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Participation and cultural and linguistic diversity: An in-depth qualitative inquiry of an Australian primary classroom

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'Pushing the boundaries'

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The ‘problem’ of ‘*participation*’ in an educational context

- The need for a more deliberative/thoughtful conceptualisations of ‘participation’ in educational context beyond ‘buzzwords’ such as participation rates and access to education (Black, 2011; Thomas, Whybrow, & Scharber, 2002)
- Increasingly and intensely diverse—culturally and linguistically—student cohort advances the need to understand participation in such diverse contexts of schooling (Patchen, 2012)
 - Building on critical scholarship demonstrating the marginalisation of cultural and linguistic diversity in teaching and learning
- Question: How is participation understood, practiced, and experienced in the context of a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) primary classroom?



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Conceptualising participation in the context of cultural and linguistic diversity

Positionality: The perspectives that position students as they participate in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom

Resourcing: The cultural and linguistic resources that are mobilised as students participate in schooling

Sociality: The social dynamics that shape or influence the ways that students participate in schooling



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Participation as practice: Thinking with Bourdieu

Field

- the 'game'
 - players positioned in the field (i.e., educators and students)
 - conditions of the field
- (Thomson, 2014)

The classroom as the field that structures or organises the conditions of possibility for the 'players in the field'

Capital

- resources in the field
 - symbolic capital: legitimisation
 - animates the field; never neutral
- (Skeggs, 1997)

The ways that cultural and linguistic resources are either mobilised (or not) for teaching and learning

Habitus

- dispositions
 - potentialities: *stable, evolving collective, diverse*
- (Reay, 2004)

The different participatory dispositions that students can inhabit in teaching and learning spaces

Research Design

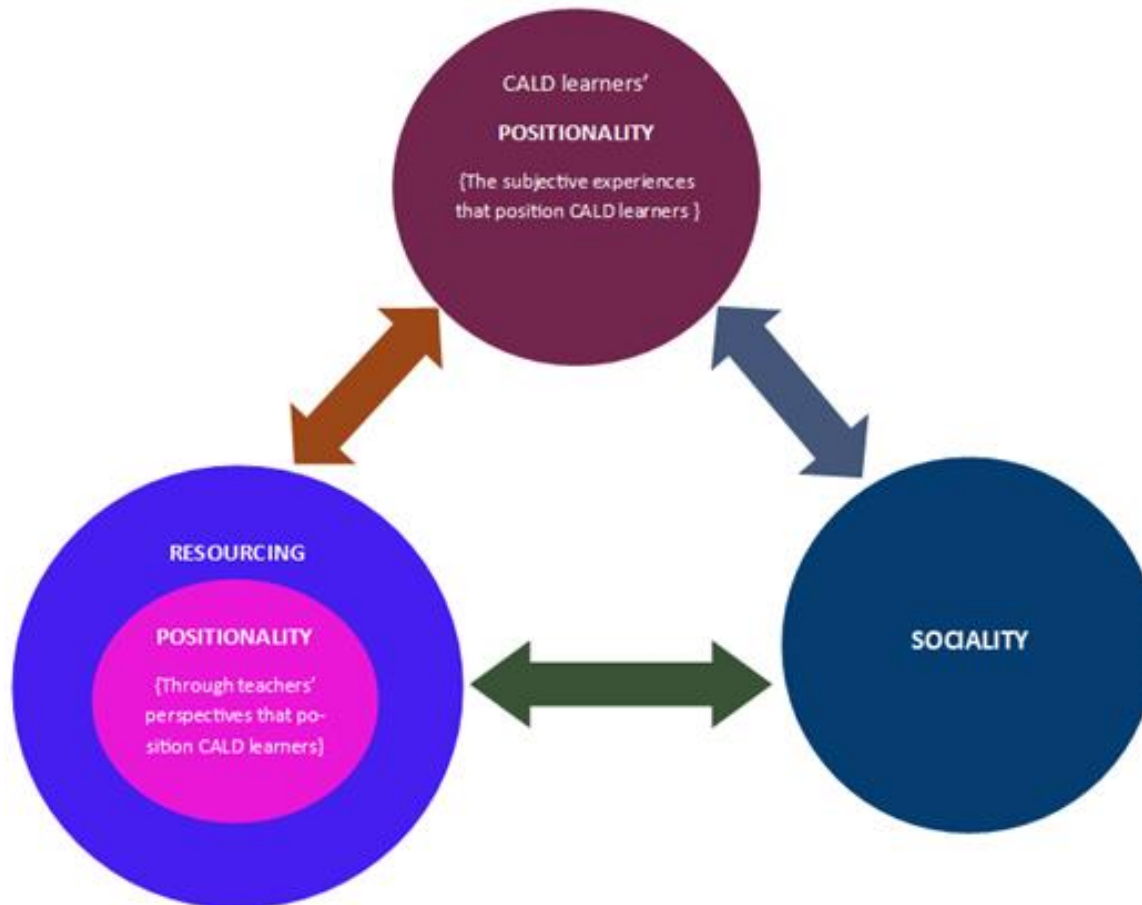
- A consideration for the confluence of the critical tradition and constructivist approach to methodology: New Paradigm Dialog (Denzin, 2008)
- Bourdieusian theorising guiding the methods and fieldwork decisions
- Case study design
 - Primary 5/6 composite classroom
 - 11 students representing 12 cultural backgrounds and 17 linguistic backgrounds
 - 9 educators: 6 of Anglo-Australian backgrounds who are monolingual English, 3 additional cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Dutch, Greek, and Singhalese)



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Conceptual Contribution

The teaching triad of participation



- 2 ways of understanding 'Positionality'
 - students' subjective experiences
- The limits of Bourdieusian theorising: affective dimension (Reay, 2015; Zembylas, 2007)
 - = habitus or capital?

Empirical Contributions

Implications to teaching and learning, policy

- Considerations of multilingual and multicultural frameworks for teaching and learning
- Critically reflective teaching and learning practices
- Building inclusive cultures of participation that attends to peer dynamics and student-teacher relationships
 - nurtures student voices and their diversity
 - flexibility to various conditions of possibilities
- Reviving the discourse and debates on multicultural education, including at the policy level



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