

## **Facilitative practices to promote migrant children's agency and hybrid integration in schools.**

### **Discussing data from Italy, Poland and England.**

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### **Abstract**

This paper discusses the narrative construction of personal trajectories by migrant children in multicultural classrooms across three social and cultural contexts (England, Italy, and Poland). The interactional construction of personal trajectories in form narratives is discussed with a focus on its implications for the enhancement of children's agency. The discussion is supported by the analysis of three exemplary extracts transcripts of audio or video-recorded classroom activities facilitated by teachers. The three extracts were chosen to illustrate the main forms of facilitation of migrant children's narrative observed in the context of a European research project. The analysis shows if and how facilitation of interactions can enhance children's agency as authorship of narratives. The analysis focuses on interactions between facilitators and children, in which facilitators use language to support children's narratives of personal trajectories of migration and social inclusion, also showing that facilitation is influenced by children's language proficiency. The construction of

narratives is not only manifestation of children's agency. It can also be context for the negotiation of hybrid integration, at the intersection between different forms of facilitation, different social and cultural contexts and different personal trajectories and experiences.

Questo saggio presenta l'analisi della costruzione di traiettorie personali di bambini migranti in classi multiculturali, in tre diversi contesti sociali e culturali (in Inghilterra, Italia e Polonia) e sulla base di un progetto di ricerca europeo. In particolare, il saggio riguarda la facilitazione della produzione di narrazioni di queste traiettorie e le sue conseguenze per la promozione dell'agency dei bambini. L'analisi è basata su tre trascrizioni di audio o video-registrazioni di incontri in classe facilitati da insegnanti. L'analisi di queste trascrizioni evidenzia se e come la facilitazione di interazioni in classe possa promuovere le narrazioni dei bambini migranti. L'analisi riguarda l'uso del linguaggio dei facilitatori che ha l'obiettivo di incoraggiare la produzione di narrazioni riguardanti le traiettorie di migrazione e inclusione sociale dei bambini, anche in relazione al loro grado di competenza nella lingua utilizzata nell'interazione. La facilitazione dell'agency dei bambini non incoraggia soltanto la narrazione delle loro traiettorie personali, ma anche la negoziazione di forme ibride di integrazione, in base alla forma di facilitazione, al contesto sociale e culturale in cui essa viene prodotta e alle esperienze personali dei bambini.

Keywords: children's agency, facilitation, hybrid integration

## **Introduction**

This paper discusses the results of the CHILD-UP (Children Hybrid Integration: Learning Dialogue as a way of Upgrading Policies of Participation) Horizon 2020 research project (GA 822400) that approached the lives of migrant children in Europe through the lenses of children agency and hybrid cultural integration. In particular, the project explored educational practices in seven European countries to identify good practices that can be elaborated to provide school communities tools for the successful inclusion of children with migrant background in multicultural classroom. The project also aimed to review the impact of current policies, supporting both decision-makers and civil society to design effective inclusion policies. This project included a variety of research phases and methods and produced a huge amount of data. It produced questionnaires to almost 4000 children, their parents, and 870 among teachers, social workers, and interpreters/mediators; focus group and individual interviews involving 1300 children, and 280 among teachers, social workers, and interpreters/mediators; recordings of more than 200 school activities and almost 40 interpreting sessions involving teachers and children's parents, sometimes with the presence of children.

Whilst the design of the research project is complex and utilises both quantitative and qualitative indicators, this article considers the qualitative data collected through recordings of school activities in three participating countries: Italy, Poland, and the UK to discuss different ways of promoting the inclusion of children with migrant background observed in classroom interactions. The article aims to provide new knowledge about the ways in which production of children's narratives about their own experiences of migration and integration can be facilitated in multicultural classrooms, discussing the methods employed to facilitate these narratives. While questionnaires and interviews are rather frequently used to investigate migrants' points of view, an important methodological innovation of the research project was the recording activities during which children could tell their personal stories of migration and integration. In particular, the analysis of narratives includes the analysis of teachers' facilitation to support children's exercise of agency as authors of knowledge. Analysing facilitation in educational interactions means analysing teachers' support of children's self-expression (Shier, 2001). Facilitation is a method to encourage, enhance and support this self-

expression showing children's agency. Children's self-expression is based on the narrative construction of their persona stories of migration and integration. Teachers' facilitation of this construction is discussed regarding the role of narratives in realising hybrid integration in the classroom.

The next section of the article presents the theoretical background underpinning the project. Section three and four illustrate the contexts of the research and the methodology. Section five discusses three extracts that illustrate different strategy to facilitate the participation of children with migrant background. The final section of the article summarises the results of the analysis.

### **Facilitation of children's narratives and hybrid integration**

The theoretical framework of the project is based on a combination of three conceptual dimensions. They are the function of facilitation in enhancing children's agency; personal narratives as manifestation of children's agency; an anti-essentialist view of intercultural communication in dealing with issues regarding children's identity and integration. The article investigates how the use of language in facilitation can enhance and support children's agency and in children's telling of their stories. This article is interested in exploring a dialogic use of language in the facilitated interaction.

#### ***Facilitation of agency and dialogue***

The concept of children's agency (Baraldi, 2014, 2020; James, 2009; Larkins, 2019; Oswell, 2013; Stoecklin & Fattore, 2017) relates to children's actions that are not simply reactions to adults' inputs. Promoting children's agency consists in enhancing children's availability of choices for action. It

enhances alternative actions that create the conditions of change at the level of classroom interactions (Baraldi, 2014). The achievement of agency needs the promotion of children's right to choose. In the context of the classroom, the children's right to choose is the right – and the corresponding responsibility - to produce knowledge, defined as epistemic authority (Baraldi, 2015).

Analysis of children's agency can focus on its social conditions (James, 2009; Kirby, 2020; Leonard, 2016; Moosa-Mitha, 2005). The structural limitations of children's agency consist in hierarchical forms of generational order (Alanen, 2009). Research on teachers-children interactions has highlighted mitigations of hierarchical forms of teaching that can be produced by adults' actions (Mercer & Littleton, 2007), such as “revoicing” (O'Connor & Michael, 1996). Research has also highlighted radical changes to hierarchical forms of teaching, based on facilitation of children's agency (Baraldi, 2014; Wyness, 2013). Facilitation takes form in specific interactions as sequences of adults' actions that enhance children's agency, and children's actions that display agency, that is, their epistemic authority.

The facilitation of agency can be interpreted as facilitation of dialogue. Dialogue is a specific form of communication that “implies that each party makes a step in the direction of the other” (Wierbizka 2006, p. 692). In adults-children interactions, dialogue is “the starting point, whereby children are consulted and listened to”, ensuring that “their ideas are taken seriously” (Matthews 2003, p. 268). Facilitation of agency as facilitation of dialogue can refer to facilitation of children's authorship of narratives, where children's agency is displayed choices that concern sharing personal perspectives and experiences.

Narratives are social constructions – produced in communication – where the observed reality is interpreted and ‘storied’ (Baker, 2006). Somers distinguishes between narratives of the self (ontological narratives), public narratives, and metanarratives concerning “the epic dramas of our time” (1994, p. 619), for instance international migration. In schools, facilitation can enable the construction of narratives of cooperation (Hendry, 2009; Winslade & Williams, 2012) by enhancing dialogue. Facilitation of narratives in the classroom facilitates the participants to negotiate their

identities (Bamberg, 2011) and supports the access to the rights of narrating (Norrick, 2007), therefore supporting participants' agency. Facilitators' actions are based on specific variations of use of language in the interaction (Baraldi, forthcoming). First facilitators can encourage children's production of narratives through open questions - giving children the opportunity to tell their stories - and focused questions - giving children the opportunity to expand on these stories. Moreover, facilitators' can enhance children's production of narratives by actively listening to their stories, through minimal responses or repetition of parts of children's sentences. Finally, facilitators can support children's production of narratives through formulations, that is, utterances that emphasise to 'gist' of previous utterances by summarizing, making explicit or developing this gist and presenting facilitators' interpretation of children's stories (Baraldi, 2014, Farini, 2021). In these different ways, children are invited to produce, clarify, and expand their stories of migration and integration.

It is also important to stress that language proficiency can influence children's ability to narrate. The research shows that fluency in the use of local language is a problem for newcomers. When children are not fluent, it is more difficult for teachers to facilitate their agency in the interaction. The data presented in this article shows the importance of language proficiency; they have been collected in two settings (London and Genova in Italy) in which migrant children are fluent in the local language and one (the Lublin Province in Poland) in which they are not.

### ***Construction of cultural identity and hybrid integration***

The meaning of "integration" - as used in this article - needs clarification. As facilitation focuses on children's agency in producing narratives, it can also concern the narration of personalised cultural meanings in multicultural classrooms. Often, the definition of "multicultural" classroom relates to individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Mahon & Cushner, 2012). Studies on intercultural education show that there are several ways of handling cultural meanings and identity (Gundara &

Portera, 2008). These studies imply that intercultural dialogue is based on the acknowledgment of difference among predefined cultural identities (Grant & Portera, 2011; Guillherme, 2013). This is an essentialist perspective that “presents people’s individual behaviour as entirely defined and constrained by the cultures in which they live so that the stereotype becomes the essence of who they are” (Holliday, 2011: 4).

A non-essentialist interpretation of cultures and cultural identities invited investigating the construction of narratives of culture and identity in communication. The anti-essentialist view emphasises the prefix ‘*inter-*’, which indicates the importance of relationships whilst warning against the insistence on essentialist narratives of cultural belonging (Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014). The anti-essentialist view approaches identity as contingently constructed in communication (Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013; Piller, 2011), replacing the primacy of cultural identity with the construction of hybrid identity (Jackson, 2014; Kramsch & Uryu, 2012). For anti-essentialist perspectives, identity is always negotiated in communication processes where personal and cultural trajectories are manifested (Holliday & Amadasi, 2020). Hybridity is conceived as the outcome of interactions designed to “open up many possibilities for how narratives can intertwine and express themselves” (Holliday & Amadasi 2020, p. 11). For the research project discussed in this article, the anti-essentialist concept of *hybrid integration* refers to: (1) narratives of personal and cultural trajectories that are negotiated in the classroom interactions; (2) narratives that include a variety of conditions, events and changes related to children’s personal cultural trajectories.

Hybrid integration is based on facilitation of contingent construction of children’s stories about their trajectories. Thus, hybrid integration is based on the combination of facilitators’ supportive actions and children’s exercise of agency. Since children’s agency is a basic component of hybrid integration, hybrid integration does not mean assimilation. Assimilation is rather based on hierarchical forms of education aiming to produce ‘acculturation’ by conveying knowledge, norms, values, and tacit assumptions, such as beliefs about cultural and ethnic differences (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2012). In this view, classrooms can be the social space for narratives about personal cultural trajectories that co-

construct *small cultures* (Holliday, 2011). Thus, the classroom is “multicultural” when the communicative production of a variety of small cultures is produced. Classroom communication is intercultural when narratives of small cultures are constructed (Baraldi, Joslyn & Farini, 2021).

### **Commonalities and differences between research contexts**

The analysis proposed in this article is based on a collection of audio or video-recorded data from classroom activities involving children with migrant background. In the seven countries participating in the research project, 207 meetings were recorded in primary and secondary classes. These meetings were planned and coordinated by different professionals, prevalently by teachers. This article focuses on activities in three countries: Italy, Poland, and the UK; 68 meetings were recorded in Italy, 40 in the UK and 13 in Poland. From each of the three corpora, one example of transcription was selected to be used as an example of different ways of enhancing children’s hybrid integration in the classroom. These extracts have been selected since they represent the different ways in which teaching - aiming to facilitate children’s agency - was performed in the three contexts. The three illustrate the main forms of facilitation of migrant children’s narrative observed in the research.

Data from Italy was recorded in a Primary School in the city of Genova. These activities reported in the extract is part of a series of 20 meetings organised by an association of teachers that promote the use of the Methodology of Narration and Reflection (MNR). MNR consists in the facilitation of reflection on short written narratives proposed to the children at the beginning of each meeting. Children are invited to read the stories and work in groups to reflect on the texts, sharing their reflections with the classmates. The success of MNR methodology depends on the trust in the association entertained by many teachers who entrust their classes to MNR specialists based on their interest in the promotion children’s agency and relational wellbeing.



Data from the UK was collected in a mainstream Primary School, located in the North-West of London. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is almost four times higher than the national average, which is not rare for schools in the Greater London Authority. The School is a Rights-respecting School that achieved UNICEF *Rights Respecting Award*, given to schools where teaching and learning is planned around the UNCRC. Rights-respecting schools follow four key areas; wellbeing, participation, relationships, and self-esteem and are committed to empower children to learn about the UNCRC and use such knowledge in their everyday social interactions.

Data from Poland comes from a Primary School located in a rural municipality in the Lublin Province. It is a small setting characterised by a high proportion of migrant children (in the school year 2020/21, 22 out of 41). A significant proportion of these pupils are refugee children who live in a nearby centre for foreigners. It is worth mentioning the specificity: despite an increasing number of children with a migrant background, the typical situation in Polish schools was rather a situation of one, two, rarely few migrant children per class.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the research in all participating countries. Video-recordings in schools were foreseen in the spring 2020, but the whole school system was in lockdown. The impact on recordings in classroom was very relevant; in consequence of the continuation of the pandemic, the data was collected in different ways in different phases. In Italy, the interaction presented in this paper was video-recorded in spring 2021, when schools re-opened, after further closures in autumn 2020 due to the second wave of the pandemic. Small groups of four children were working together at a distance from others. In London, the interaction was audio-recorded since researchers were not admitted in the school due to public health policies at the time of the research activities. The recording refers to a learning activity that took place in December 2020. At the time, in-person teaching in the school had just resumed following a short local lockdown. In Poland, the interaction was audio-recorded as researchers were not given permission to record videos; the researcher also filled in an observation sheet, noting additional details such as the arrangement of the desks in the class, the position of the teacher, non-verbal actions. The

recording was made at the beginning of June, after a long period of remote teaching (from late October to mid-May) marked by children's lack of appropriate equipment and suitable conditions for learning. Thus, according to teachers, children had to get used to working in presence again. In all three national settings, the classroom was at full capacity. Children and the facilitator were wearing facemasks only in Italy.

### **Ethical issues**

McNiff and Whitehead (2006) argue that research should be undertaken for the benefit of participants and always maintain strict ethical standards, which include offering participants clear information to choose whether to participate in the research or not. Offering information means providing an informed consent including explanation of how anonymity and confidentiality will be secured, what will be done with the data produced and who will be privy to the findings and why. This research was underpinned by rigorous ethical procedures. The research was approved by both the ethics reviewers of the European Commission, according to the European GDPR 2106/679, and the Ethical Committees of the participant institutions. The researchers committed to prioritise the protection of personal data against the research needs. The promotion of the voices of children was the aim of the research and one of its ethical pillars. Thus, the research was ethically and methodologically underpinned by the commitment to do research *with* children rather than research *on* children (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008). Children were the main stakeholders and the analysis of the use of facilitation was motivated by the commitment to promote children's voices. Decisions concerning the research aim, design and methods were informed by a strong sense of responsibility to participants.

Information and research methods were shared with all participants in advance, including information about the recording procedures and ways of anonymization and storing of the data. Consent related

to all aspects of the research. Consent from children's guardians was obtained before research was undertaken and documented through a signed agreement, with the possibility of using translations from guardians if needed so that consent was properly informed (Alderson & Morrow, 2020). Assent from children was obtained after research aims and activities were discussed in each class. Children participated on a voluntary basis. They were asked if they wanted to participate in the research, offering them the opportunity to decide and no pressure was made on them. Alternative provision and options were arranged for any children who chose not to take part in the research. Assent and consent from all participants were understood as a living and fluid agreement (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). Assent from children was sought verbally prior to research activities and was continuously monitored during activities related to this research. Children were informed of their right to change their minds about participation during research activities and data collection at the beginning of the research activity. Opportunities for children to privately express to the researcher, or the teacher, the wish to withdraw were made available in case children feel pressured or unable to withdraw within the classroom, so that they could leave the activity in a dignified manner.

### **Methodological approach to analysis of interactions**

The methodological approach of this research is based on the analysis of interactions and narratives, focusing on teachers and children's interlaced contributions to classroom interactions, including teachers' reactions to children's contributions and their implications for production of narratives as well as children's exercise of agency as epistemic authority.

This type of analysis incorporates some tenets of Conversation Analysis (CA). First, an action is considered as a "turn of talk" in the interaction. Second, each turn of talk is based on the previous one. Third, "turn design" can be observed for each action (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). However, the analysis presented in the paper differs from CA regarding the way of analysing interaction. For

CA the relevant aspect is participants' orientation (Schegloff, 1987) and reproduction of social worlds (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). This article approaches interaction differently, replacing CA interest in participants' orientation or reproduction of social worlds with the interest on the production of narratives and the ways of enhancing and supporting children's agency in the interaction as authorship of narratives. In particular, the promotion of narratives and children's agency is related to the construction of small cultures and hybrid integration. Considering the paper's aim, CA methodology of transcription is only partially used in the extracts. For instance, turns are numbered rather than lines, CA transcription conventions are simplified to serve the purpose of the analysis. First conventions are used to indicate pauses: short pauses are indicated with (.) and (..), longer pauses with number of seconds. Second, they are used to show overlapping (aligned square brackets). Finally, they are used to show non-verbal aspects of the interaction (using double round brackets)

The availability of data in form of recordings is pivotal for research interested in actions-in-interaction because it allows researchers' observation of classroom interaction directly, capturing its complexity. Moreover, researchers can return to the recorded data towards enhanced reflectivity that support discussions among researchers. For the research discussed in this paper, recordings and transcripts can document how facilitation of children's exercise of agency is achieved and narratives are produced. Recordings and transcripts provide qualitative indicators concerning forms and problems of interactions, production of narratives and differences in participation in interactions. The use of recording, in particular video-recording, needs to be very careful to avoid inhibiting spontaneity and participation. However, the robust experience of the research teams suggests that children tend to forget the presence of the recorder quickly.

Analysis of the transcriptions shows some differences among the three research settings. In particular, important differences concern the ways of dealing with children's exercise of agency and the types of narratives produced during the activities. Comparison among these different ways of interacting with children is interesting because it can show different degrees of success of facilitation of children's agency and production of narratives, and thus of the ways of promoting

migrant children's hybrid integration in the classroom. In the Italian setting, MNR facilitation prevalently includes teacher's formulations and minimal responses to open the floor to the children's contributions, related to the protagonists of the short stories presented by the teacher. Migrant children claim their epistemic authority in telling their own views on acceptance. In the English setting, facilitation takes a mixed form where teacher's directive actions are more evident. The teacher gives more relevance to his own epistemic authority in the interaction. However, children can exercise their agency as authorship of narratives based on their own knowledge as in the extract presented, where the narrative combines migrant children's family experiences and historical events. In the Polish setting, the analysis shows a form of participated teaching, that is, a more hierarchical form of communication than facilitation. The narrative concern Chechnya, the country from which the migrant children come. Participated teaching can enhance children's active participation, albeit with some limitations.

The paper will discuss how teaching can take different forms, with different implications for children's agency. The three narratives presented in the next section show different expressions of the meta-narrative of migration and three different hybrid forms of integration, both as co-construction of narratives and children's personal cultural trajectories.

## **Practices to facilitate children's agency as production of narratives**

### *Adults' minimal responses and use of formulations within children-led conversations*

Extract 1 (Italian setting) shows how facilitation can enhance migrant children's participation as authorship of a narrative on feelings, focused on the feeling of acceptance. Building upon previous conversation, in turn 1, M1, a child with migrant background, highlights the combination of happiness

with acceptance, respect and belonging to a group where it is possible to express feelings, desires and ideas. However, another child with migrant background, F1, replies that happiness is not the only important emotion: anger and sadness are equally important (turns 4 and 6), thus indirectly rejecting M1's narrative of integration.

The facilitator's minimal response in turn 7 leaves room to other children, who emphasise the importance and meaning of happiness, therefore ignoring F1's comment (turns 8 and 9). After a short pause, the facilitator asks if there are other views (turn 10) which offers the possibility for M2 to explicitly disagree with F1 (turn 13), re-establishing a narrative of adaptation and relations (turns 19, 21, 23) that supports M1's initial narrative. F1 tries reply but M1 overlaps (turn 25). Despite the facilitator's request to hold on, M1 takes the floor (turn 27) to insist that acceptance and respect cannot be linked to anger offering as a negative example his previous experience of discrimination. In turn 28, F1 explains that for her anger and sadness are not linked to acceptance but other topics "which then can make you happy later in life". The facilitator does not intervene allowing several girls to take the floor to confirm F1's narrative (turns 33, 34, 35, 36) although M1's narrative is not explicitly criticised. In turn 37, the facilitator summarises and develop the previous conversation, asking children, the authors of knowledge, to confirm her understanding. On F1's initial confirmation, the facilitator asks for more and F1 confirms again. The facilitator closes this conversation with a new summary and an appreciation before changing the topic of the discussion (turn 41).

In extract 1, two children with migrant background link their views to personal trajectories, leading the conversation and enhancing their classmates' contributions. Although conflicting, both children show their authority in producing knowledge which is an instance of agency, supported in that by the facilitator and classmates' contributions. The facilitator contributes to the interaction minimally until turn 37, displaying active listening but leaving the floor to children who participate smoothly and competently. From turn 37, the facilitator upgrades her epistemic authority through a formulation. The facilitator's formulation in turn 37 summarises children's contributions. At the same time, it develops these contributions to emphasise the value of respect and acceptance. Importantly for

facilitation, the formulation is followed by a request for confirmation, displaying support to migrant children's epistemic authority as authors of knowledge who are entitled to assess the validity of the formulation. The repetition of the request of confirmation guarantees that understanding is shared before the facilitator presents the gist of the conversation again showing appreciation for children's participation.

Extract 1 (Italy)

01	M1m	so in my opinion it means yes to be happy means this because (.) if I think I am accepted I am respected I am part of the group I am happy to be part of the group, I am happy not to be alone (.) as before but I am part of a group I can express myself- express my feelings, my desires, my ideas, that's what being happy in my opinion
02	F1m	raise her hand
03	FACf	((it can't be seen but FAC gives her the floor))
04	F1m	in my opinion, yes, however, happiness is not the only important emotion
05	FACf	happiness is not?
06	F1m	the only important emotion because to move forward you need other emotions such as sadness and anger
07	FACf	mh
08	F2	((also with her hand raised)) in my opinion happiness is made precisely by respect and em by someone who accepts you for who you are, and: I mean in my opinion if these elements are not present, you ca you cannot be happy (?)

09	M2	so, in my opinion yes because: you are happy when someone is polite to you, speaks well of you, and expresses ideas of and yours your ideas, and: when: does not: does not make fun of you and he doesn't treat you badly
(..)		
10	FACf	all done? (.) Some doubts?
11	M2	always me
12	FACf	go on
13	M2	I disagree a bit with F1
14	FACf	with?
15	M2	with her
16	FACf	yes (.) I don't remember what's her name
17	F1m	F1
18	FACf	F1
19	M2	and because yes, in any case we have to adapt- that is, we are human therefore [we
20	FACf	[are?
21	M2	we are human and therefore it is normal to get angry and sad, but I do not think it serves to move forward in life
22	F1m	in my opinion yes because in life you cannot always be happy
23	M2	yes, not in that sense always happy and always cheerful but like anger if you are angry, it is as if (.) you were another person because you have the impulses, and you isolate yourself because you are angry and you do not want to be with others and this it can also provoke mh I don't know but bad things anyway. Even sadness same thing
24	F1m	yes b[ut



25	M1m	[and then
26	FACf	wait wait
27	M1m	and then if you are respected, if you are accepted why should you be angry? (.) Indeed I would be very happy (.) I am already accepted but in the first class when I was not yet accepted since I was (.) of another colour, I was sad, I played alone, but now that I have been accepted it is not that I'm sad, it's not that I'm angry, of course human beings get angry and sad, but if you are accepted if (you are a great thing) why do you have to be angry? Why are you sad? In fact, you have to be - you have to be happy
28	F1m	yes, but I don't say you have to be angry when you have to be accepted, when you have to be - when you are accepted you have to be happy, but I say to be angry and sad about other topics, which then can make you happy later in life
(2)		
29	F3	in my opinion
(..)		
30	FACf	(?)
31	F3	in my opinion so sometimes sadness helps you (.) because when you are sad a friend arrives and from that moment you feel happy
32	F4	in my opinion, you also need sadness for another thing maybe it is also like a friend but also learn how to get up from a sad thing alone, also believe in yourself more too
33	M2	F2 is right because to me it happen- she was the one who spoke earlier, because according to me it happened that I was sad and ((name)) came which is the one over there, and let's say it gave me some comfort so let's say it's like a test, to see if friends are true friends and if they notice you you

(..)		
34	F5	so in my opinion and it is right what my companions said, because anyw- we must also be happy not sad but sometimes we also need to be sad, and, but also to believe in ourselves
(2)		
35	F6m	in my opinion and: the fact of being sad and angry then makes you grow so (in my opinion) F1 also meant that from there you are happier, and you are also more grown up
36	F7	I wanted to say the same thing but, in my opinion, and: for example, when you are sad and: it makes you think and: you ask yourself questions, why am I sad? em: and then go to clarify maybe
(..)		
37	FACf	well it seems to me that you have managed to put the two view together (.) that is we have not excluded one thing or the other (.) but we have accepted what she said that is and: it is important to be respected it makes you happy, but even in the moments when you are not happy because there may be a problem or because you are angry etc., you are respected even when your anger and sadness are accepted (..) Did I understand it correctly?
38	F1m	Yes
39	FACf	do you think it's okay in this sense?
40	F1m	yes yes
41	FACf	then it is very true what you said that is I am happy because I was accepted (.) this seems true to me and that (.) it is beautiful eh? all right? (nice) then I lost the questions

*Teacher's more active engagement through questions and comments to support the children's narratives towards*

The activities recorded in London schools were integral to the focus on participation and relationships of Rights-respecting Schools. Activities were usually designed to promote children's narratives of social relations and expectations, starting from a theme introduced by the teacher. Extract 2 is taken from an activity aimed to support children in sharing experiences or knowledge of conflicts and their implications. The extract illustrates the mainstream form of facilitation observed in London schools: a mixed facilitation oscillating between promotion of children's agency and actions that pursue teacher-defined educational goals.

The extract begins with M1's initiative. M1 criticises another child's comment therefore upgrading his epistemic authority. In turn, 2 the teacher acknowledges M1's contribution in an interrogative form to invite further expansion. In the extended turn 6, the teacher acknowledges M1's high epistemic authority; he subsequently positions himself as a co-expert by expanding M1's narrative to insert educational contents. In turns 8 and 10, the teacher acknowledges again M1's status as author of valid knowledge, reducing the epistemic hierarchy that characterises educational interactions. However, the interaction takes a sudden turn to teacher-centredness in the final unit of turn 12 when the teacher produces an invitation to complete, which is a type of question with known answer, characteristic of teacher-centred educational interaction (Margutti, 2006). Children's choral reply is followed by a repetition in turn 14, utilised by the teacher to establish what he considers to be knowledge of educational value. In the same turn, the teacher delivers more educational contents followed by an invitation to talk. The invitation, as well as the following ones in turns 16 and 18, only elicits minimal participation. After the teacher-centred shift, the interaction does not seem to promote children's agency. Nevertheless, another change is brought by Adli in turn 19, who takes the initiative of accessing the role of speaker to share a story based on family memories, whilst ignoring the themes introduced by teacher's questions. Teacher's reaction is mixed: whilst he accepts Adli's personal

initiative, he recontextualises Adli's narrative within his preferred educational theme 'war to access resources'.

However, the pendulum between teacher's control and children's agency is always swinging. In turn 24, Adli claims status of author of knowledge through a personal initiative as he delivers an unprompted comment. The teacher does not provide direct support to Adli. Rather, he produces a generic appreciation of children's participation, that is a lukewarm support of children's agency, followed by a series of interrelated questions that re-centre the interaction on the educational theme of his choice (turns 25-30). Another shift towards children's agency can be observed in turn 34. M1 takes the role of speaker to complete the teacher's turn without being prompted to do so. In turn 35, the teacher confirms M1's upgraded status in the interaction. The promotion of M1's agency is followed by another shift towards teacher's control in turn 37. The teacher does not interlace his turn to M1's narrative. Rather, he introduces an unrelated new topic. Nevertheless, it should be noticed that the teacher claims control over the interaction to introduce knowledge that he has learned from a child, the older brother of M6, thus signalling an upgrade of children's epistemic status. This opens an opportunity for children's agency, particularly for M6 who takes the role of speaker to contextualise teacher's comment (turn 38). This is the first of three children's personal initiatives. In turn 39, F4 self-selects as speaker to comment; in turn 40 F5 self-selects as speaker to ask M6 a question. In turn 41, M6 displays high epistemic authority as he replies to F5. In turn 42, the teacher confirms M6's high epistemic authority by seeking his confirmation of the validity of a comment. Comments are a powerful facilitative action (Farini and Scollan, 2021; Scollan and Farini, 2021) that contribute to the success of facilitation in enhancing dialogic learning if they are utilised to build on knowledge constructed by children.

Extract 2 (London)

01	M1	<p>my statement is, so you know how we were doing the group economics thing?</p> <p>From (M2) point of view, you know how England is a very first world country?</p> <p>Sometimes they want more than they have, so they take from poor countries which have good resources. No offence, but England is like a first world country, but it isn't well resourced in like food and other stuff, so they take from different countries, so people started to think that they didn't want to do that so that's how war broke out</p>
02	Tm	ok?
03	M1	like in my country, in my family's country, Sierra Leone
04	Tm	so, Sierra Leone said we shouldn't be giving all our resources to these rich countries, and others said we have to. And some people are trying to keep it to themselves, and that's how the war break loose?
05	M1	families were torn apart. I think there was almost 2 million people that died in that war
06	Tm	<p>((to children)) Did you hear that? Because of one resource, one natural resource, almost 2 million people died in Sierra Leone. Even going back to the diamonds, the blood diamonds is probably one of the most famous well-known single type of resource. I mean, there's still people that mine the diamonds and gold, and they have illegal mines, and people die I would say if not weekly then certainly monthly. Because they work in terrible conditions and they get stuck underground and no one saves them, and I've just watched a documentary on this actually, people go and attack their mines, and these miners are unarmed and work for like a penny a day, a penny a day. But are they armed, these miners?</p>
07	F1	No

08	Tm	they're armed with like a shovel. But is their shovel any good against a gun? So, it's still going on today. That war was probably, I don't know, do you know?
09	M1	it was 1997 because that's what my family was telling me about
10	Tm	end of 1997 ((to children)) do you know how long it spanned for?
11	M1	my mum said it was something like 7-5 years
12	Tm	7-5 years. To lose 2 million people in 7-5 years is an awful lot of people in the country, and all over a natural resource which, think about the apocalypse we are reading about in that book, all of us agreed that a diamond necklace became absolutely (.) absolutely
13	Children	useless
14	Tm	useless, but 2 million people died just because someone with a lot of money in another country wanted it. Is that right?
15	F1	No
16	Tm	but again, during that war, if it's going on for 5-7 years, is anyone supporting them to finish it from the rich countries?
17	M1	No
18	Tm	the UN might have tried to get involved. Was it the UN?
19	M3	mister? In Afghanistan my grandad always says that they tried to get, I think, resources or something, they said no but then it was a war a long time ago before this one. I think it was for less than 20 years and 1.5 million people died
20	Tm	but again, it's a war about natural resources by the sounds of things, and money. So, what's driving this?
21	M3	money. My grandad says it was for money, the Russians and the American and English people before want to take all from Afghanistan
22	Tm	wanting more. Wanting more. Wanting more. What's that?

23	Children	Greedy
24	M3	greed can lead to war
25	Tm	this is a good chat we're having. If we all sort of shared, and found better systems, then would this happen? We say that, but then I give it all to a really nice year six class bunch, if you got it all and another group nothing, any of you would feel naughty? Nasty?
26	F1	No
27	Tm	but if, what would happen in the group left with nothing?
28	M4	Anger
29	F2	Frustration
30	Tm	anger, frustration and fighting. Fighting, interestingly, in a poor country, [civil
31	F3	[war
32	Tm	can you see how it plays out? Are any of you sitting there going 'Oh my goodness'? I had rich countries getting richer, poor countries getting poorer, and one poor country kept getting poorer and poorer and poorer to breaking point, and they couldn't agree on what to do next and the best thing to do for their resources, they started to argue, but really upset, which is basically the same as having a [civil
33	M5	[war
34	M1	exactly the same as Sierra Leone
35	Tm	exactly the same as Sierra Leone
36	M1	but they didn't have their independence taken like Afghanistan, I think. My mum told me that they got their independence in like 1970 something
37	Tm	often, fledging countries, young countries, your brother taught me so much about that, by the way ((the older brother of a by standing boy, M6)), your

		brother, I'm an expert now. But when countries breakoff into smaller countries, they can then often be fighting over resources, land
38	M6	Kosovo
39	F4	It's happened all over the world, but sort of, Israel and Palestine
40	F5	I wanted to ask (M6) what happened in Kosovo?
41	M6	Yeah, they had a war, Kosovars and Serbians
42	Tm	They have been at war for ages over who owns which bit of the country. Kosovo and Serbia, haven't they (M6)?
43	M6	There was a big war there

***Teacher's strong control of the interaction implemented through the use of comments***

Extract 3 was recorded in Poland during an activity about interesting places in Poland and Chechnya, based on the comparison of pictures. After an introduction, the teacher shares his view of Krakow concluding with a question addressed to the children ("and where will you take me?"), to move the conversation to Chechnya.

This question seems to give the floor to children, but the teacher does not promote children's agency systematically. During the interaction, the teacher seeks images of Poland on the Internet, which he describes with great passion as well as images of Chechnya. In turn 1, he is looking for pictures of Chechnya. F2 takes the floor to share that she had been in Chechnya; however, the teacher ignores her comment to focus exclusively on the images. F2 again takes the floor to praise Chechnya, but the teacher continues to focus on the images, adding that Krakow also has mountains. In turn 6, F2 tries to take the floor for the third time, only to be again ignored by the teacher. In turn 8, F2 succeeds in attracting the teacher's attention saying that she was born in Chechnya. The teacher displays some interest, but he continues to proffer enthusiastic praises of the Internet pictures. Only at the end of



turn 13, the teacher returns to F2 to ask a question. The recording of the following part of the conversation is not clearly audible. It includes some Chechen language conversation, (turns 18 and 19). Turn 21 shows that the teacher does not engage further in the conversation.

Extract 3 (Poland)

01	Tm	this is actually Czechia, but further on there is Chechnya perhaps, because I typed it wrong, oh, Chechnya. Chechnya [by entering the name], yes, pictures of Chechnya
02	F2	I was there once
03	Tm	in the mountain of Chechnya. Yes, let's see them without graphics, but using names perhaps, to get the name. Tusheti, Chechnya
04	F2	right, most beautiful water in Chechnya
05	Tm	Yes. Oh, here is the Armalynsky gorge, the largest lake in Chechnya, the Armalynsky gorge and the Khunzakh gorge, how gorgeous those mountains are. Here in the south, further from Krakow, there are also mountains.
06	F2	I was-
07	Tm	but they are not as high as the Caucasus Mountains
08	F2	I (?) I have been to the mountains, too
09	Tm	aha. It's somewhere around here
10	F2	I was born there
11	Tm	you were born there?
12	F2	Yes
13	Tm	you, well, it needs to be seen, how it looks there, super. There you were born. But you didn't live there before leaving?

14	?	Yhmmm
15	Tm	yhmm, yes?
16	F1	No
17	Tm	no, not either?
18	?	((Some words in Chechen language))
19	Tm	well and ((Some words in Chechen language))
20	F1	how this-
21	Tm	Ok, no more dragging the subject, we're going to the museum ((switches)). a museum, just there, we will go to the downtown. Well, such city, how many people live there? 50,000? Well, you see (.) you have mountains so close in your country, right?

Extract 4 is the continuation of activity in extract 3. The teacher is looking at photographs of Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, showing surprise for changes after the war with Russia. In turn 44, Maria comments that Grozny is now very pretty, and the teacher simply comments that he is looking at it, once again missing out on the opportunity to support a narrative initiated by a child. In turn 46, F2 asks a question to the teacher who, however, continues to pay attention to the images. It is probable that F2 shows photographs to the teacher as he asks questions about them (turns 49 and 51). F2 describes the photographs and the teacher displays active listening (turns 53, 55, probably 57). In turn 59, the teacher asks about a mosque in the photograph. F2 replies but also points to her sister in the photograph. The conversation, based on the teacher's minimal question continues until turn 73, when the teacher returns to talk about Poland.

Extract 4

43	Tm	And now here, this (.) how this Grozny looks like now. You know what, I remember your capital city when there was a war, how horrible it looked, and everything was ruined, burnt, when there was a war waged in Grozny
44	F1	and now Grozny is very pretty
45	Tm	well, I'm just looking at it
46	F2	Sir? ((wants to ask something))
47	Tm	So, how Grozny looks like after so many years of war (.) Aha, is that-
48	F1	((laughing, pleased because something has been recognised)).
49	Tm	is that you?
50	F2	((laughing))
51	Tm	is this your home?
52	F2	This ((indicates)) and this, it was the place
53	Tm	Hhh
54	F2	and our home here
55	Tm	And here, it's some neighbour, right?
56	?	Yhmm
57	Tm	Yes?
58	F2	no! ((laughing)) ((students say something to each other))
59	Tm	stop that please. And here, this is the mosque, right?
60	F2	And here ((excited)) and here my sister, when she was going to the shop ((on her bike)), she fell, oh, here. ((laughing))
61	Tm	what a thing!
62	?	Yhmm
63	Tm	but she saw that picture?
64	F2	I think (.) There they were ((unclear who)), ((laughing)), taking her picture.

65	Tm	Beautiful
66	F2	and this is me
67	Tm	aha, do you pray?
68	F2	yes, this is daddy in Chechnya, this is me
69	Tm	but is that in your home?
70	F2	Yes
71	Tm	aha. Hey, the daddy did bring you up well, well, yes, to pray?
72	F2	Yes
73	Tm	it's good, one needs to pray. And do you know where we pray in Poland? I'll show you one such place

Despite an interesting activity was planned, with the possibility for migrant pupils to present a piece of "their" social worlds, extracts 3 and 4 show that the teacher he did not use this opportunity. Even when pushed by F2 agency to pay attention to some photograph, the teacher does not support her agency. Rather, he overlooks several opportunities to facilitate F2 narrative of her life in Chechnya or a narrative of her experiences as a migrant. In addition to that, the teacher does not give the pupils the opportunity to interact with each other about the places they have recognised, and the events connected to them.

### **Discussion and conclusions**

Extracts 1-4 are conditioned by difference in language proficiency, as well as by difference in the activities. As for language, in Italy and in the UK, migrant children display good knowledge of Italian and English respectively because they have been socialised in the country of migration. On the contrary, in Poland language barriers are much more relevant since children have migrated only

recently. It is apparent that language barriers create problems for children's participation. As for the type of activity, in Italy, the activity was based on an explicit project of facilitation, planned by an association of teachers. In the UK, the activity was designed and led by the teacher who had undertaken training in the use of facilitation. In Poland, ordinary activities, planned by the school without an explicit focus on facilitation, were recorded. Against this background, extracts 1-4 show three important differences concerning the local production of teacher-children interaction.

First, facilitation of migrant children's participation takes different forms, based on teachers' different actions. The first form (Italy) is based on facilitator's frequent minimal responses within a conversation led by the children who self-coordinate as well as final formulations that both summarise and develop the gist of previous turns at talk. The second form (UK) is based on teacher's questions and comments aiming to support the children's narratives thus creating a more teacher-centred facilitation. The third form (Poland) is based on the teacher's control of the interaction, above all through comments on the photographs, leaving marginal space for children's participation.

Second, these different actions have different results in terms of enhancement and support of children's agency as epistemic authority. In the Italian setting, children take the floor autonomously; in particular, migrant children can condition the interaction through their contributions. The upgrading of their epistemic authority is systematically enhanced by the teacher and supported by their classmates. Support of agency is also evident in the UK setting, through the systematic interlacement of children and teachers' upgrading of epistemic authority. The teacher leads the conversation, but he also supports children's agency. In the Polish setting, the enhancement of children's agency is limited and its support nearly absent. The activity follows teacher's planned agenda, and it seems to be aimed to impart knowledge rather than encouraging children's agentic participation and authorship of knowledge

Third, the extracts show different ways of producing ontological narratives and hybrid integration. It is interesting to note that there is not an explicit focus of migrant children's experiences in any of the national settings. These experiences emerge in the conversation in a rather casual way. The most

articulated narrative is produced in the UK, while in Italy the narrative is more fragmented, given the variety of children's contributions, and in Poland it is very superficial because the teacher does not support it. Narratives of personal trajectories showing hybrid integration is more evident in Italy, where the two migrant children talk of their feelings about their condition and one of them links his feelings to the condition of migrant. The second meaning of hybrid integration, that is, hybrid co-construction of narratives, is more evident in Italy and the UK, although in different ways but in Poland the teacher misses out on several opportunities to participate in a hybrid co-construction of the narrative.

Differences across the three contexts may be related to a combination of children's language proficiency, the different types of activity and, most importantly, to different methods of dealing with children's participation in the interaction, ranging from facilitation to a more traditional form of participated teaching, where children's voices are more likely to confirm what the teacher says. The combination of these three variables leads to different outcomes for migrant children's agency, therefore the possibility to change the social and cultural contexts of their experiences. We can draw two conclusions from our research results, concerning the way to provide comparative, transnational analyses of children's agency and hybrid integration. A methodological conclusion is the importance of studying local practices in which daily bottom up processes upgrade migrant children's rights and responsibilities in the interactional construction of knowledge. A conceptual conclusion is that this methodology makes possible to identify specific facilitative actions that are relevant in enhancing and supporting migrant children's agency in producing narratives, and to observe how different forms of interaction may make a difference for agency. Future research could be expanded to other local contexts in which different local activities aim at enhancing and supporting migrant children's hybrid integration, based on children's agency as choice of ways of acting and narrating trajectories and identities in the school context.

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