Bilingual classrooms at Wichi communities in Argentina: defining bilingual intercultural education through interactional practices.

Virginia Unamuno
CONICET, Argentina

This paper is part of a broader research on El Impenetrable, a region in northern Argentina whose inhabitants are mostly Wichis, one of the indigenous peoples of the country. In recent years, indigenous teachers have been incorporating to school, and, with them, wichi oral and writing practices have been acquiring a place in teaching-learning processes. These transformations have been accompanied by changes in linguistic and educational policies that outline new sociolinguistic dynamics that challenge traditional models of monolingual education. Our research, based in an ethnographic approach to sociolinguistic dynamics, explores the relationship between political dimensions and microsocial aspects, which are to be traced in the analysis of daily interactions.

For the present paper, we explore and contrast two schools that carry out different bilingual education proposals, in order to discuss bilingual educational practices from a situated perspective. As we show, through classroom interactional analysis we can reconstruct different views of plurilingualism and intercultural processes that coexist and are in tension at schools. Languages uses, as symbolic resources, are analyzed in order to describe and understand disputes between groups (indigenous and non-indigenous) that contextualize and map out possibilities of inclusive education in the area. Beyond an idealized vision of plurilingualism, this work emphasizes the need to consider in the description of plurilingual practices at schools, the disputes between groups over "the power to say" and "the power to do" with languages.

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