'The next teacher is going to be… Tereza Rico':
Exploring Gender Positioning in an all-girl Preschool Classroom

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Abstract

This article sets out a Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis, FPDA, approach to examine gender positioning in an all-girls preschool classroom in Colombia where English is mostly taught/learnt as a foreign language (EFL). After selectively describing findings in the field of gender and young children's language use and concentrating on features of poststructuralism, I move on to briefly sketch FPDA. Then the analysis of an EFL class segment called Talk Circle will be developed. I will posit that the EFL classroom seems to be an environment in which femininities could be constructed and encouraged, or diminished and constrained through the interplay of competing discourses. Finally, I will mention an avenue for further research for those interested in the discursive analysis of gender, early childhood and EFL education using FPDA.

Key words author

Girl-teachers, competing discourses, gender, poststructuralism, FPDA (Feminist and Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis), English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Key words plus

Girl-teachers, competing discourses, gender, poststructuralism, FPDA (Feminist and Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis), English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Transference to practice

This paper offers a brief epistemological and methodological framework for teacher-researchers interested in looking into the intersection of gender, early childhood and EFL education. Additionally, the paper proposes a few transformative actions which could be beneficial to those EFL teachers who face similar discursive interactions to the ones described here. It is argued that EFL teachers who work with activities similar to the 'Talk-Circle Activity' need to be aware of the possibly negative impact these activities might have on the development of some students' EFL speaking skills and act accordingly. This means that language teachers need to be aware of emergent subject positions and create classroom environments in which access to the use of the target language is evenly distributed.

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Palabras clave autor

Profesoras de niñas, discursos contradictorios, género, post-estructuralismo, Análisis de Discurso Feminista Post-estructuralista (FPDA), Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL).

Palabras clave descriptor

Profesoras de niñas, discursos contradictorios, género, post-estructuralismo, Análisis de Discurso Feminista Post-estructuralista (FPDA), Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL).

Resumen

Este artículo presenta un Análisis de Discurso Feminista Postestructuralista (FPDA, por sus siglas en inglés) para examinar el posicionamiento de géneros en un salón de clase de preescolar femenino en Colombia, donde el inglés para la mayoría es enseñado / aprendido como una lengua extranjera. Después de una descripción selectiva de los hallazgos en el campo de género y el uso de lenguaje de niños, con énfasis en características del postestructuralismo, explicaré de manera breve el FPDA. Enseguida, desarrollaré el análisis de un segmento de una clase de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL, por sus siglas en inglés) llamado Talk Circle (círculo de conversación). Propondré que la clase de EFL parece ser un ambiente en el que la femineidad puede ser construida y fomentada, o reducida y restringida, teniendo en cuenta la interacción entre discursos contradictorios. Finalmente, mencionaré una línea de futuras investigaciones para aquellos que están interesados en el análisis con FPDA de discursos sobre género, infancia temprana y enseñanza de EFL.

Transferencia a la práctica

El artículo ofrece un marco metodológico y epistemológico para investigadores de la educación interesados en estudiar el cruce entre género, infancia temprana y educación de inglés como lengua extranjera. Adicionalmente, el artículo propone algunas acciones de transformación que podrían ser de beneficio para aquellos profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera que enfrentan las interacciones de discursos distintos como los que se escriben aquí. Se argumenta que los docentes que trabajen con actividades similares al "Círculo de conversación" deben estar conscientes de las opiniones emergentes, y deben crear un ambiente en el que se distribuye de manera equitativa el acceso al uso del lenguaje objetivo de aprendizaje.

Mots clés auteur

Professeurs de filles, discours contradictoires, genre, poststructuralisme, Analyse du Discours Féministe Poststructuraliste (FPDA), Anglais comme Langue Étrangère (EFL).

Résumé

Cet article présente une Analyse du Discours Féministe Poststructuraliste (FPDA-sigles en anglais) afin d'étudier le positionnement des genres dans une salle de classe de préscolaire féminin en Colombie, où l'anglais est appris / enseigné, par la plupart, comme langue étrangère. Après une description sélective des résultats de la recherche dans le domaine des études de genre et du langage des enfants, centrée sur les caractéristiques du paradigme poststructuraliste, je vais expliquer ce que c'est le FPDA. Ensuite, je développerai l'analyse d'un extrait d'un cours d'anglais comme langue étrangère (EFL- sigles en anglais) appelé *Talk Circle* (le cercle de la conversation). Je proposerai que le cours d'EFL semble être un environnement où la féminité peut être construite et promue, ou réduite et restreinte, tenant compte des discours contradictoires. Finalement, je citerai des axes pour de futures recherches pour tous ceux qui sont intéressés à suivre des études dans le cadre du FPDA par rapport aux discours de genre, première enfance et enseignement d'EFL.

Transfert à la pratique

Cet article propose un cadre méthodologique et épistémologique pour les chercheurs de l'éducation intéressés à développer des études situées dans le carrefour du genre, première enfance et éducation de l'anglais comme langue étrangère. Or, l'article propose des actions de transformation qui pourraient bénéficier tous ces professeurs d'anglais qui doivent faire face à des interactions de divers types de discours comme ceux qui sont présentés ce travail. On défend l'idée selon laquelle les enseignants qui travaillent avec des activités semblables à celle du "Cercle de la Conversation" doivent être conscients des opinions émergentes, et doivent créer un environnement où l'on distribue de manière équitable l'accès à l'usage du langage objet d'apprentissage.

Palavras-chave autor

Professoras de meninas, discursos contraditórios, gênero, pós-estruturalismo, Análise de Discurso Feminista Pós-estruturalista (FPDA), Inglês como Língua Estrangeira (EFL).

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta uma Análise de Discurso Feminista Pós-estruturalista (FPDA, por sua sigla em inglês) que visa examinar o posicionamento de gêneros numa sala de aula de pré-escolar feminino na Colômbia, onde o inglês para a maioria é ensinado/aprendido como uma língua estrangeira. Depois de uma descrição seletiva do que foi encontrado no campo de gênero e no uso da linguagem das crianças, com ênfase em características do pós-estruturalismo, explicarei de maneira breve o FPDA. Em seguida, desenvolverei a análise de um segmento de uma aula de inglês como língua estrangeira (EFL, por sua sigla em inglês) chamado Talk Circle (círculo de conversa). Proporei que a aula de EFL parece ser um ambiente no qual a feminidade pode ser construída e fomentada, ou reduzida e restringida, tendo em conta a interação entre discursos contraditórios. Finalmente, mencionarei uma linha de futuras pesquisas para aqueles que estão interessados na análise com FPDA de discursos sobre gênero, infância e ensino de EFL.

Transferência à prática

O artigo oferece um marco metodológico e epistemológico para pesquisadores em educação interessados em estudar a relação entre gênero, infância e educação de inglês como língua estrangeira. Adicionalmente, o artigo propõe algumas ações de transformação que poderiam beneficiar aqueles professores de inglês como língua estrangeira que enfrentam as interações de discursos diferentes como os que se escrevem aqui. Argumenta-se que os docentes que trabalhem com atividades similares ao "Círculo de conversa" devem estar conscientes das opiniões emergentes e devem criar um ambiente no qual se distribua de maneira equitativa o acesso ao uso da linguagem objetiva de aprendizagem.

Introduction

This paper sets out a Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis, FPDA, approach (Baxter, 2003) to examine gender positioning in an all-girls preschool classroom in Colombia where English is learnt as a foreign language, EFL. The literature shows a 'gender-blindness' (Piller & Pavlenko, 2001) of the studies of gender, language learning and early childhood. This seems to hold truth for the Colombian context. However, elsewhere I have also researched on the intersection of gender and language learning (Castañeda-Peña, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2009) where it has been pointed out how preschoolers construct themselves discursively as girl or boy teachers and talk about gendered language learning materials. Such discursive constructions and talk around materials tend to affect positively and negatively the acquisition/learning of the foreign language. At this time of writing the literature does not show major local research studies on the intersection of gender and language learning in preschool in Colombia. In other geographical contexts, it is Barbara L. Hruska's study (2004) which tackles the gender identity construction in different interactional contexts of bilingual preschoolers in an USA kindergarten. Results of her research indicate that the establishment of gendered power relationships may affect friendship and group networking and this greatly affects the acquisition/learning process of a second language.

In this paper I analyze through FPDA how preschool girls strive for access to perform the role of a girl-teacher in a 'Talk-Circle Activity.' I will argue that the girl-teacher is constructed via the assertion of female power within two types of discourses: The 'I-Know-It' and the 'Oh no! [¡Ay! Nooo].' By drawing on these discourses different gender positions are made available for the preschoolers in role. Both discourses are individual and collective and could be forms of 'Teacher' and 'Peer Approval' discourses (Baxter, 2002, 2003). They could also be identified as discursive practices used by very young girls, in the case of the data analyzed below, to handle dispute management in which different versions of femininity become salient (*e.g.*, assertive and less assertive).

Below I will provide selectively a very short overview of language and gender studies related to early childhood and a description of poststructuralist studies in the context of early childhood and education. Then I will describe the layered analysis that FPDA offers, which will be illustrated in the analysis of an EFL role-play embedded in the 'Talk-Circle Activity.' This analysis will pinpoint how girl-teachers are constructed and how they experience group power or assert their own power over the group. This negotiation of subject positions is performed to gain access to the use of the target language. This is also used by the preschool girls to construct themselves not only as assertive/less assertive girl-teachers but as effective and possibly less effective language learners.

Language and gender studies about early childhood

The interaction between EFL education and gender in the preschool years seems to be far less explored than the interaction between gender and language use in the context of first language. A great deal of research in the latter area of study appears to acknowledge socialization processes started at home and school in which children are said to acquire different speech styles and communicative competences (DiPietro, 1981; Hart, 2004; Sheldon, 1990; Swann, 1992).

Heather Holmes-Lonergan (2003) claims that girls mitigate their speech while boys perform an un-bounded discourse. Others argue that girls not only develop faster linguistically than boys but that their language use is performed better linguistically than boys (Bornstein, Hahn & Haynes, 2004; Stowe, Arnold & Ortiz, 2000) and that girls' interactions may even be more complex and unmitigated than those established between boys (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Sheldon, 1996b). Other studies have indicated that girls' and boys' communicative styles do not differ according to specific types of cultures, interactions, relationships and situations (e.g., friends, siblings) (DeHart, 1996; Farris, 2000; Nakamura, 2001; Sachs, 1987; Sheldon, 1996a).

These widely-varying results can be explained by the aims, methods and understandings of gender of each research study. Recent studies of the relationship between second language learning and gender, as maintained by Yasemin Bayyurt and Lia Litosseliti (2006, p. 73), have shifted "away from gender generalizations and differences, to examine discourses and gender identities that are at work in educational settings." These studies include essentially the works by Bonny Norton (2000), Norton and Aneta Pavlenko (2004) and Pavlenko, Adrian Blackledge, Ingrid Piller & Marya Teutsch-Dwyer (2001).

In regards to the learning of English as a second language (ESL)[1] at preschool level, the field appears to be pioneered by Barbara L. Hruska's study (2004) of aspects of gender, ethnicity and friendship potentially present in whole-class interaction, small-group activities and free activities. In accordance with Hruska's analysis, this presence has a twofold purpose: shaping classroom participation and making power relationships evident (see also Castañeda-Peña, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2009).

Acknowledging Hruska's (2004) interesting call to research gendered ideologies operating in preschool classrooms; it appears vital to discuss methods in order to understand more deeply the intersection of foreign language learning with gender and early childhood. Feminist poststructuralism in relation to discourse analysis might constitute a complementary alternative for the study of gendered discourses in the preschool EFL classroom.

Judith Baxter (2003) points out that poststructuralism celebrates the interplay of competing theoretical positions, the co-construction of multiple versions of meaning in situ and the discursive positioning of subjects that mutually, adversely or in competition craft multiple shifting identities in discursive localised

contexts. These ideas underlie a few early childhood studies in relation to other discourses of gender and education (Davies, 1989; Davies & Banks, 1992; Jordan, 1995; Jordan & Cowan, 1995; Walkerdine, 1998).

It is in the context of a "*movement of thought*", as Michael A. Peters and Nicholas C. Burbules (2004, p. 18) refer to poststructuralism, that Judith Baxter (2002, p. 831) has positioned Feminist Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis, FPDA, as a feminist methodology to locate, observe, record and analyse "discursive contexts where silenced or marginalized voices may be struggling to be heard." The crossroads of gender, early childhood and EFL education constitute one of those contexts not yet fully observed through the feminist poststructuralist lens.

As Barbara L. Hruska (2004) has demonstrated, in an USA context preschoolers, learning a language establishes power relationships affecting learners' linguistic attainment and this also appears to happen to preschoolers learning English in Colombia. Before explaining how a group of preschool girls experience power relationships and construct feminine and EFL learning identities as girl-teachers, I now turn to briefly describe FPDA.

An FPDA approach towards studying gender and discourse in the EFL context

FPDA understands discourses primarily as forms of knowledge structuring experiences which determine power relations. To unveil those discursive practices, Judith Baxter (2003) proposes a layered analysis that includes a microanalytic descriptive level and an interpretative level.

The descriptive analysis could be developed in a number of 'prototypical approaches' in Judith Baxter's words (2003, p. 49) "to foreground and pinpoint the moment (or series of moments) when speakers negotiate their shifting subject positions." I have followed a Conversation Analysis approach in order to describe and explain what is happening on the ground, in an EFL context where it is customary to observe preschoolers providing physical responses and verbal responses both in English and in Spanish.

However, in this descriptive level I do not concentrate exclusively on the spoken words. I also analyse the non-verbal communication. Non-verbal behaviour is relevant in the data because most activities performed in the preschool EFL classroom imply rote learning and the use of physical responses. At many points, preschoolers do not verbalize their answers in an EFL activity. Additionally, the linguistic development of the second language in the preschoolers participating in my research is still in progress; for most preschoolers their EFL learning is in its initial phases.

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1 ESL stands for English as a second language and EFL stands for English as a foreign language.

Then the analysis interprets *why* specific subject positioning happens, drawing on the evidence found at the microanalytic level. Judith Baxter (2003) conceives of alternative pathways in this level by engaging multiple voices and viewpoints. Contributing voices include not only the voice of research participants, but also those of the researcher and the voice of those who have highlighted a feminist quest in localizable contexts of discursive practices. Viewpoints seek to make relevant those voices who have not been heard "where competing discourses in a given setting seem to lead (temporarily) to more fixed patterns of dominant and subordinated subject positions" as Judith Baxter (2003, p. 71) comments. In this level I have analyzed how specific discourses are constructed and contested. I have also contrasted my interpretations with other researchers' findings.

This layered analysis embraces a deconstructionist approach because the discursive practice is dismantled and reassembled through the intertextual analysis of competing and complementing viewpoints and voices in a continuous self-reflexive exercise. Last but not least, FPDA focuses on concrete moments —as in the analysis below— portraying singular experiences, which are then explored on a noteworthy long-term qualitative observation basis (see Castañeda-Peña, 2007, 2009) which allows the formulation of small-scale transformative actions.

The study: Competing discourses in EFL 'Talk Circle'

The set of data presented in this article is part of a qualitative study[2] that looks at how the construction of masculinities and femininities of Colombian preschoolers learning EFL is communicated verbally and non-verbally. This research objective confesses to a poststructuralist perspective on gender identity, which concurs with Mary Bucholtz (1999, p. 209), because "individuals engage in multiple identity practices simultaneously." Therefore, the analysis below proceeds from the starting point that femininities and masculinities are unfixed.

The data comprises videotaped EFL lessons taking place in different classrooms of the Sunrise Kindergarten (not its real name), located in Bogotá (Colombia),[3] in which a variety of EFL activity types are carried out, *e.g.* 'point to' —students point to classmates or illustrations—; 'do as I say' —students imitate with physical movements what they are told—; oral drills —students repeat after the teacher. Six different classrooms were filmed. Four classrooms were *Jardín*[4] level and two were *Transición* level. For this article, however, because of limited space there is only representation of a sample taken from one of the *Jardín*'s all-girls classrooms. These girls were in the first term of *Jardín* preschool level in 2003 and their teacher was the only one who also taught at *Transición* level.

The study below captures a synchronic moment, which lasts around ten minutes offering rich possibilities for an FPDA analysis and I have called that moment 'The Talk-Circle Activity' due to the nature of the exercise. All

3 There are in Colombia single sex schools. Most of them are not state schools. They are schools sponsored by religious communities. In such a context it is possible to find small groups of students attended by a home teacher and at times a teaching assistant. This is not the situation of mixed-sex state schools where classes tend to be very large.

4 In Colombia, it is possible to find one-year and three-year preschool programmes in either state or private schools. It is in the context of a three-year EFL programme that the Sunrise Kindergarten, a private school, should be placed. The official names for each corresponding year are *Pre-Jardín*, *Jardín* and *Transición*.

participants speak Spanish as their first language. At the moment of videotaping this activity there were 12 five-year-old female students, the EFL teacher (female) and the camerawoman.

In all the four *Jardín* classrooms of the Sunrise Kindergarten, where the data was gathered, there is a designated area for the Talk Circle (TC). The area is furnished with cushions on a rug where the students sit; the EFL teacher sits on a small chair. There are four basic phases to the TC structure and all the EFL teachers follow it. Firstly, the *Greeting* routine takes place. This part is teacher-led and usually very brief. Secondly, there is a short *Praying* moment. Schools in Colombia can choose to include a prayer time in class time, general assemblies, etc.[5] The teacher then constitutes the *Reviewing* segment with series of controlled and semi-controlled activities designed to review previous learning. It is in this segment that the preschoolers appear to demonstrate their EFL knowledge. Finally, *New work* is introduced and the students go back to their desks to develop that work.

Courtney B. Cazden (1988) describes 'sharing time' as a daily school activity in monolingual settings. Students inform classmates about new things that have happened using narratives. Gisela Ernst (1994, p. 294) defines the 'Talking Circle', in a primary school setting, as "a group activity used by the teacher to encourage talk and interaction [which] can provide rich opportunities to practice the [second language] and to engage in… meaningful interaction." Interestingly, there is a lack of studies investigating how gender operates in preschoolers' interactions when using EFL in the TC. The TC in the context I am researching is a semi-controlled EFL activity, which in this case takes the form of a role-play.

Transcript

The transcript below is my reconstruction (Taylor, 2001) of one TC episode. I have selected a few extracts and indicated where omissions have been made. Omitted turns are described in the microanalysis below. Presenting the data in this form implies my own judgment in selecting and conferring especial significance to excerpts that I consider to exemplify competing discourses in the social construction of powerful and less powerful girl-teachers.

In addition, in order to show how the TC functions clearer, I have segmented the entire episode into smaller units unified by the initiation and ending of what could be interpreted as a complete oral exchange or interaction unit (Ernst, 1994), in this case the completion of a TC segment and the entire participation of a student while in role within a TC segment. This has given me the opportunity to focus the analysis on two participants: Lina and Tereza.[6] The 'Talk-Circle Activity' is made up of 128 turns in total.

'The Talk-Circle Activity'[7]

Greeting segment
(*actual greeting was not videotaped*)

001	T→MJ	Martha Josefa, what day is today?
002	Ss→T	Today is Tuesday
003	XF	[Monday]
004	**Praying segment** (*omitted*)	

Reviewing segment
005	T→Ss	Ok, now I'm going to ask you questions remember the questions that we were practicing yesterday about the face the parts of the body.
006	XF	Ahhhhy!
007	T→Ss	Yes? And you have to answer I have taaa taaa remember?
008	Ss→T	III have...
009	T→Ss	No, wait a minute **porque** #because# because I have to ask you the questions.

(10 turns omitted)
019	T→Ss	Good. How many EEEARS do you have?
020	Ss→T	III haaave two EEEARS.
021	XF→T	Ears!
022	T→XF	Ears! Very good! How many NOSES do you have?

(*comments*)	Non-verbal behaviour and transcribers' comments
[help]	Simultaneous utterance, single square indicates where the simultaneity starts
/	Incomplete or an utterance that has been suddenly cut-off
Ss	Students
XF	Unidentified female student
+	Pause of a second
eee	Emphatic elongation of sounds
EEE	Loud emphatic elongation of sounds
= =	Continuous utterance
¡Hola!	Bold characters for utterances in Spanish
#Hello!#	Best transcriber's translation into English of utterances in Spanish
T	EFL Teacher Connie
MJ	Martha Josefa
VQ	Valeria Quitián
MI	Margoth Isabel
MV	Marcia Victoria
M	María
V	Valentina
MM	Melisa Marina
VC	Valentina Cárdenas
A	Ana
J	Juanita
TERE	Spanish diminutive form for Tereza

(*07 turns omitted*)

030	T→Ss	No, remember. Not mouse. Mouse is the animal.
031	XF→T	Mouth!
032	T→Ss	Mouth!
033	Ss→T	Mouth!

(*11 turns omitted*)

045	T→Ss	Very good! OK. I'm going to call one girl that is going to be the teacher.
	T→Lina	Let's see. Ehhhh! Lina Márquez come here!

(*Lina stands up*)

		Sit down here!=
046	XF	(*Inaudible*)
047	T→Ss	= Lina is going to be the teacher.
	T→Lina	(*Lina reaches the place where the T is*)
		Hello teacher. Sit down. OK.
	T→Ss	(*Lina goes to the head of the circle and sits in T's place*)
		Now Lina is going to say touch your ta ta ta and you have to do what she says ok? So you have to listen carefully to Lina (*Inaudible*)
		(*Two Ss get distracted by the camera*)
048	T→Ss	Listen to Lina (*Inaudible*)
	T→VQ	Valeria Quitián. (*Inaudible*) Ready?
049	Lina→Ss	Touch your mouth
		(*All girls follow the instruction*).
050	T→MV	Marcia Victoria, listen to the teacher. Touch your…
051	Lina→Ss	Touch yoooour eyes.
		(*All girls follow the instruction*).
		Touch yoooour shoulders.
		(*All girls follow the instruction*).
		Touch yoooour head.
		(*All girls follow the instruction*).
052	T→MI	Margoth Isabel, sit properly.
053	Lina→Ss	Touch your ehhh nose.
		(*All girls follow the instruction*).
054	T→Lina	(*Inaudible*) yes? Go! Lina one more thing
055	Lina→Ss	(*Inaudible*) la la la (*Inaudible in Spanish*)
		Touch your legs
		(*All girls follow the instruction*).
056	T→Lina	Lina, your legss. OK. Thank you. You, come here.
		Teacher Lina sit down=
		(*Lina jumps back to her original place*)
057	XF	(*Inaudible*)

058	T→Ss	= OK.
		Now we are going to have another teacher (*Inaudible*)
059	XF→T	(*XF raises hand*)
		I know I (*Inaudible*)
060	T→Ss	OK.
		Next. The next teacher is going to be Tereza Rico=
		(*Tereza stands up*)
061	XF	[ahhh]
062	SS	[ahhhh]
063	T→Tere	=Tere, sit down
		(*Tereza reaches the head of the circle and sits down where Lina was*)
064	XF	**Aaay no! Nooo! Ay Nooo!** #Oh no! No! Oh no!#
		(*Three girls tuck their hands under their arms and frown*)
065	T→Ss	**Ay** #Oh!# Yes!
	T→Tere	Tere, quickly
066	XF	(*Inaudible*)
		(*Ss seem to disagree with T's decision about Tereza being the teacher*)
067	T→Ss	Everybody is going to be the teacher but you have to give permission to Tereza. OK
	T→Tere	Tere go!
	T→MV	Marcia Victoria.
	T→Tere	Quickly, Tere!
068	Tere→Ss	Touch your head.
		(*Ss do not follow the instruction*)
069	SS	(*Inaudible*)
		(*Ss do not seem to quite follow Tereza' instruction*)
		(*Ss mumble inaudible things, hard to say if they use Spanish or English*)
070	T→Tere	Tere! Quickly and louder!
071	Tere→Ss	Tou Touch your eyes
		(*Ss do not follow the instruction*)
072	T→Ss	Touch your eyes
073	XF	Valentina
074	SS	(*Inaudible*)
075	T→M	María
076	Tere→Ss	eyes +++ (*Inaudible*)
		(*Spoken while stretching her own legs*)
		(*Some girls start clapping*)
		(*All students clap*)
077	T→Tere	OK. Thank you.
		(*Tereza slides from the chair and goes back to her original place in the circle*)
	T→V	Valentina.

	T→Ss	Nooow…
078		(*Inaudible*)
079	T→Ss	The teacher has to be in silence here! The idea is that if you want to be the teacher you have to sit down quiet. Shhh!
	T→MM	Melisa Marina=
080	SS	[hummm!]
081	T→MM	= Shhh! One more time (*Inaudible*)
082	SS	Nooo!
083	MM→Ss	Touchch =
084	T→MV	[María Valen]
085	MM→Ss	=your fingers
		(*All girls follow the instruction*)
086	T→VQ	Valeria Quitián.
	T→Ss	Shhh!
	T→MM	Another one!
087	MM→Ss	Touch your eyes!
		(*All girls follow the instruction*)
		Touch your hands!
		(*All girls follow the instruction*)
		Touch your nose!
		(*All girls follow the instruction*)
088	T→MM	OK! Very good!
089	MM→Ss	Touch your head!
		(*All girls follow the instruction*)
090	T→MM	**¡No más!** #That's enough!# Sit down.
	T→VC	Valentina Cárdenas.
091	XF→T	[**¡Hey!! Yo quiero** #¡Hey! I wanna do it# nooo!!] (*Inaudible*)
092	T→VC	Quickly, Vale!
		(*Valentina Cárdenas reaches the head of the circle and sits down*)
093	VC→Ss	Touch your=
		(*Valentina Cárdenas touches her nose*)
094	Ss	[Nose!]
095	VC→Ss	=nose!
		(*All students follow the instruction*)
		(*Ss suddenly start laughing with no apparent reason*)
		Touch your
		(*Valentina Cárdenas shows her hand open*)
096	T→VC	The fingers. Fingers.
097	Ss	Fingers. Fingers.
098	VC→Ss	Fingers!
		(*All students follow the instruction*)
099	T→S	Your fingers, not your hand
100	VC→Ss	Touch your head!
		(*All students follow the instruction*)
101	T→A	Very good. Sit down, Vale.
		(*Valentina goes back to her place in the circle*)

		And the last one. **La última** #the last one#.
		Ana=
102	SS	[Nooo!]
103	T→A	=Ana, quickly!…
		(*Ana reaches the head of the circle and sits down*)
104	A→Ss	Heads! Tooouch yooour legs!
		(*A very few girls follow the instruction*)
105	T→A	Touch your legs. Ready **con** #with# Ana, please sit down!
		(*Ana goes back to her place in the circle*)
106	SS	Ahhh! (*Inaudible*)

New work segment

107	T→Ss	(*T goes back to her initial position and sits down and point to her knees*)
		OK. Who knows what it is?
108	Ss→T	Knees
109	XF	Knees
110	T→Ss	(*T stretches her legs*)
		And these?
111	Ss→T	Legs!
112	T→Ss	Ahhh! OK.
		(*Ss keep talking*)
		(*T grabs her bag and takes out some handouts*)
		(*Inaudible*) no more teachers, now!
		(*T holds up the handouts showing the face of a boy to Ss*)
		What is this, a boy or a girl?
113	Ss→T	Boooy!
114	XF→T	Booy!
115	T→Ss	(*T moves her hand drawing a sort of wave indicating she wants a complete sentence as reply*)
116	Ss→T	It's aaa boooy!
117	T→J	Juanita, what is this?
118	Ss→T	It's a boy!

(*10 turns omitted*)

Microanalysis

The TC starts with the girls sitting down in a circle. The teacher briefly develops the greeting segment (not fully videotaped), asks what day it is and moves onto a prayer (omitted) which all students appear to know by heart as they repeat it without hesitation. Afterwards, the teacher initiates the reviewing segment with a series of question/answer exercises that she models (005). This teacher-led activity in cooperation with the group of female preschoolers lasts 40

turns (most of them omitted for brevity), which include open questions and feedback provision as illustrated in turns 019 to 022 and 030 to 033 respectively.

These turns reflect findings of traditional classroom-interaction studies based in the IRF routine (Initiation-Response-Feedback) where teachers ask questions, students react with a response and then they are provided with feedback or evaluation from the teacher (Cazden, 1988; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). I will not use those categories, because in spite of the fact that they are self-evident in parts of the data, there are also 'deviations' (Cazden, 1988) with regard to these interactional routines.

More importantly, I find it more useful to explore instead how 'positioning' of the preschool girls in powerful instances occurs when the teacher 'initiates' the interactions because what seems interesting, for the purposes of this study, is to see how 'power' is allocated discursively. This indeed places the more powerful position, from an institutional and interactional point of view, in the teacher's talk. For example, the teacher sets up the role-play activity of the reviewing segment (045-047). Then, Lina is appointed girl-teacher (047) when the teacher says 'Lina is going to be the teacher. Hello teacher. Sit down.'

Significantly, the teacher's utterance includes a direct greeting 'Hello, teacher,' which gives Lina a new identity for the role-play. It is Lina who is the new teacher and Lina is positioned with all the power to lead the activity by the teacher. Lina is to give instructions and the other girls are required to perform what she says. Lina starts investing in her role (049), uttering an instruction 'Touch your mouth.' All the girls, except Marcia Victoria, follow this instruction.

It could be said that Lina was successful in her attempt not only to perform the role as a teacher, but also in getting most of the girls to do what she ordered correctly; she was successful in the assertion of her recently given power. The teacher breaks the pretend play (050) by remarking on Marcia Victoria's distraction: 'Marcia Victoria, listen to the teacher. Touch your…' However, Lina, asserting her power once again, pulls back the pretend play into the role-play framework (051) and keeps her role of giving instructions, three in total, which are followed by all the girls.

The tension between being in role and being out of role happens twice, when the teacher interrupts (052-054), but Lina keeps her girl-teacher role all the way through (051-053). The teacher ends Lina's role (056), but thanks her and requests her to sit down, still vesting her with the identity of girl-teacher saying 'OK! Thank you. You come here. **Teacher Lina**, sit down.'

The data shows that Lina uses commands in the target language (English), which are verbal and are followed by non-verbal responsive movements produced by the group of girls. What is more, Lina has to decide from her own learnt repertoire what to say, proving she is not only good at English, but also good at negotiating her role as girl-teacher.

As a girl-teacher she was assertive enough to affirm her power and apparently she was recognized as teacher by the group of girls who did not show opposition to the new teacher in Lina's persona. Valentina kept performing the movements as required by Lina. The fact that Margoth Isabel did not sit properly only proves that the 'teacher' was policing her body. This does not mean that in Margoth Isabel's eyes, Lina was performing an unacceptable role, because Margoth Isabel was also providing physical responses. Overall, Lina had the opportunity to use EFL effectively and to gain her classmates' group effort and recognition in order to succeed in the task. She even goes back to her original place in the circle still vested as 'Teacher Lina.'

However, Tereza is less 'fortunate.' The transcription shows an evident opposition of the group towards the teacher's decision, which might affect Tereza's identity as a girl who is to gain access to EFL use within a group of potential girl-teachers. Tereza is able to utter her first instruction after some overlaps (058 to 067). Three girls cross their arms and deliberately remain off-task (064), resisting the teacher and affecting the possible success of Tereza's performance. When Tereza says (068), 'Touch your head' the other girls still argue and do not follow her. Tereza appears not to have been fully recognized in the role of the girl-teacher.

The teacher also uses several turns to direct Tereza into the pretend role, for example 'Tere, sit down' (063), 'Tere, quickly' (065) and 'Tere, go' and 'Quickly, Tere' (067) but the teacher is also unsuccessful in positioning Tereza in this new role. It is noticeable how the teacher did not address Tereza as a girl-teacher as she did with Lina. The teacher urges Tereza even more (070) and Tereza uses her next turn, still trying to position herself in role and utters an appropriate and different instruction, 'Tou Touch your eyes', but Tereza's negotiation of role with the group seems to fail since the group does not follow her. The teacher emphasizes Tereza's instruction (072) and some girls follow.

Tereza, however, tries to take up again her role of a girl-teacher (076), but the only answer she gets from the group of girls is a rhythmic applause non-verbally indicating that her performance is over. The teacher thanks Tereza and requests her to go and sit down in her original place in the circle. In fact, the teacher verbalizes the group's non-verbal response.

Tereza starts by displaying her knowledge of the EFL repertoire, but ends up reproducing what the teacher had said because the teacher breaks the pretend level and repeats Tereza's instruction (072). Tereza's second repetition (076) of part of her instruction may well also indicate her understanding that she has not been successful in taking up the role of girl-teacher and this turn seems to be a last effort to subvert the social organization against her. The group not only displays disagreement, but their actions show opposition/resistance to a sort of status quo leading the pretend EFL activity; by applauding, the group sets up a counter-discourse against the teacher's decision with dramatic consequences for the subject who is in role, in this case Tereza.

Overall, it could be said that Tereza, in spite of her accurate knowledge of both the task and her role, was not able to negotiate her identity as girl-teacher with the group and, at the same time, the group did not recognise such a role in her persona. Tereza was not able to construct, through discourse, the assertion of her power as a girl role-playing a girl-teacher. She had to conform and to come back to her place as instructed by the teacher and she could not realise her identity as a good EFL learner because she did not have access to use EFL effectively at all in this specific moment of the TC.

In the examples of Lina and Tereza, the TC seems to provide these female preschoolers with the means to establish relationships with their classmates; this establishment implies power, which was communicated in that context by the demonstration of possessing/holding the identity of a girl-teacher. The microanalysis clearly shows how one girl (Tereza), practising her oral skills, was rejected non-verbally during the TC, while another classmate (Lina) was fully socially recognised, both verbally and non-verbally.

Then Melisa Marina, Valentina and Ana have their go in the TC. In spite of the dispute a few students make evident, Melisa Marina is able to fully accomplish the task; she utters three commands (087) which are

followed by the preschool students. She also has one more opportunity (089). Valentina is granted the next turn to role play the girl-teacher. In her first instruction (093-094), the group of students overlap the content of the instruction because Valentina taps her nose before uttering the complete instruction. There is some laughter, probably produced by this, and as soon as Valentina starts 'configuring' her second instruction in the same turn, the teacher introduces the name of the body part Valentina was supposed to say (096). This is followed up by a choral response (097). However, Valentina completes her turn and adds a new instruction (100) which is followed by the group of preschoolers.

Lastly, Ana is selected by the teacher. As she sits down, Ana utters an instruction which is self-corrected (104). A few girls follow Ana's instruction whilst she is required to sit down almost immediately by the teacher (105). There is a display of disagreement by the students (106).

Then the teacher introduces the New Work segment (107). She uses a visual aid and information questions to explain to students that they have to colour and cut out an illustration of a boy (omitted). The activity finishes when a photocopy is handed out to each student and they go back to their desks to do the colouring and cutting-out task.

FPDA Commentary

How does gender positioning feature in these descriptive findings? Where is the construction of femininities in those interactions, while learning EFL? Following the poststructuralist line of thinking, I argue that both masculinities and femininities are socially constructed discourses and that they are communicated through forms of subjective discourses. These discourses shift from moment to moment.

Additionally, these multiple discourses of femininities and masculinities are constantly renewed and are subtly insidious or overtly pervasive, according to interwoven contexts in which gendered people interact (see Talbot, 1998, for ideas about resistance and contestation, intervention and counter-resistance).

I would argue that this is portrayed at the descriptive level using as a warrant (Swann, 2002) the teacher's use of the noun 'girl' as a linguistic trace (Sunderland, 2004) that triggers not only a dispute over who is positioned as a girl role-playing a girl-teacher, 'inside' each female preschooler, but also fuels the students' overt verbal and non-verbal responses towards what being a girl-teacher could mean at the moment of constructing assertive and less assertive femininities.

In the TC it could be said that in the opening of the role-play exercise the teacher parallels the word 'girl' equalizing it to a powerful position represented by the image of a 'teacher' who says 'touch your…' The students are subordinated to this provisional female empowerment and in a powerless position 'have to do what she says' as is pointed out by the teacher (047).

Notice that the teacher could have said in turn 045 'I'm going to call a [student]' and the development of the activity could probably have been the same. However, it is the use of the formula 'girl' = '[to] become a teacher' which orients the group of female preschoolers towards the construction of, or resistance towards, the construction of potential girl-teachers embedded in the assertion of female power and authority within girls. Elizabeth H. Stokoe and Janet Smithson (2001, p. 233) suggest two types of orientation towards gender in feminist Conversation Analysis, 'one in which it [gender] is noticed, repaired or in some other way attended to by the speaker … and another where a gender reference is used but not oriented to except by us as analysts.' I shall argue that my analysis is a combination of both types of orientation.

Gender overtly crops up in the stretch of classroom interaction described above, in the moment in which the teacher empowers the subject position of a girl-teacher and it is access to performing such a role representing female power that ignites a struggle for the floor in the TC. As Valerie Walkerdine (1998, p. 65) points out 'individuals are powerless or powerful depending upon which discursive practices they enter as subject.'

The role-play opens a 'battle' to be positioned in the role of a girl-teacher: probably in the mind of the preschoolers this role corresponds to the one who knows and to the one who gives instructions as it is covertly expressed by the teacher's initiation of the activity 'I'm going to call one **girl** that is going to be the **teacher**' (045), by the teacher's follow-up instruction 'Now, Lina is going to say touch your ta ta ta and **you have to do what she says**, ok?' (047) and by the teacher's subsequent selection 'Now we are going to have **another teacher**' (058).

In the other interactions the teacher just uses proper names (079, 090 and 101). In these turns there is no comparable parallel between the nouns as her previous use of 'girl' and 'teacher' demonstrated. Melisa Marina, Valentina and Ana also experience their opportunity to assert their female power and become the girl-teacher in role differently. Melisa Marina manages to be recognized as such and all the girls follow her instructions. Valentina struggles at the beginning of her participation but ends up delivering a complete instruction which is followed by all her classmates. Conversely, Ana was not given enough time by the

teacher to be in the role of a girl-teacher and her only instruction was not followed by all the students.

Although it is impossible in this case to establish the criteria the teacher uses to select the girl-teachers and how she decides when a turn in the role-play is finished, Valerie Walkerdine (1998, p. 66) demonstrates that "girls take up positions of similarity with the powerful teachers. Indeed, the girls who are considered the 'brightest' do indeed operate as subjects within the powerful pedagogic discourse: taking the position of the articulate knower, becoming 'sub-teachers.'" Apparently, all the girls wanted to take up that position of similarity to the EFL teacher, which could probably represent the affirmation of an assertive and powerful femininity.

Consequently, Lina's and Tereza's gender positioning during the TC, and the subject-positions of the other three girls, were the end result not only of the pedagogic power the teacher has in nominating the girl-teachers but of a multifaceted social construction amended by at least two subjective and competing discourses of approval (see Baxter, 2003, for an exploration of classroom discourses from a poststructuralist standpoint: 'Teacher Approval' and 'Peer Approval' discourses).

I name those discursive constructions as the 'I-Know-It' and the '¡Ay! Nooo' discourses. For the first discourse, I have partly based my choice in Barbara L. Hruska's comment (2004: 465) about the existence of a characterization of children's discourses patterns in which for example knowledge is expressed by statements such as 'I know! I know!' and 'I knew it before you even said it!' Indeed this is verbalized in English by a preschooler using the words 'I know' when she was volunteering to participate in the TC activity (059). For the second discourse, I have chosen to quote directly the preschool students' words to reflect that this 'rejectionist' discourse has been expressed mostly in Spanish.[8] The expression '¡Ay! Nooo' in Spanish could be translated into English as 'Oh no!'

The 'I-Know-it' discourse

Jennifer Coates (1998, p. 311) explains that 'given the range of discursive positions available to [women], it is not surprising that [women] present [them]selves in talk as different kinds of woman, sometimes more forceful and assertive, sometimes more passive and ineffectual' —this could be true of men too! This gendered presentation of different selves also occurs during the TC. The preschoolers seem to be making clear-cut investments through language in order to be recognized as the ones who 'know English' after obtaining the entrée that gives them the right to participate in the Reviewing segment and to demonstrate who they are as learners: they struggle for access to use English.

It is important to note that in this context there might be multiple reasons for the preschool girls to consider speaking English as a highly-valued status. There is a similar situation reported in Barbara L. Hruska (2004) where English has a high status whereas children's first languages would not. In Hruska's research context it seems that children who have English as their first language do not confer the same status to those whose first language is not English even if they master it as a second language.

This said, it is possible to argue that the preschoolers in this particular EFL classroom present themselves to the teacher (a woman) and to the other classmates (women) as gendered beings in the TC. They also see each other as English language learners where knowing the target language could provide a high status. Paraphrasing Jennifer Coates (1998), these little girls do their utmost for access and inclusion, being women (this episode might not be considered gendered by some analysts, yet it surely illustrates 'forms' of assertive and less-assertive femininities). And the experiences are completely different for each one.

The abovementioned struggle, which is configured by the preschool girls' determination to show off their knowledge of the target language, operates in a different way at collective and individual levels. Students appear to overlap, to overtly demonstrate their intention to participate and to test their comprehension of the target language as I shall discuss below.

A type of socially constructed display of group understanding is thoroughly presented to the teacher. This knowledge is performed in choral answers and seems to position all the girls at the same level of a governing discourse: 'We all know it.' Turn 7 displays the teacher's instructions to introduce the Reviewing segment. The preschoolers started fabricating an immediate answer as a group by saying 'I have' (008). Although the teacher introduces a further explanation that interrupts the girls' action, what the example probably illustrates is the implicit and shared aims that the group of students have to practice their oral skills. The choral answer becomes a sort of safe arena in which all the participants could be comfortably positioned within the 'I-Know-It' discourse. In this case, it appears, as Jennifer Coates (1994, p. 188) has shown,

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8 To certain extent, code switching is present across the data in the construction of the classroom interactions of the preschoolers. However, I decided that this is not a focus of this paper. I acknowledge the vast literature in the field related not only to gender but also to second language learning and bilingualism.

that they 'are not fighting for the floor: they are sharing the floor, and this sharing is symbolic of intimacy.'

It could be said that as a group of 'women' this action presents them at a consolidated egalitarian level. This alliance seems to be firmly grounded in the practices of the preschool girls. Those practices in the classroom indicate for the most part that all the girls know what to say when they are asked questions.

Jennifer Coates (1994, p. 188), investigating turn-taking patterns in numerous social contexts, states that 'where speakers [women] have shared knowledge of the topic under discussion, it seems to be the case that it matters little who acts as spokesperson; speakers act as one voice.' In this case, there is evidently no 'topic' under discussion but certainly the EFL knowledge is shared and it is such unspoken agreement what appears to offer the preschoolers the chance to challenge the individual choices made by the teacher as to who answers or not her direct questions addressed to named students or to the group.

The preamble to the Praying segment (001) illustrates how a direct question represented by 'Martha Josefa, what day is today?' is taken over by the whole group, who provides the answer chorally (002). It seems that, in the understanding of the preschoolers, this is a social action in which the group's power to access the use of the language prevails over the access given to a particular student.

In a different context and working with a different age group, Julia Davies (2003, p. 118) has established that 'the unanimity of purpose characteristic of the girls' discussions supported the development of a group identity in which similarities among individuals were emphasised whilst, conversely, differences were relegated.' In the TC the group identity seems to be driven by the demonstration of full knowledge of the target language by the group on behalf of the group.

A further example of the same category—containing an evident orientation towards gender— comes from the initiation of the New Work segment where there is a new group overlapping. The teacher has invested a few turns (112-115) to elicit information from the preschoolers: 'What is this, a boy or a girl?' The group appropriates the right answer (116). Then the teacher addresses a new question to a specific student '[Juanita] what is this?' (117) which is again taken up by the group (118).

At the heart of the uses of overlapping there is female group power, previously characterized as the preschoolers' investments in maintaining an egalitarian access to and display of EFL knowledge. Juanita and Martha Josefa in the examples above seem also to conform to the group strategy and the teacher apparently, at a discursive level, continuously adapts to this practice set by her students.

Thus, overlapping, rather than being a language function of interrupting others, seems to operate in this context as a gender social construction category used to reveal group cohesion. Jennifer Coates (1994, p. 189) has also demonstrated that 'girls as young as fifteen have already learned to speak as a single voice, and can use this skill in a public arena.' My findings seem to show that this type of 'collective voicing' happens earlier in women's lives.

There are yet two more aspects to be considered. Firstly, it is not attempted to claim that collective voicing should be attributed just to women. Studies investigating how overlapping uses are acquired by groups of preschool boys/older men are required. How overlapping represents, marks and constructs particular social relationships and gendered discourses needs to be researched across contexts, e.g. within all-boys

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groups and within girl and boy groups. Secondly, the work of Coates concerned studies in which older 'native' speakers of English participated. Overlapping in EFL educational contexts and in all types of settings should also be cross-culturally studied because this might reflect diversity in the use of language and in the structuring and establishment of social relationships and orders discursively.

Individual efforts to partake in the discursive orders during the Reviewing segment also take place. Turns 59, 'I know I …,' and 91, '[¡Hey! I wanna do it]' show, respectively, the overt intention of two female preschoolers, unidentified in the videotape, to be nominated as the one to perform the girl-teacher. They are not successful because the access to the role and, consequently, to the use of the target language is controlled by the teacher's decision. It is important to note that the 'I-Know-It' discourse also happens when the teacher opens the possibility for undetermined individual participation in the classroom activity and the preschoolers may well volunteer. For example, the teacher does not overtly nominate a student (058) and her instruction is overlapped before the instruction is addressed to Valentina Cárdenas (090).

Linguistic traces reflecting individual intentionality to participate do not happen frequently in the TC, but at times they appear to structure the dynamics of the interaction in the classroom. Those devices seem to operate presenting a gendered self willing to demonstrate a sound EFL knowledge. It is also noticeable that those contributions are made either in English or in Spanish.

In order to check and make hypotheses about specific linguistic uses in the target language, the preschoolers appear to test their knowledge expressed in the use of lexical items like "Ears!" (021). They also make use of linguistic choices which have been adjusted after receiving feedback, as illustrated in the use of "Mouth" (031).

The use of the devices described above hinges on the teacher's recognition and appraisal of individual versions of the 'I-Know-It' discourse. Turn 022, for example, contains an expression of approval, and the fact that the teacher repeats what a student has previously said (032) also illustrates how she orients her utterance to acknowledge the assertive gendered self performed by the preschooler. Consequently, it could be argued that the use of 'testing devices' is a mechanism to negotiate individual gendered positioning within the 'I-Know-It' discourse. How young boys use them in EFL lessons seems to be another topic yet to be researched. This would need to be carried out bearing in mind that the research goal is not to compare the boys against the girls but to explore from a relational point of view how different types of masculinities and femininities are constructed discursively.

The 'iAy! Nooo' discourse

There were five participants during the development of the TC. In-depth analysis was conducted of two participants. Special emphasis was put on the resistance the group had to Tereza's participation. Although this student knew what she was expected to do and appeared to have an appropriate EFL repertoire to perform the task, Tereza was not able to negotiate recognition as girl-teacher. Therefore, she could not position herself as an assertive girl within the framework of the 'I-Know-It' discourse as Lina did.

However, the nature of the opposition generated in the group of preschoolers determined the positioning of the other participants selected by the teacher. Out of five girl-teachers, it could be said that only Lina and Melisa Marina were able to position themselves as assertive and that they fully gained the recognition of the group. The other three girls could not mitigate or create a more effective counter discourse, a 'shell' to resist the power of the group and to gain their recognition. This provisional finding resonates to a certain extent with Amy Sheldon (1990, 1996b, p. 58) who, exploring 'conflict-talk' in preschoolers, demonstrates that 'girls are just as competent as boys in direct and confrontational talk but stronger social penalties for females engaging in such behaviour create an effective deterrent' (see the teacher's counter discourse or assertion of power to control/discipline the girls (079) and especially in (112) 'no more teachers, now!').

The 'iAy! Nooo' discourse seems to be another discursive strategy about girls' dispute management. The dispute is not always verbalized. Tereza's participation is undermined (064) when three girls "tuck their hands under their arms and frown" and Tereza hears the undermining rhythmic applause (076) that completely weakens her role as girl-teacher and ends her participation in the activity. This also happens to certain extent to Valentina when some laughter is heard.

However, it would be interesting to see, once again from a relational point of view, how these types of disputes are handled in all-boy preschool classrooms when constructing their own fluid masculinities in pretend EFL activities. This type of research (e.g., all-girl and all-boy contexts) could be risky as it could be thought that the researcher is to an extent buying into the 'gender differences' discourse despite of seeing 'tendencies' as constructive.

The resistance towards the teacher's decision regarding Tereza is initiated by an unidentified girl (061), whose disagreement is openly followed by the rest of her classmates (062). The oppositions that determine

the '*¡Ay! Nooo*' discourse also overlap in this case and become more evident when the teacher keeps instructing Tereza to position herself in the assigned task as a girl-teacher able to display her own EFL repertoire; this could also be evidence of how the 'Teacher approval' and the 'Peer approval' discourses, which Judith Baxter (2002, 2003) identified, might contest each other.

Another example, turn 82, is a choral disagreement with the teacher's request directed to Melisa Marina to continue as girl-teacher. The same oppositional reaction is put into effect when Ana is selected (102). What also strikes one here and ignites the dispute is the fact that, after Ana's participation, the preschool group will not have any more opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge since this student is announced as the last one to be chosen.

Bald challenges and disagreements have been explored in adults and children (Holmes, 1994) where bald 'masculine' styles are compared to 'feminine' mitigation. Judith Baxter (2002) has also noted how female adolescents feel silenced by bald masculine challenges in the classroom. The TC illustrates how preschool girls have acquired contesting skills that are expressed non-verbally and verbally and might be versions of task-divergent skills as they are called by Victoria Bergvall and Kathryn Remlinger (1996), who studied an adult educational context, using a critical paradigm. What the data shows is that preschool girls try to silence other girls using bald challenges in order to obtain a desirable subject position, that of a girl-teacher. It could be argued however that actions such as frowning, folding arms and clapping are more ironic but from my own cultural point of view they seem to me overt bald challenges that undermined especially Tereza's option to display assertive femininity.

It should also be highlighted that students try to stick to classroom-behaviour rules. For instance, one student raises her hand and volunteers to participate as a girl-teacher (59) but her request is ignored by the teacher who chooses Tereza and urges her to develop the task probably weakening as well Tereza's own effort to accomplish the goal of being in role. Valentina faces a similar situation when the teacher insists on having Valentina perform the activity quickly plus the additional repetitions of what the students have just said.

The group's feeling of failure to contest the teacher's power is salient (106). They seem to understand that the role-play activity is finished and that they will move on into a different task. Notice that the teacher utilises bits of Spanish (101-105). This is probably done to make sure there is full understanding of her authority and classroom management.

Additionally, it could be argued that the teacher permanently shows her authority selecting at will the student she believes should perform the girl-teacher. This too leads the preschool girls to develop an incisive and over-assertive '*¡Ay! Nooo*' group discourse that resists the imposed status quo. It seems that the '*¡Ay! Nooo*' collective and individual discourse brings in a sense of dispute where different versions of femininities ('Assertive' – 'Less assertive') appear to be on stage.

Last but not least, at issue is my use of the term 'assertive femininity.' There would be a danger of essentialism in gender studies if the bipolar combination of assertive/non-assertive were to be used (although not necessarily, if these positions can be seen as momentary and, indeed, relational!). I would like to argue that my use of assertive femininity (e.g., Lina) and less assertive femininity (*e.g.*, Tereza) could be seen as versions of femininities that are 'indexing' the concrete experiences *in situ* of my research participants. It is me as a researcher who is attributing such mean-

ings to socially constructed girl-teachers in the TC and I admit my 'background knowledge' and my readings on feminist research as the source I draw on to support the name of such types of femininities. How to qualify/ name types and/or aspects of femininities and masculinities might be culturally determined by the context, the research participants, the researchers, etc., and this is still a research task to be discussed between those interested in the relationship of language and gender in order to better warrant their interpretations (see Sunderland, 2004, for discourse naming).

Conclusion and some implications

FPDA locates, analyses and interprets the absence of power and presence of power, which, through competing discourses, position subjects. FPDA has given me insights into seeing how shifting versions of femininity may marginalize or support the construction through discourse of girl-teachers in EFL-learning situations such as the TC. Lina was able to display the assertion of her power; "taking the position of the articulate knower." Conversely, Tereza could not articulate her knowledge to the assertion of girl-teacher power. Both were caught up in the interplay of competing discourses: The 'I-know-it' and the '¡Ay! Nooo.' Valerie Walkerdine (1998, p. 65) remarks on the need to understand the type of practices that children reflect in their classroom play —should we also say classroom role-play— as this shows "the children as re-creating the —often reactionary— discourses with which they are familiar [which] also constitute them as a multiplicity of contradictory positions of power and resistance." This is why it is possible to claim that indeed the EFL classroom (re)constitutes femininities as it seems to occur in the Sunrise Kindergarten. This also appears to operate in its own way in mixed-sex EFL classrooms (see Castañeda-Peña, 2009).

This espouses Hruska's (2004) claim about how gender ideologies determine who has access or not to use the target language. Lina had access to English use and was favourably positioned by the teacher as a girl-teacher. Tereza did not have access to fully use the target language and was not positioned as an effective girl-teacher and faced an overt resistance constructed and inflected by her classmates through non-verbal discourse. Therefore, due to this micro-classroom politics, Lina is also seen as an effective language learner as she demonstrated her speaking skills. In spite of the fact that Tereza Rico knew what to do with the language, she is constructed as a less effective language learners as she was not able to demonstrate her speaking skills in the TC episode. All these positions shift eventually from moment to moment. This resonates with Marjorie Harness Goodwin's (2002, p. 723) ex-

ploration of girl's play in which "while crafting their social relations through talk […] children delineate the boundaries of their group. Children can select ways of interacting that do not treat peers as co-equals." Apparently, this also happens in the preschool EFL classroom depending on the subject positioning that takes place in co-constructed interactions where the language of instruction is also the object of knowledge.

In this line of argument, it is important to highlight the need of more research about the intersection of gender and learning in other school subjects. We have seen that Valerie Walkerdine's work (1998) is carried out in the context of girls learning mathematics; Barbara L. Hruska's research (2004), as described above, was conducted in a kindergarten context where English was a second language for most of the research participants and Judith Baxter's work (2002) embraces high school students and their development of oral speech using their mother tongue. Yet other school subjects and school years seem to be fruitful epistemological sites to conduct FPDA studies.

I have not done full justice to FPDA using such a synoptic description in this paper but I should on reflection add that FPDA appears to be useful to explore how subjects are positioned in myriad core subjects delivered at school. In my current research, FPDA has been helpful to expose competing discourses in which gendered subjects are positioned during EFL preschool activities. Therefore, FPDA could be valuable to grasp the very moment in which subject positions are constituted and shifted in the multilingual societies in which scholars have started to investigate how foreign, modern, new, additional languages (depending on how educational, pedagogical, political discourses position them) are learnt and taught and where very young children face competing gendered discourses permanently.

Why would this be useful? FPDA could be an excellent methodology to strip away the veil covering local and detrimental gender ideologies affecting language learning. Therefore, FPDA research could contest, complement and support second language research and theories that have not included gender subject positioning as part of their explanation of how a language is learnt, acquired or taught. Lastly, EFL teachers who work with activities similar to the 'Talk-Circle Activity' need to be aware of the possibly negative impact these activities might have on the development of some students' EFL oracy skills and act accordingly. More research is needed in order to suggest possible types of transformative actions. Suffice it to say for now that EFL, language knowledge and learning should also be couched in a specific relation to gendered positions of masculinities and femininities in discursive practices. That still remains as a whole re-

search programme in preschool EFL education where more variables and contexts can be researched. In that sense, it is also important to say that an FPDA research programme should also consider different social classes from an educational perspective and conduct research within and across social stratification systems. For example, in a cosmopolitan city like Bogotá (Colombia) inhabitants are ranked according to income and area of domicile from 1 to 6. It is rank 6 where the highest standard of living can be found. Girls attending the Sunrise Kindergarten belong to families classed 3 and 4. Thus more research is needed across other socially established ranks to contrast results regarding gender and subject positioning in language classrooms.

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