be more sensitive to consider the linguistic background of students and would be capable of using sensitive cultural and linguistic materials (Gay, 2010).

Much work remains to ensure that all teachers received professional development in LRT. Revealing the teachers' perceptions of linguistic responsiveness in teaching SL2 may be a critical step toward improving educational justice and meeting the needs of immigrant students. This study provides valuable implications for policymakers and for the improvement of teacher development to better support language instruction of immigrant students and offer some suggestions for what the basis of that improvement might involve.

6. References

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7. ACKNOWLEDGMENT