

Educational inequalities, teacher authority and student autonomy in multi-ethnic Basque secondary education

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This paper focuses on educational inequalities in multi-ethnic Basque secondary education. More precisely, the study takes an ethnographic standpoint and aims to explore the academic performance disparities between autochthonous and immigrant students in Basque education in relation to teacher authority. Methods include participant observation and interviews conducted in a Basque school attended by a high proportion of immigrant students. The data indicates that teachers showed three kinds of authority styles, including authoritative and affectionate, which elicited different degrees of student autonomy. The authority style that did not elicit an effective student response involved the use of both authoritative and affectionate strategies; this inconsistent style was only observed when teachers interacted with immigrant students around Basque language learning. This paper argues that teachers' authority styles have implications for the academic inequalities present between autochthonous and immigrant students.

Introduction

Teacher to student relations influence classroom management and student performance. These should be especially considered in educational intervention with immigrant students, as they are often in an unequal position in relation to their autochthonous[1] counterparts. The purpose of this study is to analyse particular causes of educational inequalities in multi-ethnic Basque secondary education. Research has often reached contradictory conclusions regarding immigrant educational inequality: whereas some studies in the US point out an immigrant advantage, or the paradox that immigrants often show high educational attainment in spite of a lack of local cultural knowledge or limited language competence[2] (Feliciano & Lanuza, 2016; Kao & Thompson, 2003), in Europe studies acknowledge that immigrant pupils usually show low academic performance compared to autochthonous students (Cummins, 2015; Martín Rojo, 2011; Weber, 2009).

This study is Basque-based, in an area where both Basque and Spanish are languages for instruction. In line with European research addressing ethnic inequalities at school, public reports indicate that in the Basque Country immigrants show low academic achievement (Department of Education, 2016; Save the Children, 2014). More precisely, in the Basque Country a variety of newspaper articles (Fernández de Arangiz, 2016; Fernández Vallejo, 2016; Goikoetxea, 2016; Sotillo, 2016) indicate that immigrant students are unevenly distributed between schools and classrooms. In schools with a high proportion of immigrant students, some classes are highly immigrant-populated and have correspondingly low academic achievement, whereas in others there is higher autochthonous student attendance and these perform better (Department of Education, 2016; Save the Children, 2014). Based on an analysis of teachers' authority styles and the level of autonomy[3] elicited in students, this study aims to highlight some reasons why, in

education centres with an ethnically diverse studentship, non-autochthonous students tend to have lower academic achievement in comparison to autochthonous students.

Teacher authority and student autonomy

According to Stefanou and her colleagues (2004), students' relationships with teachers are especially important in maintaining their motivation and engagement, and enhancing their performance at school. Teachers' explicit and implicit messages significantly affect student responses. Based on this idea, authority is a key element in establishing an effective classroom environment. I will define teacher authority as the relationship built between teachers and students where teachers guide the classroom dynamic (Dubet & Martuccelli, 1997). Levin and Nolan (2014) proposed an authority classification based on a set of strategies a teacher can use. First, 'referent authority' is based on a positive relationship between students and teachers; students usually regard these teachers as people who care about them. Second, 'expert authority' involves teachers' capability and knowledge to help pupils learn; pupils usually perceive their teachers' wisdom and enjoy the learning process. Third, 'legitimate authority' refers to teachers who use their power to legitimate their position; students tend to follow these teachers' rules, as they feel it is their duty as students to do as they are told. Fourth, 'reward or coercive authority' is based on teachers' administration of rewards and punishments in their interaction with students to enhance their academic performance. Although a teacher can use more than one kind of authority, they usually identify mostly with one.

A variety of studies indicate that teacher authority and classroom management directly influence student autonomy (Goodman, 2006; Harmandao lu Baz, Balçikanlı and Tevfik Cephe, 2018; Niemiec & Ryan 2009). For instance, Griffin (2016) and Hall and Webb (2014) proposed that an autonomy-supporting teaching style enhances student motivation to learn, whereas a controlling style engenders low levels of self-determined motivation. Developing this idea, in this paper I consider "autonomy" as an individual's capacity to act in a self-determined way to support their own learning and demonstrate positive self-motivation to learn in an academic environment[4].

Although the literature indicates that there are different kinds of authority that could be related to student autonomy, there is a gap around demonstrating how these might be performed in ethnically diverse environments. Hence, the research questions guiding this multi-ethnic Basque-based study are: (1) how do different models of teacher authority affect student autonomy? and (2) are different models of teacher authority related to academic inequalities and performance disparities between autochthonous and immigrant students?

Method

The study was proposed from an ethnographic perspective. Ethnography is a qualitative approach that relies on long-term fieldwork employing participant observation and interviews, among other techniques. The fieldwork started early in 2015 in a Basque school attended by a high proportion of immigrant students. In line with the research

questions presented, participant observation was proposed to ascertain the extent to which teaching practices affected students' autonomy and academic performance. Observation of teacher–student interaction enabled me to explore teaching practices and the academic response they elicited from students (Bloome, 2012; Woods, 2012). Following Woods and Hammersley (2017), I explored the actions of students and teachers, interpreted their discourse, and analysed its implications for daily school life. I supplemented the observation data with interviews I conducted with research participants. These were proposed to deepen each subject's explanation of their behaviour. Data were analysed using *ATLAS.ti* (ATLAS.ti, 2019) software.

Research setting

The ethnographic context is a multi-ethnic Basque education centre. The Basque Country is located on the Cantabrian coast in northern Spain and southern France, where Basque is a minority language in comparison to French and Spanish. This study took place in an area dependant on Spain, designated as the *Basque Autonomous Community* (BAC). Here, under Franco's dictatorship, it was prohibited to speak Basque from the 1930s until the 1970s. Nowadays, both Spanish and Basque are official languages and their instruction is compulsory at school, however, Basque is a sensitive topic for Basques and often acts as an ethnic-identity marker[5]. Although a description of the role of Basque in education, culture and politics in the BAC is beyond the scope of this work, it must be mentioned that most teachers in academic institutions speak Basque and promote its use.

In the BAC, students are distributed between classrooms in terms of their level of instruction in Basque. There are three linguistic models to choose among: in model A instruction is in Spanish and Basque is studied as a subject, in model B both Basque and Spanish are studied, and in model D instruction is in Basque and Spanish is studied as a subject (there is no letter C in Basque). One of the measures taken to ensure the promotion of Basque is the preferment of models D or B over model A in most education centres.

Other elements influencing the distribution of students are the school and the linguistic choices available within it, which, according to the press and educational reports, is sometimes ethnically guided (Fernández de Arangiz, 2016; Fernández Vallejo, 2016; Goikoetxea, 2016; Save the Children, 2016; Sotillo, 2016). In the BAC, only 8% of the studentship is immigrant, but this percentage is much higher within some education centres and classrooms (Fernández de Arangiz 2016; Fernández Vallejo 2016; Sotillo 2016). In 2016, 62 Basque schools were attended by a studentship consisting of over 20% immigrant students (Alonso 2016), which implies that immigrant studentship is not evenly distributed among schools. The same is true within these schools and among classrooms, as immigrant students tend to enrol in classes with a high level of Spanish instruction, whereas autochthonous students are more likely to choose classes with a higher level of Basque instruction. This results in an uneven distribution of immigrant students within each classroom.

Participants

Participants in this study attended a secondary education centre which I will designate as 'Udabia'. This and other names are pseudonyms to ensure the confidentiality of the data provided by research participants. Data was collected following the guidance of the Ethics Committee of the University of the Basque Country (CEISH) and confidentiality and personal data protection were guaranteed.

In 2015 Udabia had over 37% foreign national students, and most of them attended lessons that had a high level of Spanish instruction. In Udabia there were not officially any model A classes, however, some model B classes were instructed only in Spanish because immigrant students did not speak Basque.

Udabia provided its students with four years of 1st to 4th Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE, corresponding to Year 7 to Year 10 in Australia). I chose to focus on two different kinds of participants: the studentship of the 2nd CSE (corresponding to Year 8 in Australia) (N=53) and their teachers (N=13). I will treat both of these participants separately, as their characteristics are different in terms of their role at school.

The 2nd CSE groups were chosen because they had the highest immigrant studentship attendance in Udabia. The 2nd CSE level was divided into three groups: 2X, 2Y and 2Z. Table 1 shows the composition and main characteristics of each group. This data was obtained previous to the participant observation and interviews, via the school database with the principal's permission.

Table 1: Composition and main characteristics of groups 2X, 2Y, and 2Z (N=53)

Group	Linguistic model	Academic performance	Ethnic composition
2X	Model B officially, model A in practice	In general, the group showed low academic performance. They advanced slowly in relation to the syllabus.	One autochthonous, two local Roma, one Spanish, and 15 immigrant students (Ecuadorian, Bolivian, Colombian, Peruvian, Nicaraguan, Bulgarian, and Portuguese students) (n=19; 35.8%).
2Y	Model B officially and in practice	In general, they showed a medium academic performance.	13 autochthonous, two local Roma, and two immigrant students (Ukrainian and Ecuadorean) (n=17; 32.1%).
2Z	Model D officially and in practice.	In general, they showed a satisfactory academic performance.	17 autochthonous students (n=17; 32.1%).

As represented in Table 1, 2X officially studied in a model B although in practice classes were conducted as though in a model A. This class had a very high proportion of immigrant students in attendance, as 15 (78.9%) of the 19 students were immigrants. 2Y studied in a model B and had low immigrant attendance, as only two of the 17 (11.8%) were immigrants. Finally, 2Z (n=17) was enrolled in model D and had only

autochthonous students in attendance. According to school performance, 2Z had the highest achievement, 2Y had a medium performance, and 2X had poor academic results.

Finally, 13 of the 15 2nd CSE teachers at Udabia were observed. The two teachers who were not observed did not grant their permission for data collection. All teachers were Basque-born and spoke Basque and Spanish fluently, and all taught both in Basque and Spanish in different linguistic models.

The process in the field

The process of choosing Udabia secondary education centre for this research was complicated by the fact that the education administration in the BAC does not make public the data of schools with a high immigrant studentship. According to informal conversations I had with Basque-based secondary teachers, this is due to the belief that if schools were public about the number of immigrant students they educate, centres with a highly diversified immigrant studentship would be stigmatised as centres of immigrants, where autochthonous students would not enrol. Following the guidance of these teachers, I chose Udabia, as it was known among teachers for its high immigrant studentship. In spring 2015, the first contact with Udabia was made and the school agreed to my data collection with group 2X, as this classroom was the most diverse in terms of academic performance and ethnicity.

Following Dewalt and his colleagues (2011), participant observation in group 2X started in late-September 2015 and aimed to understand the learning process of such an ethnically diverse studentship and the reasons for their low academic performance. Participant observation enabled me to systematically collect information about the interactions between students and teachers, the authority style used by teachers, and the level of autonomy it elicited in students. Participant observation occurred over two days per week and was completed with informal conversations I had with members of group 2X and their teachers. These conversations revealed explanations for behavioural elements that had been observed. By April 2016, I had collected a large amount of data regarding interactions in 2X, so I negotiated with the principal the possibility of observing groups 2Y and 2Z. These observations were conducted during April and June 2016 and the different results were compared. However, it is important to mention that I only obtained permission to observe the classes conducted by teachers who also taught group 2X.

In February 2016, I also started to conduct interviews with students and teachers in 2X. In all, 36 interviews were conducted, of which 11 were with teachers of 2nd CSE groups. These were guided by elements that had already been observed and informally asked about, and enabled a deeper exploration of each individual's discourse and point of view on teacher-student relationships (Marvasti, 2010; Woods & Hammersley, 2017).

Analysis

Analysis was conducted using *ATLAS.ti* (ATLAS.ti, 2019) software. Transcriptions of the interviews and field diary were saved in an RTF document, codified and *ATLAS.ti*

software was used to generate families of codes, including intertwined categories that described interactions in group 2X, 2Y and 2Z. I created different categories based on the classification of teacher authority models by Levin and Nolan (2014), but these were modified to fully address the data collected during fieldwork. These categories were: (1) authoritative, (2) affectionate, (3) double-criterion styles. In general terms, authoritative teachers relied on their power as teachers to conduct lessons, matching the general characteristics of legitimate authority; affectionate teachers transmitted trust to their students, correlating to the features of referent authority; and double-criterion teachers used resources from both authoritative and affectionate teachers. The latter did not correspond to any of Levin and Nolan's (2014) authority models. In line with these authority models, the level of student autonomy varied.

Findings

In this section I will present the results of the fieldwork in relation to the authority style teachers showed and the level of autonomous response it elicited from students. The data correspond to observation registered in field notes (FN), and interviews with teachers. I will present data corresponding to interactions in groups 2X, 2Y and 2Z. Although each teacher approached students differently, common characteristics were present in each of the styles. Important elements that influenced interactions were the nature of the subject and the level of disruption caused by students in that class.

For instance, in lessons involving the learning of Basque, immigrant students in 2X behaved disruptively because they said that 'Basque was too hard' and 'it was not worth learning it' (FN). This negative view towards Basque affected the Basque language teachers and other teachers who tried to teach them some words in Basque. By contrast, teachers who used only Spanish to conduct the lesson did not face such resistance. For instance, the Social Science class was conducted in Spanish and immigrant students in 2X behaved less disruptively than during Basque lessons. Hence, the Social Science teacher did not have to invest so much energy in conducting the class as the Basque teacher did, which influenced the style of authority used. This was not an issue in groups 2Y and 2Z.

The kinds of teacher authority used by the 13 teachers I observed during the fieldwork in groups 2X, 2Y and 2Z are represented in Table 2.

Table 2: Teacher authority models

Teacher authority style	Teachers (N=13)
Authoritative	n=4 (30.8%)
Affectionate	n=5 (38.4%)
Double-criterion	n=4 (30.8%)

The data I will present in the following subsections corresponds to four teachers using one of the three authority models. Most observation took place in group 2X (September 2015-April 2016), whereas observations in groups 2Y and 2Z were conducted at the end of the course for comparative purposes (April-June 2016).

Authoritative teachers

When teachers showed an authoritative style they gave simple orders to students and organised lessons in a very clear way. Relationships were built between students and teachers traditionally, in the sense that educators reinforced their role as a leader at the top of the power-relations pyramid. They also organised activities or posed questions to students to test theories they had explained.

The response obtained from students was compliant in most cases. Although sometimes students resisted doing their assigned work, complaining that it was 'too difficult', these teachers dismissed protests and students usually completed their assignments. I will present two examples from 2X, one from 2Y, and another from 2Z.

Example 1

The following interaction happened in group 2X, in the Mathematics session, which was conducted entirely in Spanish by Iker. For more than the half of the session, Iker had been explaining how to solve fractions. For students to put their knowledge into practice, Iker decided to distribute exams students had taken the previous week and asked students to show him how their mark was calculated.

- Iker: How do you calculate the mark I wrote on your exams? (In a low, steady and strong tone)
(His question implies that students have to use fractions explained some minutes previous to the exam distribution).
- Juan: Dude, stop hassling me, will you? That was a joke...!
(Iker listens to the comment, looks intently at Juan and Juan looks down.)
- Iker: How do you calculate the mark?
(Students look at their exams in silence)
[...]
- Iker: What we have done on the blackboard (fractions), (you have to write it) near the mark (in the exam). Do it! Do it!
- Several students: I don't understand!
(Iker ignores students' questions)
- Iker: I said do it!
(Students remain quiet and Iker leaves some minutes for them to do the exercise on their own. Students use that time to try to resolve the exercise. Then, he resolves the problem for everyone on the blackboard).

As *Example 1* shows, Iker expected students to put their mathematics knowledge into practice. To that aim, he asked students questions in a strong tone that transmitted clarity and authority. In response to Juan's defiance Iker looked intently at him, causing him to look down, probably embarrassed. When students' complained about the exercise Iker

repeated his instructions and students worked in silence. By making conscious use of silence, looks, voice tone, and orders, Iker achieved his aim of compelling students' attempts to calculate their mark in silence. In an interview I conducted with Iker, he described his approach to students in 2X:

Iker: Teachers have to treat students in 2X one by one. And a teacher's attitude toward each student has to be very different. In terms of the academic level of each student and the kind of exercise proposed, it has to be different [...], it all has to be adapted. Not only the material, but also the tone, how to speak to each one has to be different. And what attitude, what punishment, or what decision to make for each one has to be different.

According to Iker, each interaction with students in 2X had to be well-planned. In an informal conversation, he compared these students to other groups and stated that they had very low academic achievement. He also claimed that he could not follow the syllabus corresponding to a 2nd CSE level with students in 2X, despite trying (FN).

Example 2

Manolo taught 2X Social Science and, similarly to Iker's method, he tried to give clear orders and propose dynamic activities. He also conducted the lesson entirely in Spanish. This is an example of an interaction at the beginning of a session he taught. Students were speaking, playing and shouting as Manolo began the lesson:

(All students are loudly interacting among themselves at the beginning of the lesson.)
 Manolo: All of you have a right to receive an education and I have a right to work!
 (In a strong, loud voice)
 (After that message, all students quietened and the class started. Using an interactive methodology based on the reading of newspaper headlines about sexual abuse and wars, Manolo interacted again with students)
 Manolo: What do all these headlines have in common? We studied them during the last lesson.
 Juan: Violence.
 Manolo: What kinds of violence?
 (Students remain silent)
 Manolo: I said: what kinds of violence?
 Juan: Violence against women?
 Manolo: Do you mean gender violence?
 Juan: Yes.
 Agustín: Structural violence.
 Myriam: Physical violence.
 Manolo: Don't forget psychological violence.

Manolo started the session using a loud tone and straightforward message to interrupt classroom disruption and gain the students' attention. Several students interacted with Manolo's opening questions, which indicated compliant behaviour, partly guided by the teacher's power and authority. The level of complexity in this session was low, as Manolo

opted to work on the concept of violence orally, not in writing. However, he maintained students' attention using a loud tone, clear and direct questions and pressuring them for answers. In an informal conversation later that day, Manolo acknowledged the difficulty of following the syllabus and maintaining a silent working environment in 2X, but he also mentioned that these students participated as actively as students in other 2nd CSE groups (FN).

Example 3

This example took place in group 2Y in the Social Science class with Manolo, as he was also a teacher for this group. He used the same authoritative model with students in 2Y, but conducted the lesson both in Spanish and Basque. Students in 2Y were not as disruptive as in 2X, so his voice tone and messages were milder. He also conducted a lesson about kinds of violence with students in 2Y. The interaction happened as follows:

- Manolo: We learnt that there are four kinds of violence: gender, structural, physical and psychological violence. Now you have to do a group project, each group has to think of an example of the kind of violence I will assign you. [Basque]
(Each group of students was assigned a kind of violence).
- Julen: Manolo, I don't want to work on the kind of violence you assigned us. I don't understand structural violence. [Basque and Spanish]
- Manolo: You have to work as if you had to earn your salary, so if you don't find out what structural violence is, you won't be paid. It's up to you! [Basque and Spanish]
- Julen: Okay. [Basque]
(All groups worked on their assigned projects in a low voice.)

The topic of the session was the same as that in *Example 2*; however, in this case, the authoritative model employed by Manolo did not only serve to gain the attention of students in 2Y, but also to motivate them to complete a written assignment. Motivation was promoted via a symbolic incentive: in response to Julen's complaint, Manolo placed his students in the position of employees, earning wages in an imaginary job. As Manolo was aware that students in 2Y had medium academic achievement, he probably planned to push them towards self-reflection using the group assignment. Later, Manolo told me in an informal conversation that he was happy with this group of students because they were usually engaged in classroom activities and knew how to work cooperatively (FN).

Example 4

In this example Manolo conducts the same lesson with group 2Z. This lesson was instructed entirely in Basque; the classroom assignment was the same as for 2Y. The interaction happened as follows:

- Manolo: We worked on different types of violence last week. Today I will assign one kind of violence to each group and you will have to give examples of each kind: structural, physical, psychological, and gender violence.
- Lucas: What? [In a rude tone]
(Manolo looked intently at Lucas)
- Lucas: Alright.
- Manolo: You will have to work in groups.
(Students worked in each group on the project they had been assigned)

This interaction started in the same way as in 2Y, both in relation to the approach by the teacher and a student response; in this case, it was Lucas who interacted disruptively, rudely asking ‘what?’, as if he had not heard Manolo’s instructions. Manolo’s response, however, is different to that he gave in 2X, as he chose to look intently at Lucas. Lucas admitted he knew what he should do and Manolo instructed all students in 2Z to work in groups. As we can see, Manolo did not use the symbolic game of the salary to motivate students, as these worked effectively and applied themselves to their activity without incentives. However, in line with Iker, the Mathematics teacher, Manolo made a conscious use of silence to decrease disruption and encourage student engagement. Generally, authoritative teachers obtained high performance, but they rarely motivated autonomous learning. Students showed compliance and worked on their assignments, probably out of excessive respect.

Affectionate teachers

In contrast to authoritative teachers, affectionate teachers tried to gain students’ trust by showing an attentive attitude toward them. They also gave orders to students, but used a soft tone of voice and respected students’ working rhythm. To some extent, they negotiated assignments and due dates with students, and in that sense, they were more flexible than authoritative teachers. In Udabia, these teachers worked on increasing student autonomy but did not pressure them as much as authoritative teachers did. They also tried to build a connection with students and get feedback on their activities. They proposed structured classroom activities, but conformed to lower student performance. The aim in their classes was not to advance quickly according to the syllabus, but build close and trusting relationships with students. I will use two examples of interactions in group 2X and 2Y.

Example 5

This interaction took place in the History session with group 2X and happened entirely in Spanish. Miren, the History teacher, aimed to review the lesson they had studied the previous day. To reach her objective, she started the class with a question:

- Miren: What did we study in our previous lesson?
 Ángela: Basque nobility.
 Miren: Exactly. When was society ruled by nobility?

- Agustín: In the Middle...
- Miren: Yes, in the Middle Age. What was Basque nobility like at that time?
- Agustín: They had all the power.
- Miren: Agustín, let's say that you are a nobleman in the Middle Age, and that you have a domain that you rent to María. What would you do?
- Agustín: She would have to pay rent to me.

In this example Miren tried to connect with students and engage them in the classroom dynamic, by involving them in the lesson's objective. In this interaction, she reviewed previous day's lesson and motivated students by asking them questions. Agustín engaged with Miren's questions and she encouraged him to use his empathy and imagination. Students felt at ease in her class, because they learnt based on their own experience and creativity. Miren showed empathic behaviour with students in 2X and it served to encourage classroom participation, which implied autonomous behaviour based on their teachers' guidance. During informal conversations, Miren told me that she needed to adapt to a slow working rhythm with 2X, and could barely follow the syllabus. However, she believed that she had created an adequate classroom environment for learning (FN).

Example 6

This interaction took place in the History session in group 2Y, which Miren also taught. Miren used both Spanish and Basque to conduct the lesson and created a trusting environment for students; the classroom dynamic was similar to that in group 2X's lessons.

- Miren: What's the 'revolution of prices'?
- Mario: Does it mean that prices increase?
- Miren: Yes. Imagine you are in the 18th century, you have a workshop and manufacture swords. How do you think you would work?
- Ana: Long hours.
- Miren: Yes, Ana, long hours. And now imagine that suddenly prices increase. Does anyone know what such a phenomenon is called?
- Mario: Inflation?
- Miren: Great, Mario, inflation.

This example shows a similar situation to that in group 2X. Miren encouraged student participation by introducing them to an aspect of history that corresponded to the time-period they were studying. Miren's attitude motivated students and elicited autonomous behaviour as they answered the questions she proposed. The level of autonomy shown by students in 2Y was similar to that in 2X. In another informal conversation, Miren indicated that she was happy with the classroom dynamic in 2Y and could advance according to the syllabus (FN).

Double-criterion teachers

The double-criterion style could be described as a mix of the authoritative and affectionate styles. In these cases, teachers tried to create affectionate bonds with students but were also authoritative in some situations. Teachers tended to be authoritative when

students were disruptive, as a reaction to these provocations. In contrast to authoritative and affectionate strategies, double-criterion styles did not use an effective method to manage student disruptions. This kind of teacher authority was only observed in interactions with group 2X and was only related to their Basque learning. I will introduce two examples corresponding to such situations.

Example 7

This interaction happened during a Basque lesson with 2X, conducted by Andrés, the Basque teacher. Although most of the session was supposed to be conducted in Basque, the opposite happened: most of the class was conducted in Spanish and Basque was only mentioned in some explanations. At the beginning of the session, Andrés explained some vocabulary and unsuccessfully tried to gain students' attention. Once he finished the explanation, he asked Marta, an immigrant student, to translate phrases from Basque to Spanish.

- Andrés: Marta, would you like to translate the following phrase from Basque to Spanish? 'Zubi hori Bilbon dago (that bridge is in Bilbao)' [Basque].
 Marta: No! I don't want to translate it! I don't know how to! [Spanish].
 Andrés: Come on! Do it, let's work together [Spanish].
 (Marta sighed and did not follow Andrés' order)
 Andrés: Note in your work the following: 'Zubi hori Bilbon dago (that bridge is in Bilbao)' [Basque].
 Marta: I said no! Basque is shitty! [Spanish].
 (After this interaction took place, some students laughed at Marta's claim, the classroom dynamic became tense, and Andrés struggled to take control.)

As this interaction shows, first Andrés tried to control the classroom dynamic authoritatively and gave Marta an instruction. Marta refused and Andrés switched to an empathic approach, trying to encourage her. Marta did not verbally refuse, but sighed, implying she would not start the work. In response, Andrés gave a short and straightforward order, to which Marta answered even more directly, refusing and devaluing Basque. After this interaction, the classroom environment became tense and Andrés struggled to continue the lesson. Later, during an informal conversation, Andrés admitted the difficulty of conducting a Basque lesson with group 2X (FN).

Example 8

This interaction happened in group 2X conducted by Tomás explaining the history of a Basque song in Basque and Spanish. Tomás always tried to teach them some Basque, in spite of their complaints:

- Tomás: Write a summary (of the lesson) in your notebook. I will collect all of them at the end of the class [Basque and Spanish].
 Nora: Why do we have to do this? I'm not interested in Basque or Basque songs [Spanish].
 Tomás: Why not? Basque culture is very interesting [Spanish].
 Nora: I like the modern Latino music. Plus, why do we have to learn Basque?

- [Spanish].
 Tomás: Just do what I said [Spanish].
 Nora: What for? I don't want to! [Spanish].
 (Some students joined in Nora's complaint and tried to avoid doing the exercise).

Tomás started the interaction by ordering the class to do an exercise; in that sense, he showed authoritative behaviour. However, Nora questioned the exercise as she was not interested in Basque songs. Tomás responded with an empathetic question but Nora's answer questioned Tomás' exercise again. Tomás then reverted to the authoritative style, instructing Nora to start the exercise; her refusal showed a lack of compliance. After this exchange some students united behind Nora's complaint and the classroom dynamic became tense.

According to the observations in examples 7 and 8, the double-criterion style brought about more disruption, probably because students did not perceive consistency in those teachers' messages. It showed an inconsistency in practice, unconsciously triggered by frustration due to a non-receptive public. When disruption happened continuously, students did not show any compliance and did not complete their exercises. Although one could argue that student responses showed self-determination, this was not directed towards their learning process, hence, it did not elicit autonomous learning.

Discussion

According to the results obtained, when teachers interacted with students, they showed one of the following authority styles: authoritative, affectionate, or double-criterion. These were created in light of the data, based upon the classification by Levin and Nolan (2014). The authoritative style is a form of the 'legitimate authority' as fundamentally, authoritative teachers created relationships with students based on the fact that they were legitimised to influence students at school. In this study, authoritative teachers also showed some characteristics of the 'expert authority' model, as students valued them for their wisdom, meaning students listened and worked on their assignments. These teachers occasionally used symbolic incentives to motivate students to work; hence, authoritative teachers sometimes used reward/ coercive authority too. All in all, authoritative teachers used particular modes of behaviour to dissuade disruption and obtained student compliance and performance. However, students usually showed low levels of autonomy towards learning.

The affectionate style proposed in this paper corresponds to Levin and Nolan's (2014) classification of 'referent authority' as the relationship between students and teachers was based on trust. Students viewed teachers as adults they could trust in an academic environment, and felt empowered to work autonomously, guided by teachers. Finally, the double-criterion category proposed in this work is a mix of the authoritative and affectionate styles and does not correspond to any of the models of authority described by Levin and Nolan (2014). This lack of consistency by teachers who used a double-criterion varied depending on the response they obtained from students. Students showed a lack of

compliance in response to these teachers, as they claimed they could not do the exercise or refused to complete it on their own. Hence, autonomy, as referred to self-determination and motivation to learn, was not encouraged by this teaching style. Although it could be said that student rebellion reflected self-determination, this worked in detriment to their learning process and does not fall under the scope of autonomous learning as defined in this work.

In line with the observations, authoritative and affectionate styles were present in all of the 2nd CSE groups: 2X, 2Y, and 2Z. The former elicited student compliance and high performance, as teachers tended to pressure students, but hardly ever motivated them to learn, which elicited low levels of autonomy. The latter brought about a higher level of student autonomy, understood as the capacity to act in a self-determined way, which implies a self-motivation to learn. However, double-criterion teachers were only observed with immigrant students in 2X and were related to the learning of Basque. Following Woods and Hammersley (2017), the learning process – of Basque in this case – had direct implications for the classroom environment and influenced the interaction between immigrant students and their teachers in 2X. Indeed, when learning Basque was involved in group 2X, immigrant students complained and sometimes devalued the importance of its study. Based on the idea that teacher authority and classroom management influence student autonomy (Griffin 2016), I argue that student autonomy and performance varied depending on the authority model used by teachers and drastically decreased when immigrant students had to learn Basque.

Indeed, an implicit observation that has direct implications for the results of this study is the relationship between Basque and general academic performance in correspondence to teacher authority and student autonomy. Students were distributed in terms of Basque learning, which was ethnically marked, i.e. a majority of immigrant students were instructed in Spanish whereas a majority of autochthonous students studied in Basque. In addition, academic performance was related to Basque learning, as the higher the instruction of Basque, the higher the general academic achievement. Hence, the distribution of students in terms of the learning of Basque, which was ethnically marked, also indicated a distribution of academic performance that, this paper argues, was related to the authority style shown by teachers. This distribution of students in terms of Basque learning, ethnicity, and academic performance, which reflected and influenced their teachers' authority styles, brought about inequalities, as has been found in other European settings (Cummins, 2015; Martín Rojo, 2011; Weber, 2009).

Conclusion and educational implications

This paper has explored why, in Basque education centres attended by a high proportion of immigrant students, ethnic performance disparities occur in relation to teacher authority and student autonomy. The results indicate that Basque language is an element influencing the ethnic distribution of students, the authority model used by teachers, students' autonomy and their academic performance.

This study contributes to the theory surrounding the role of teacher authority in student achievement and proposes new classifications: authoritative, affectionate, and double-criterion. The latter's inconsistencies were provoked by the situation of having to teach a non-receptive and disruptive group of students. These results contrast with other cases in the US where immigrant students show high academic attainment, and the achievement gap between locals and immigrants has been significantly reduced (Feliciano & Lanuza, 2016; Kao & Thompson, 2003), although these studies do not indicate that language learning causes conflict between students and teachers.

A limitation of this study is that observation of autochthonous students in other 2nd CSE groups was restricted. Hence, more observation in other classrooms and centres would help determine whether the double-criterion style is only used while learning Basque in classes composed of immigrant students, or if teachers in different circumstances use this authority style. It also opens new avenues for research, as future investigation could focus on the social and political contexts related to immigration, to compare these results in similar settings; and could also clarify whether there is a gender bias to the authority styles performed by teachers.

This study provides education practitioners with evidence to support the consistent use of an authority style, that is, either authoritative or affectionate, to improve classroom interaction and reduce academic performance disparities between immigrant and autochthonous students. Finally, the results of this research could be used in similar multi-ethnic educational environments, as related to the use of authority in second and third language teaching to immigrant students.

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Endnotes

1. Autochthonous means a local who understands their belonging to the land they inhabit. They are distinct from indigenous people as they are usually the dominant groups in their countries.
2. Some of these studies supersede Ogbu's (1978; Ogbu & Simons, 1998) theory that in the US minorities should be considered as voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary minorities immigrate and usually have positive expectations of the opportunities they will encounter, while involuntary minorities are born in a society and suffer from ethnic disadvantages. According to Ogbu (1978), the educational success of the latter is lower than the former due to the more oppressive circumstances they experience.
3. Autonomy in this work refers to the self-determined motivation to learn (Griffin, 2016; Hall and Webb, 2014). Consequently, this paper will not consider any show of

self-determination that is detrimental to the learning process as autonomous behaviour.

4. According to the definition provided, this paper does not consider resistance to learning as student autonomy.
5. The Basque language is an identity marker for a large part of the Basque population (Echeverria, 2003; Martínez, 2014). In compulsory educational environments Basque marks academic community belonging and teachers use Basque in their academic interactions. Hence, not learning or speaking Basque indicates a lower cultural capital (Pérez-Izaguirre, 2018).

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