Rapping in Catalan in and beyond a rhyme workshop in Secondary Education

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This paper explores the role of Catalan language along a 4-day RAP workshop in one multicultural and multilingual public school in Catalonia (IES Lluís de Peguera, Manresa), whose student body is predominantly from Maghreb and Latin America. The rhyme workshop was conducted at the end of 2012 by Pau Llonch, lead vocal of At versaris, one of the few current groups which rap in Catalan. It was integrated within the optative subject Music and aimed at helping students to find their own balance between the rhythm, the verse and their critical perspectives on the world. Through the workshop, each student wrote its own RAP in Catalan and later on performed it in front of the class. In this paper we will be particularly looking at the impact that the workshop had in some students with different command of the language and with different degree of experience with rap music.

The Rhythm And Poetry (RAP) is a lyrical genre typically excluded from education despite the wide range of possibilities it offers for developing musical, literacy and critical skills (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade; Lamont 2009; Low 2011). In addition, Catalan is rarely perceived as the language of rap music, both in the streets and in the music industry (Palà 2010). Moreover, in the educative context where the workshop was conducted, even though Catalan was seen by immigrant background teenage students as the language of the school, it was not the preferred language for peer-social relations; a discontinuity that has been documented in other school settings (eg. Woolard 1989; Patiño-Santos & Unamuno 2009; Corona 2012). In this sense, this RAP workshop was promoting the socialization of Catalan language in and beyond the classroom by acknowledging, within the educational space, real uses of the Catalan language in connection with the cultural practices of urban students.

Keywords: Literacy, Secondary Education, Rap.