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Countering decapitalisation: examining teachers' discourses of migration in Galicia

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ABSTRACT

Multilingualism in European classrooms is the norm, not exception, and while the management of linguistic diversity is increasingly at the fore of language policy debates, policy engagement with the multilingual realities of schools continues to be inadequate, and the linguistic habitus of present-day education systems remains largely monolingual [Piller, I. (2016). *Linguistic Diversity and Social Justice: An Introduction to Applied Sociolinguistics*. Oxford University Press.]. This article draws on a case study of Cape Verdean immigrants in the small fishing town of Burela in Galicia, Spain, to highlight the challenges associated with language education and immigration in a minority language setting specifically. The article presents an expansion of the concept of decapitalisation [Martín Rojo, L. (2010) *Constructing Inequality in Multilingual Classrooms*, De Gruyter Mouton.] as a framework for analysing how hegemonic ideologies in the Galician education system can contribute to social stratification and the marginalisation of the immigrant population. The article focuses specifically on discourses deployed by teachers to understand how processes of decapitalisation play out, and the grassroots initiatives taken to resist them.

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Introduction

Language has long been used as a tool to create and reinforce social hierarchies (Agha, 2007; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Kroskrity, 2000), with immigrants often experiencing forms of linguistic domination that challenge their legitimacy in social settings (Collins et al., 2009; Duchêne et al., 2013; Márquez Reiter & Martín-Rojo, 2015). This can be seen especially in the classroom. In Galicia, where this research was conducted, and in the broader Spanish and European contexts, changes in economic structures, coupled with numerous migration waves during the 20th and 21st centuries have led to increasingly linguistically diverse classrooms (Corona et al., 2012; Etxeberrias & Elosegi, 2008; Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011; Gkaintartzi et al., 2014; Pulinx et al., 2015; Van Der Wildt et al., 2015). Despite this, the linguistic *habitus* of the education system remains rooted in monolingualism (Busch, 2013; Piller, 2016), and studies in the Spanish context have demonstrated how linguistic factors can contribute to the poor academic achievement

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of immigrant students when compared to their local counterparts (Codó & Patiño-Santos, 2014; Patiño-Santos et al., 2015; Pérez-Milans, 2011; Pujolar, 2010). To date, little research has been carried out on the role that language plays in the academic achievement of immigrant students in Galicia, Spain. To that end, this article draws on a case study of Cape Verdean immigrant students in the Galician town of Burela, to better understand the complexities of immigration and education in a minority language setting specifically. The article examines the tensions between the hegemonic ideologies in the Galician education system that contribute to the *decapitalisation* (Martín Rojo, 2010) of the immigrant population (where their symbolic capitals are not valued and they are not taught what they need to compete in the labour market) and the initiatives taken at grassroots level to actively challenge dominant paradigms from the bottom-up.

Language in the education system plays a central role in perpetuating the status quo: by suppressing linguistic diversity and inculcating a standard variety of a dominant language, schools impose 'the only legitimate form of linguistic expression' (Piller, 2016, p. 99). It is this 'hidden curriculum' that maintains and preserves the socioeconomic order. Language thus gains importance as a resource that contributes to boundary making and maintenance, and can be used to regulate processes of social inclusion and exclusion and present them as legitimate (Gorski, 2011; Heller, 2011; Martín Rojo, 2010, 2013). As Heller (2011, p. 38) explains: in democratic societies, selecting people on the basis of social categories such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, social class, etc. is not considered acceptable. On the other hand, selecting people on the basis of talent and achievement is. In order to perpetuate and support such a system, we have created the idea that some forms of language are better than others, and that some people are 'better' at language than others. Therefore, 'the fact that some people master good forms of language and others do not can be understood as a problem of individual merit (talent, effort) rather than a problem of social inequality' (Heller, 2011, p. 38).

The school is often positioned as the means by which the 'objective', legitimate language can be accessed, and it is expected that, in order to succeed, students should possess 'competence' in this legitimate language (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Failure to do so can lead to students being classified as deficient and placed in segregated class groups (Gorski, 2011; Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001; Martín Rojo, 2010). Furthermore, language serves as means to justify social inequalities by presenting the legitimate language as equally accessible to all. This justification of inequality is legitimised by discourses which place the blame on those who are excluded, rather than shining a light on the desire of the powerful to remain powerful (Heller & Duchêne, 2012). In other words, dominant discourses have been used 'to convince the powerful that they deserve their power, and the marginalised that it makes sense to be at the margins' (Heller & Duchêne, 2012, p. 5). Language as a boundary marker (and maker) is especially pertinent for immigrants coming to an officially bilingual society such as Galicia, where, as will subsequently be discussed, there are pre-existing hierarchical dynamics between the two languages of the region.

The concept of decapitalisation, which draws on Bourdieu's (1986) notion of symbolic capital, explains how schools, as agents of the state, distribute capital in such a way that privileges certain members of society while at the same time classifies others (for the purposes of this study, immigrants) as deficient. Martín Rojo (2013) has discussed decapitalisation in the context of schools in Madrid; Madrid is one of the parts of Spain that has traditionally received high numbers of immigrants. This particular study extends the

framework of decapitalisation by casting new light on its implications in the minority language setting of Galicia, which in comparison to Madrid has received much lower levels of immigration. Galicia's experience of immigration has been relatively sudden. Consequently, language and immigration policies have been criticised for being reactive (Recalde, 2016); since the economic crisis that took place in 2008, immigrants in Galicia have often been ignored and overlooked at policy level (Recalde Fernández & Silva Domínguez, 2016). There has been criticism of language in education policy due to the perceived reliance on segregating immigrant students in order to cope with linguistic diversity (Silva Domínguez & Recalde, 2012). Additionally, there are no specific provisions to support the languages of immigrant communities; the focus of the curriculum continues to be 'hispanocentric', privileging standard peninsular Spanish (Silva Domínguez & Recalde, 2012), and there is a paucity of resources for immigrants to learn Galician. This exists in a context where Galician holds increasing symbolic value: Galician is a compulsory subject in the secondary education system; many classes at university level are taught through the medium of Galician; and competence in Galician is a requirement for obtaining public sector work in Galicia. In this sense, lack of engagement at policy level and lack of provision for immigrants to learn the minority language contributes to the marginalisation and decapitalisation of the immigrant population in Galicia.

Research context: Galicia and Cape Verde

The case of Galicia provides an important laboratory for understanding the sociolinguistic implications of transnational migration (Grosfoguel, 2018). Its coastline is associated with deep-sea fishing, commercial harbours, naval construction and cruise tourism, all of which provide the region with an international character (Lamela, 2018). When studying the phenomenon of immigration, previous flows of migration, colonial history and the development of transnational communities involving intergenerational connections, gains importance (DePalma & Pérez-Caramés, 2018). Migration does not happen in a vacuum, and migrants do not arrive into an 'empty space' (Grosfoguel, 2018, p. vi). Their destinations as well as their points of origin are shaped by a history of racial/colonial domination. The migration experience to Galicia illustrates the intersectional nature of oppression: in examining Galicia's relatively new status as receiver of immigrants, its position as a subalternised colonial nation within the Spanish state as well as its long history of emigration must be taken into account (Grosfoguel, 2018). Galicia has traditionally been one of the most socio-economically deprived parts of Spain. Consequently, Galicia has seen vast emigration throughout its history. This emigration has not ceased and continues to the present day with waves of youth migration; return migration of previous immigrants; and onward migration to third countries as a consequence of the 2008 economic crisis (Domingo & Blanes, 2018).

Immigration to Galicia differs considerably from immigration to other parts of Spain due to the region's geographic isolation and high unemployment levels. Thus far, no unauthorised immigrants have tried to enter Galicia on boats or rafts, there is virtually no agricultural sector that is dependent on immigrant day-labourers, and numbers of European expatriates are low (Lamela, 2018, p. 3). As of 2019,¹ the immigrant population of Spain stands at just over 5 million, and immigrants in Galicia total just over 100,000,

accounting for approximately 3.7% of the total Galician population. The number of immigrant students enrolled in non-university education stands at 11,265.² Migration to Galicia has increased over the last three decades, peaking in 2007 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2016). While the number of immigrants arriving has decreased since the economic crisis of 2008, immigration figures have not returned to the low levels seen in the latter decades of the twentieth century. While the level of immigration to Galicia and the number of immigrant children in the education system is comparatively low, scholars have explained that immigrants in Galicia represent ‘a sudden presence of diversity that was inconceivable less than a generation ago’ (Teasley et al., 2012, p. 305). This, therefore, highlights the timeliness of examining approaches to immigrant education in minority languages settings such as Galicia, where immigration on such a scale is a relatively recent phenomenon.

Galicia’s sociolinguistic ‘baggage’ is central to understanding the linguistic dynamics of the region. During the Franco dictatorship, use of regional minority languages in Spain was restricted. In Galicia, Spanish was the language of prestige, favoured by the dominant classes, while Galician was viewed as the language of the working classes. This accelerated language shift, and Spanish became increasingly prevalent in urban centres, while Galician was relegated to rural areas. Stereotypes about Galician have changed over the last forty years, in part due to the language normalisation efforts that have taken place since Spain’s transition to democracy. While previously the Galician language was associated with rurality and poverty, newer stigmas centre on the ‘artificial’ nature of the variety of Galician spoken by *neofalantes* (‘new speakers’ who for the most part have learned Galician through the education system) and the link between Galician and ideologies of political separatism (O’Rourke & Ramallo, 2013). These stereotypes exist against a backdrop of Spanish continuing to be positioned as the language of progress and modernity (Iglesias Álvarez, 2012).

The sociolinguistic parallels between Galicia and Cape Verde are salient: there is a high degree of mutual intelligibility between Galician, Portuguese and Cape Verdean Kriolu due to lexical similarities between all three languages, and grammatical similarity between Galician and Portuguese. Moreover, much like Galicia, Cape Verde’s present-day sociolinguistic dynamics reveal traces of its colonial past. The government of Cape Verde (like the governments of many African post-colonies) has adopted monolingual ideologies, whereby a group’s right to statehood and political autonomy is linked to their linguistic homogeneity (Gal, 2006). The standard language of the former colonial power (Portugal) is seen as ‘superior’ to the local language, therefore all efforts at modernisation and development must be carried out in the dominant language. Thus, we see how pre-existing hierarchical structures from the migrant community are reflected in local ones. This ‘ideological baggage’ surrounding the value and prestige of minority languages that Cape Verdean migrants arrive with, is accommodated by local linguistic ideology, which has experienced a similar history of linguistic minoritisation. This convergence of linguistic ideologies shapes the experiences of both host and guest, and leads to a situation of *triglossia* for Cape Verdeans (Fernández González, 2006), where Kriolu takes third place in the language hierarchy with Galician and Spanish. This further adds to the decapitalisation of Cape Verdean students, where Kriolu, as one of the pillars of Cape Verdean identity, is relegated to the private sphere.

Case study: Burela

The town of Burela has two defining characteristics that are important for understanding this study. First, Galician is the first language of most of the population, with approximately 50% of the population claiming to use Galician exclusively (Instituto Galego de Estatística, 2011).³ This stands in stark contrast to some of Galicia's larger cities (such as Vigo and A Coruña), where around 15% of the population have Galician as their first language (Instituto Galego de Estatística, 2011). The second notable feature about Burela is the high immigrant population. At the time of writing, approximately 14% of the population is of immigrant background (with the term 'immigrant' describing those from outside Spain). The largest immigrant subgroup are from Cape Verde, making up almost 5% of the town's population. Cape Verdean immigration to Burela dates back to the 1970s when Cape Verdean men took up jobs in the Galician fishing sector and were later joined by their wives and children. Since then, there have been ebbs and flows in levels of migration from Cape Verde (and levels of return migration), influenced largely by the fluctuating economic conditions in Galicia and Cape Verde.

The Galician media often cite the Cape Verdean community in Burela as a key example of immigration to Galicia; this in part due to Cape Verdeans' 'racial' difference as well as their status as the oldest immigrant group in the region. The media narrative tends to present the case of Cape Verdeans in Burela as an example of successful and 'seamless integration'. This, however, has received criticism: a 1998 study funded by the European Social Fund, entitled *BogAvante*, which focused on the social integration of the Cape Verdean population in Burela, demonstrated tensions and contradictions to claims of perfect integration. The findings of the project pointed to matters around the statelessness of children born in Spain to Cape Verdean parents (leading to discrimination in access to social resources); lack of vocational training for women especially; and schooling problems for Cape Verdean children (see Oca, 2018 for a discussion of the *BogAvante* project). The project ended in 2000 and was superseded by a project funded by the Galician Autonomous Government that continues to the present day. Since the economic crisis of 2008, issues around school failure rates and lack of quality education for Cape Verdean students in Burela persist.

As outlined in the Galician Statute of Autonomy of 1981, education is one of the competencies that is devolved to the autonomous community of Galicia; the Galician Autonomous Government (*Xunta*) are responsible for the language in education strategies for the region. This is important for understanding language and education in Burela: the schools broadly follow the system as laid out by the regional government; however, in parallel to this, each school is at liberty to design their own language planning initiatives, so long as they align with the main objectives of policies at regional level. As such, in response to increasingly multilingual and multicultural classrooms, in the early 2000s, community members in Burela (primarily schoolteachers and language activists) elaborated a grassroots, multilingual language planning model, entitled *Modelo Burela*. The model aimed to foster an inclusive and intercultural approach to education by promoting the use of Galician and Spanish (as languages spoken historically in the community), English and French (the two languages usually taught as foreign languages in schools in Galicia), and the languages of origin of the immigrant communities such as Kriolu, Arabic, Wolof and Serer. In addition to language teaching, the *Modelo Burela* engaged

in intercultural activities in the school, highlighting the value of multilingualism. Many of the teachers involved in the *Modelo Burela* project noted that there was a dearth of resources for intercultural integration and second language teaching in Galician. Unsatisfied with the policies put in place by the Galician Autonomous Government, which were perceived to be falling short of promoting interculturalism and followed assimilationist models of integration, teachers wished to foster cultural awareness in the town by promoting the benefits of multilingualism.

Methodology

This article draws on selected data from a larger project that focused on speakers of Galician from immigrant backgrounds. The data for this study was collected between 2013 and 2014 and comprises classroom observations, fieldnotes, semi-structured interviews and group interviews with fourteen students and ten teachers in two secondary schools, as well as one researcher and a community worker living in the town.⁴ Interviewees were selected following the snowball sampling method and over the fieldwork period relationships were built with participants. This article provides a broad outline of participants' profiles rather than more detailed, individualised profiles so as to preserve the anonymity of participants in this small town. An interview protocol of 6–8 open-ended questions was designed. The interviews with the teachers, researcher and community worker were structured in three parts, initially adopting a life-history approach to elicit information about participants' sociolinguistic background, and then asked about their experiences working with students from immigrant backgrounds. The analysis of the data took a thematic approach, initially exploiting key trends identified in classroom observations and fieldnotes to develop preliminary codes. Drawing on the framework method for qualitative research (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994), Nvivo software was then used to code interview transcripts according to emerging themes.

This study takes a social approach to language, examining how people's ideological stances are reproduced through their linguistic practices (Moyer, 2008). Moreover, interviews are understood as situated events, and thus responses to interviews are not objective and are rather a representation of the ideological stance of the interviewee. This stance is shaped by the interviewee's personal linguistic trajectory and their social context. Interview talk is inevitably constructed for the given audience and context, and is shaped by what participants consider appropriate in the situation (Codó, 2008). Nonetheless, by gathering first person interview data, it is possible to access the interpretations that people make of their social reality. This article focuses on the discourses deployed by teachers in order to understand the complexities of how processes of decapitalisation play out in Burela and the grassroots initiatives taken to resist them. (For a discussion of the discourses deployed by students, please see Bermingham and Higham [2018]). The analytical framework of decapitalisation is particularly useful as discourses regarding the decapitalisation of immigrant students were, as the data will show, actively articulated by teachers in the town. The following section first looks at how linguistic hegemony directly contributes to the decapitalisation of immigrant students, and then examines how teachers and other stakeholders in Burela mobilise to resist decapitalisation, and the discourses they draw on to justify and rationalise their actions.

The monolingual habitus and decapitalisation

The linguistic habitus of the Galician education system is structured by Galicia's past and present experience as a subalternised colonial nation within the Spanish state. During the Franco dictatorship, education in Spain was largely monolingual and Spanish was the medium of instruction in schools. As one teacher explained, the *Modelo Burela* was initially developed as a way of resisting the monolingualism of Spain's past:

We want our children to have a multilingual education. We came from a country, from a monolingual education system, monolingual in Spanish, with occasional brushstrokes of a foreign language. That is the type of education that existed in the Spanish state, and for example, politicians these days who are over the age of forty, many of them have problems with foreign relations because the vast majority of them are practically monolingual in Spanish. Practically monolingual. (Teacher 1)

This teacher drew upon his own experience of being educated monolingually, positioning monolingualism as a hindrance to future career success. His rhetoric reflects a utilitarian approach to language-learning: in this scenario language is considered as a resource for participation in a wider international community, while monolingualism in Spanish is seen as a limitation. The limitations of monolingual education models do not only have an impact on 'foreign relations'. In rural, working-class towns such as Burela, where the majority of the population are Galician speakers, monolingual Spanish education during the dictatorship implied a stark mismatch between the language of the home and the language of the school, thus directly contributing to the linguistic oppression faced by Galician speakers. Many participants in this study highlighted that with the arrival of immigrants to Burela, there was a sense of history repeating itself: the decapitalisation that Cape Verdean students in Galicia are experiencing now (where their previous linguistic knowledge isn't valued), mirrors the linguistic oppression experienced by Galician-speakers during the years of the dictatorship.

Although language teaching in Galician primary and secondary schooling has changed significantly since the transition to democracy (notably with the introduction of Galician as a compulsory subject at primary and secondary level) such changes have not been sufficient to limit language-shift to Spanish, and the *habitus* of the school remains rooted in monolingualism. Many teachers invoked the term 'diglossia' to describe the linguistic hegemony and monolingual ideologies they perceived within the present-day education system. As one teacher pointed out 'the education system is still deeply diglossic [...] daily practices are diglossic, from the caretakers to the administrative staff, to counsellors and teaching staff' (Teacher 1). By way of example, he indicated that the default language of formal communication in the school was Spanish. Teachers did not use the term diglossia as it is used academic scholarship (e.g. Ferguson, 1959; Fishman, 1967), but rather to describe the situation of language hegemony within the school, where Spanish continues to be the dominant language of prestige, despite policies that advocate for Galician. Echoing research that has criticised this continued 'hispano-centric' focus of the Galician education system (Silva Domínguez & Recalde, 2012), one teacher pointed out that, due to the 'diglossic' education system, initial evaluation tests for immigrant students are done through the medium of Spanish (and to a lesser extent Galician). Furthermore, these assessments test students against the language

and content of the Galician education system, rather than finding ways for them to capitalise on their previous knowledge (and the mutual intelligibility between Galician and the languages of Cape Verde). The teacher described these initial evaluations as ‘catastrophic’ and examples of ‘misguided pedagogy’ which set immigrant students up for academic failure.

Many of the evaluations are catastrophic. In other words, the academic failure of many immigrant children is decided during their first week in school. It’s really so misguided that those first few weeks lay the groundwork for a misguided pedagogy which then leads to nine out of ten of these students failing. (Teacher 1)

For this teacher, it is the hegemonic language ideologies that underpin the Galician education system that contribute to the decapitalisation of immigrant students (a process which he argues begins from their first day of school); this is consistent with studies that have documented the linguistic domination experienced by immigrants (Collins et al., 2009; Duchêne et al., 2013). Such practices exemplify how languages can be ‘a set of resources which circulate in unequal ways in social networks and discursive spaces, and whose meaning and value are socially constructed within the constraints of social organisational processes, under specific historical conditions’ (Heller, 2007, p. 2).

Discourses that framed difference as deficit were identified occasionally in the data. One teacher, when discussing immigrant students, noted that ‘the majority of them arrive with a very deficient education’ and explained that if immigrant students were ‘very behind’, the strategy was ‘to put them back as much as we are allowed to by law’ (Teacher 2), referring to the common practice of placing immigrant students in classes with students who are younger than them. This has implications for students’ motivation, often leading to their dropping out of school early. This deficit rhetoric and subsequent decapitalising practices serve to legitimise exclusion and justify inequalities by placing blame on the marginalised rather than the broader structures which sustain and perpetuate marginalisation. It is in this way that the education system can be central to the process of reproducing and naturalising social inequalities (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

A thread of frustration with, and rejection of top-down education policies was identified across many of the teachers who participated in the study. In addition to the ‘misguided’ evaluation tests, teachers were also critical of the measures in place to support immigrant students, especially as regards language-learning. While some immigrant students were placed in classes which didn’t correspond to their age group, others (who were deemed to have low attainment levels in Spanish and Galician) were placed in the Special Educational Needs (SEN) group. One teacher reflected on this, noting:

- T: I always give the example of if there is a child in a school in Galicia, if he has a problem with pronunciation he goes to a speech therapist [...] right? But if you want to learn English or another foreign language you’re not going to go to a speech therapist, you go to a specialist in languages. What happens here is that sometimes the student who has to learn Galician or Spanish goes to a speech therapist {laughs} [...] but I think that it could be organised within the curriculum
- I: That would have an impact on them, right?
- T: I suppose it would, yes
- I: Yes because it’s treating one problem with
- T: With another solution. You have a headache and they operate on your leg (Teacher 3)

The placing of immigrant students in segregated classrooms demonstrates a focus on fixing the student, rather than fixing the broader social conditions that lead to failure rates in the first place (Gorski, 2011). The risk posed by educational practices that focus on separating immigrant students from mainstream classes on linguistic grounds is that they often do not succeed in ameliorating educational or economic inequalities. Rather, they ‘sustain disenfranchised people within a disenfranchising system’ (2011, p. 20). Notwithstanding, Gorski, cautions that this is not to say that we should not offer tutoring and mentoring programs for any students who need them, as long as we do not fall into the deficit-inspired ‘savior syndrome’ or use ‘mentoring’ as code language for ‘assimilating’. (Gorski, 2011)

Many teachers highlighted that language hegemony within the school contributed to the exclusion of the parents of immigrant students, too. Almost all teachers noted that they had very limited contact with immigrant parents; while some attributed this to linguistic barriers, others spoke of a broader ‘lack of communication’ between the immigrant community and teachers, as arguably the mutual intelligibility between Galician, Portuguese and Kriolu would facilitate communication. This lack of communication, teachers argued, led to ‘embarrassing’ and ‘uncomfortable’ situations for immigrant parents.

They find it difficult to come to [parent-teacher] meetings because when you go to a place where you don’t have the language, you feel as I would say, at a disadvantage, and you find it difficult to bring yourself to go [...] it’s not that they don’t care about their children the way we care about ours, it’s that they don’t feel ... (Teacher 4)

When they do come, there is a breakdown in communication with the teacher, and it ends up being an awkward and uncomfortable situation for them and because they feel embarrassed they don’t come back. (Teacher 1)

These scenarios can lead immigrant students and their parents to perceive the school as a ‘foreign land’ from which they are excluded (Martín Rojo, 2010, p. 90). This has implications for the teachers involved in developing the language planning model: In heavily managed environments such as schools, where students are at a disadvantage in terms of power hierarchy, families are important interlocutors for the negotiation of pedagogical innovations and the co-construction of educational practices. Despite the multilingual reality in Burela, the monolingual habitus of the school is still evident in policies which advocate for placing students who do not speak Spanish or Galician in SEN classrooms or with groups of younger children. The classification of immigrants as deficient is often based on ethnocentric evaluations, cultural differences (which are seen as deficits) and low expectations of teachers, rather than on academic grounds. It is this systemic decapitalisation that teachers in Burela are trying to counter from the bottom-up, as the following section will discuss.

Countering decapitalisation

Valuing and recognising the language and culture of the immigrant community is an important aspect of multidirectional and multidimensional integration, and this was reflected in the discourses of the vast majority of teachers. There was a sense that top-down policies failed to promote multidirectional integration, and that bottom-up

initiatives were better positioned to understand the sociolinguistic complexities in Burela. One researcher from the now defunct *BogAvante* project argued that local government initiatives, rather than valuing immigrants' language and culture, promoted 'palliative' and 'assimilative' measures that were 'steeped in clientelism'. For this participant, recognising the language and culture of the immigrant community was a cornerstone of successful, multidirectional integration.

They [Cape Verdeans] have problems because their integration is often based on assimilation, which to me isn't integration at all. If you have to forget who you are, to me that isn't integration or anything of the sort. (Researcher)

Integration is when the minority group, in this case immigrants, can maintain their own culture and show it in public, and have relationships with everyone [in the community] not just as part of their work. (Researcher)

There was a strong tendency for arguments about integration to be entrenched in broader identity discourses. One teacher explained how he would tell his students that 'here [in Burela], we don't want you to lose you language, your identity, your culture' (Teacher 5). This was echoed by the researcher who noted that making the language and culture of the immigrant community visible within the school was one of the aims of the *BogAvante* project:

We provided academic support to students, but we also worked on [activities related to] Cape Verdean culture so as to promote self-esteem. Their culture wasn't in the school. Their language didn't exist. (Researcher)

For these participants, language, culture and identity were closely intertwined and were positioned as key to countering systemic decapitalisation. Indeed, previous research that has demonstrated the links between language and identity formation (Chung, 2006; Rampton, 2006) and the impact that dominant ideologies can have on the academic achievement of multilingual students (Allard et al., 2014; Van Der Wildt et al., 2015). It could be argued that people from Galicia (a region that has experienced a long history of linguistic marginalisation) are particularly aware of the ties between language, culture and identity. Galicians, as members of a minority group themselves, may indeed be better positioned to both understand and counter decapitalisation processes within the school.

In addition to the work of the *Modelo Burela*, teachers in the town have developed learning materials in Kriolu and Portuguese for Cape Verdean students. One teacher travelled to Cape Verde as part of a research project on immigrant education and brought back copies of schoolbooks from Cape Verde. These materials were seen as an important resource and a way of valuing students' previous schooling. Instead of treating Cape Verdean children as if they lacked literacy skills, teachers wished to recognise that these were literate children who were proficient in a language other than Galician or Spanish; using school materials from Cape Verde was a way of doing so. While the materials were not intended to replace those from the Galician curriculum, teachers felt using school materials from Cape Verde to conduct initial assessments of students' ability was a way of resisting the decapitalisation process. Moreover, the Kriolu materials were also used with local students to challenge commonly held beliefs that Kriolu was

exclusively an oral language. One of the teachers from Burela explained her motivations for going to Cape Verde as follows:

Well, because there were people that had notions of them [Cape Verdeans] [...] they thought they walked around in loincloths or they imagined sub-Saharan Africa, I don't know, so it was also to move away from those stereotypes, including my own. (Teacher 3)

This teacher's practices challenge the long-standing 'assumed truths' and deficit ideologies that mistake difference for deficit (Gorski, 2011). She acknowledges her own preconceptions as well as the preconceptions she perceived the broader community to have as regards the cultural differences between 'prototypical migrants' and Europeans (see Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998, p. 63). Working with the local students to promote multi-directional integration by bringing the Kriolu language into the school was mentioned by many teachers:

We want to present Cape Verdeans as people with their own social structure, like, they're not just immigrants. In Cape Verde they also have an ambassador, an embassy, and there are students and professionals, you know? [...] because really, the view that our students often have [...] is of the Cape Verdean [student] as a one who doesn't know things, rather than one who knows different things, and has to come here and learn new things, and that is difficult of course. (Teacher 2)

While bearing in mind the co-constructed nature of interview talk, it is interesting to note the above teacher's views, given her previous comments which suggested a deficit view. This is an encouraging finding that shows how, given the chance, teachers can shift their perspective to a more productive one. Although all the selected participants had contact with the Cape Verdean community through their work, only Teacher 1 was directly involved in developing the *Modelo Burela*. This is notable given the critical reflections of the participants, which indicate that progressive approaches to education in Burela go beyond the activities of the *Modelo Burela*. These teachers, by employing resources in more than one language in their teaching, are actively changing and reshaping the 'hidden curriculum' (Piller, 2016), one that is underpinned by monolingual norms. Moreover, this case study shows that the multicultural classroom provides an educational journey for the teachers – a step towards the increasing pressure to decolonise the curriculum.

Conclusion

Recent social and structural developments, such as the expansion of the European Union, the financial crisis of 2008 and the ensuing population flows, have led to changing patterns of migration (Rodríguez-Izquierdo & Darmody, 2017), which have in turn contributed to growing linguistic diversity in European classrooms. While this article draws specifically on the context of Galicia, the issues highlighted are applicable to societies across Europe that have experienced changing sociolinguistic climates due to immigration. Language ideological debates continue to feature prominently in contemporary societies, with the Catalan independence movement and power sharing in Northern Ireland presenting two such examples where discussions of language rights and claims to legitimacy have taken centre stage. Despite this, research on language learning and immigration in minority language contexts specifically remains on the

periphery of academic scholarship (although see Bermingham, 2018; Etxeberrias & Elosegui, 2008; McCubbin, 2010; Pujolar, 2010 for some examples). Multilingualism in European classrooms is now the norm, not exception, and while the management of linguistic diversity is increasingly at the fore of language policy discussions, engagement with the multilingual realities of schools continues to be inadequate, and the linguistic *habitus* of modern day education systems remains largely monolingual (Busch, 2011; Piller, 2016).

This study adopts decapitalisation as a framework to examine language, education and immigration in a minority language setting, demonstrating how the conflation of linguistic ability and academic ability can contribute to broader socio-economic disadvantages for multilingual immigrants. Deficit ideologies are often underpinned by, or linked to, ideologies about language. In this particular case study, we see how dominant monolingual ideologies can be detrimental to immigrant students' academic progress. The article argues that in formal language policies of schools, multilingualism in the 'wrong' languages can present a barrier to inclusion and success within the public education system and consequently within society overall. This case study scrutinises the decapitalisation of immigrant students when both locals and immigrants have experience of diglossic, post-colonial sociolinguistic settings.

By drawing on the case of Cape Verdean immigrants in Burela, this article provides new perspectives from the grassroots level to show how local language planning initiatives can challenge decapitalisation from the bottom-up. Although policy can be instrumental in facilitating linguistic inclusion in schools, local and community based initiatives could pave the way for the changes in ideological stances needed to break down long-engrained monolingual normativity. In this study, while the Galician education system prioritises learning of the standard co-official languages of the region, we see grassroots language-planning activities such as the *Modelo Burela* initiative carve out an alternative space to promote multilingualism and a breaking away from purist language ideologies through, for example, including multilingual learning materials in the classroom. The local community in Burela, a majority of whom are first language speakers of Galician, have experienced linguistic oppression, and therefore can have a more nuanced understanding of the sociolinguistic dynamics experienced by Cape Verdeans. It is against this backdrop that this article contends that grassroots approaches to language learning and immigration, which challenge monolingual paradigms, can be instrumental in countering the decapitalisation of immigrant students.

Notes

1. <http://www.ine.es/jaxi/Tabla.htm?path=/t20/e245/p04/provi/l0/&file=0ccaa002.px>.
2. https://www.edu.xunta.gal/portal/sites/web/files/datos_e_cifras_do_ensino_non_universitario_curso_2019-20.pdf (Immigrants in this case are defined by the INE as those students who do not have Spanish nationality).
3. The 2011 *Censo de poboación e vivendas* is the most recent census on use of Galician in Burela.
4. Interviewees were given the option of conducting the interview in Spanish or Galician. The data presented here has been translated into English. Original excerpts have not been included due to word-count limitations.

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