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TITLE:
Ethnicity and student identity in schools. An analysis of official and unofficial talk in multi-ethnic classrooms

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ABSTRACT

The present study shows that power relations in classrooms between Dutch and immigrant students radically shift when students move from academic talk to more open, free talk. Whereas in their interactions with immigrant students, Dutch students are able to represent the more powerful role in the official, academic discourse, they lose this position in the unofficial, non-academic discourse. These shifts show that ethnic relationships are played out differently in different discursive domains. They also show that academic identities do not exist as such but are specific to certain minority-majority relationships. This study builds upon a tradition of studies that have argued that ethnic minorities construct academic identities depending on the social setting. However, this study shows the instability of these constructions while demonstrating their dependency on specific ethnic interactions and discursive modes. The study is based on the analysis of interaction patterns in multi-ethnic classrooms in the Netherlands focussing on (a)symmetries in knowledge sharing. An ethnographic approach is combined with quantitative analyses to test group differences. The results are interpreted and discussed in the light of a post-structuralist view on how ethnic minority groups construct academic identities and how these are related to minority-majority relationships.

RESUMÉ

La présente étude fait apparaître qu'en salle de classe, les relations de pouvoir entre les élèves hollandais et immigrés changent radicalement lorsque les élèves sortent du discours scolaire pour passer à un discours plus ouvert et plus libre. Alors que dans leurs interactions avec les élèves immigrés, les élèves hollandais sont en mesure d'adopter le rôle dominant dans le discours officiel et scolaire, ils perdent cette position dans le discours non officiel et non scolaire. Ces changements témoignent du fait que les relations ethniques évoluent différemment dans des domaines discursifs distincts, et indiquent également que les identités scolaires n'existent pas en tant que telles, mais qu'elles sont spécifiques à certains rapports entre groupes minoritaires et majoritaires. Même si elle s'inscrit dans la lignée de nombreuses études qui avancent que les minorités ethniques élaborent des identités scolaires en fonction du cadre social, la présente étude montre que ces constructions sont instables, et qu'elles dépendent d'interactions ethniques et de modes discursifs spécifiques. L'étude se fonde sur l'analyse des modèles d'interaction dans des classes multiethniques aux Pays-Bas et porte plus particulièrement sur les (a)symétries dans le partage des connaissances. L'approche ethnographique s'accompagne d'analyses quantitatives afin d'évaluer les différences entre les groupes. Les résultats sont interprétés et étudiés à la lumière d'un point de vue post-structuraliste sur la manière dont les groupes ethniques minoritaires construisent des identités scolaires, et sur ce qui lie ces dernières aux rapports entre groupes minoritaires et majoritaires.

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Ethnicity and student identity in schools

(for Assistant Editor only)Received: Revision received:

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Current themes of research

Cultural diversity in learning and socialization, multi-ethnic classrooms, informal learning of immigrant parents and families, online learning.

Most relevant publications in the field of Psychology of Education (max: 5)

Paradise, R., & Haan, de M. (2009). Responsibility and reciprocity: Social organization of mazahua learning practices. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 4 (2).

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Current themes of research

Childlessness, life course transitions, fertility behavior, fatherhood

Most relevant publications in the field of Psychology of Education (max: 5)
- Keizer, R., P.A. Dykstra & A.-R. Poortman (2009),
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Current themes of research

Social interaction in learning and instruction; Learning and teaching in culturally diverse classrooms

Most relevant publications in the field of Psychology of Education (max: 5)

Elbers, E. (2010). Learning and teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. In K.S. Littleton, C. Wood & J. Kleine Staarman (Eds.), *The Handbook of Education. The Psychology of Learning and Teaching.* Bingley, UK, Emerald Publishers.

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Academic engagement and ethnicity

Academic engagement and ethnic group membership

Understanding and explaining diversity in school settings has been on the agenda of educational researchers for decades. One of the core issues when explaining diversity in schools has been how this diversity can be translated to the diversity that exists elsewhere in society, such as differences in power positions in out-of-school settings, or in the differences in out-of-school cultural practices that are considered to foster school results. These debates generally discuss the role school plays in either reproducing or levelling out the differences that are considered to lead to an unjust allocation of opportunities in life after school. There are basically two positions in this debate: one that translates these differences in cultural terms (for a description of this view, see Eisenhart, (2002) see for examples Heath (1983), Yamachi & Tharp (1995), and the other position that translates them into differences in structural power positions between groups in the society at large (for classic accounts of this view, see Bourdieu & Passeron (1977); Giroux (1983) and for a more recent example see Herve & McDermott (1998).

John Ogbu's (1991) work combines these perspectives in an interesting way when explaining diversity in school success across ethnic groups focusing on the concept of academic engagement. He sees academic identities as cultural responses to group histories of confrontation between majorities and minorities. What matters is not cultural distance per see, but how ethnic groups perceive their status in society vis-à-vis the

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majority, and their chances of bridging cultural differences that are strategically relevant, such as those associated with schooling. However, a critique of this approach has been that the cultural dispositions of whole groups are coupled with particular academic identities which creates a relatively fixed relation between academic identity and particular ethnic groups. This point has been addressed in mostly ethnographic work where it has been argued that identities are more fluid and shaped differently in different social contexts. For instance, Lock Davidson (1996) shows how meanings and perceptions of school are not necessarily associated with specific ethnic backgrounds, but can be shaped by particular school environments and can constantly reemerge in new forms. Similarly, Gorgorió & Prat (2009) show how unequal power positions have an impact on how academic identities are constructed in classrooms for immigrant students. Despite what these ethnographic studies have argued, in most work on academic engagement of minority students, race and ethnicity are still conceived as relatively fixed and seen as a variable that explains academic achievement without paying attention to the situational and constructive nature of both ethnic positioning and academic engagement, (see O'Connor (2007) as well as Hemmings (2006) who have reviewed this work).

This study builds upon the work that argues for the situated nature of academic as well as ethnic identities but extends it showing how ethnic positioning and knowledge sharing change when students move across contexts, in particular when they move from formal academic discourse to informal non-academic discourse. By systematically evaluating knowledge sharing practices in interethnic encounters in both these discursive contexts in the same classroom, the dynamic and situational nature of ethnic and academic identities

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is foregrounded from a different perspective. With respect to its relevance for learning in multi-ethnic settings, this study shows how status differences between ethic groups come into play in particular academic discursive formats as opposed to other, non-academic discursive formats.

The discursive construction of 'school' and how students escape from 'school' discursively

We are interested in the particular academic identities students create when they share knowledge in group work in school. At the same time, we are also interested in how these identities and relationships change when students discursively escape from school. Even if students are *in* school they do not necessarily perform according to the discursive rules that make school a particular institutional social and linguistic practice. We consider 'school' as a specific discursive practice as defined by Fairclough (1992), dominated by culturally-defined 'speech rules' and behavioural norms. These rules and norms are not arbitrary, but based on cultural assumptions about what learning is (de Haan, 1999) and on historically formed and complex language registers that reflect, for instance, authority relationships between students and teachers (Mehan (1998); Schleppegrell (2004). The well known IRE pattern (*Teacher Initiation, Student Response, Teacher Evaluation*) is an example of such a rule which reflects the teachers' authority to initiate turns, elicit responses and to define which answer is correct according to a particular discursive frame. To capture the student's school discourse, or the official register, is operationalized here as the talk that represents the school norms on what it means to be a

good student when interacting and collaborating with other students. The student discourse that deviates from what is seen as legitimate or represents behaving as a good student within the particular local interpretation of schooling, is seen as unofficial talk. While Maybin (2007) has recently argued for the intertwining of both, here we see these discourses as breaking away from the official school discourse in line with studies conducted by Giroux (1983) and by Gutiérrez *et al.*, (1995) who view the unofficial domain as a place where students can develop alternative identities and forms of talk that resist or reshape dominant ideologies and dominant forms of knowledge, inspired by the idea of Goffman's *underlife*.

Status differences between ethnic groups and knowledge sharing

Our interest here is in how ethnically informed status differences come into play both in spaces that are more official as well as in those labeled unofficial in the sense just described. The relevance of ethnically informed status differences for learning in multi-ethnic classrooms has been demonstrated in earlier work. Cohen (see for instance, Cohen and Lotan, 2004) has shown how collaboration in heterogeneous classrooms is influenced by status differences that come into play based on how children value each other in terms of school achievement, ethnicity, gender or popularity. These status differences often result in asymmetries in participation in classrooms. As minority children often are perceived as having a lower status by their peers, they also have to deal with these asymmetries in participation formats in group work. Linell & Luckman (1991) have argued that there is not a necessary relationship between asymmetries in knowledge and actual participation practices. Asymmetries in knowledge might lead to different

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entitlements to develop topics and exploit knowledge or varying access to particular perspectives on topics such as in expert-novice relationships. Asymmetries in participant status are differences in participation rights as well as actual patterns of participation. Asymmetries in knowledge may generate differences in participant status, but there is not a one-to-one relationship between the two. For our study, this is a relevant distinction as our goal is to study how these status differences remain intact or fall apart when students cross the border from the official talk to the unofficial talk but still are involved in some form of knowledge sharing. The research questions that guide our study are therefore: Are there differences in participation rights in knowledge sharing practices in classrooms between minority and non-minority students? How are possible status differences between ethnic groups, as expressed in participation patterns in knowledge sharing in classrooms, related to the shift between the academic, official discourse and the non-academic, unofficial discourse? We believe this issue informs the discussion on academic engagement for minority students as it will tell us how the academic space works out differently for the development of status differences between minority and mainstream groups compared to other spaces.

The study: methodological issues

The data set consists of video and audio samples of classroom interactions in a multi-ethnic school in the Netherlands, which are part of an ethnographic study. In this study our main goal is to understand the role diversity plays in collaboration patterns and knowledge construction in multiethnic classrooms. We participated and observed in classrooms of the two highest grades of a primary school for longer periods of time (between 1999 and 2004) while collecting a diversity of data sets including field notes, interviews, video and audio recordings. For this paper we

present observations from math lessons in the seventh and eight grades, i.e. children between ten and thirteen years old. We choose math lessons as a sample of problem solving activities where we expected knowledge sharing to happen. 22 students participated in both grades. In Table 1and 2 the composition of the groups in both grades are given in terms of ethnicity and gender using pseudonyms. In Grade 7, there are two groups in which Dutch students are mixed with minority students. In Grade 8 the Dutch students are more divided over the groups such that there was maximally one Dutch student in a group. We are using the term minority here to refer to students with a migration background, even if they are a majority in the classrooms studied.

(insert table 1 here)

(insert table 2 here)

The school from which the data sets were collected is referred to in the Netherlands as a 'black' school, since the parents of 80 percent of the students were not born in the Netherlands, and therefore these students are referred to as second-generation migrants. The teaching staff is native Dutch. We use the term Dutch-Moroccan, Dutch-Ghanaian etc. for the students with an immigrant background, referring both to their background and to their socialization in Dutch society, irrespective of nationality. The study presented here builds on earlier work in which we found that ethnic groups use different repertoires or modes of collaboration to share knowledge in a multi-ethnic classroom in the Netherlands. We found, in particular, that Dutch students explained significantly more to other students compared with minority students, and that Dutch students, more frequently than their minority student counterparts, used an asymmetric tutor mode, in which a traditional teacher-student relationship was implied. The minority students preferred to

use a peer-based mode of collaboration (de Haan & Elbers, 2005). The tutor mode was used by Dutch students particularly in ethnically mixed groups, supposedly reflecting certain power relationships between the Dutch and the minority students in this class. In addition, the present study builds on an analysis of how students relate the official school discourse to the unofficial discourse, and how the unofficial discourse is functional in shaping alternative versions of 'school' (the official discourse) for minority students (see for earlier work on this de Haan, 2005; Keizer, 2005). The present study combines both analyses and is therefore able to answer the question how the academic discourse, as opposed to non-academic discourse, shapes the ethnic relationships and collaboration modes in the classroom.

Analysis

The analysis of our study is based on video and audio recordings of student conversations made during math lessons. Our analysis covers 40 hours of recordings (in grade seven, four lessons of five groups, and in grade eight, five lessons of four groups). A video camera was placed in one corner of the classroom to give an overview of what happened during the lessons. The children's conversations were audio-recorded with small tape recorders placed on one of the tables in each group. We transcribed the audio-recordings of these lessons and used these transcripts as the main source for our analyses. A combination of a qualitative and quantitative methodology was used. First, each lesson was described paying attention to the variation in knowledge sharing practices in the groups. Then, as we found two clearly distinguishable knowledge sharing patterns in these qualitative descriptions (see below for more details) we designed a micro-analytic

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scoring system in which the results could be quantified and statistically tested. In the analysis we first used interactions as a unit of analysis in order to identify phenomena at an interactional level (e.g. whether in a particular sequence a specific type of interaction between the students occurs) and to test how its occurrence differs per group (1) and then, in order to test the differences between groups based on individual identifications (e.g. whether minority students use a particular action more then non-minority students) we used the individual student as a unit of analysis (2).

Scoring per interaction (unit of analysis 1)

In order to qualify the students' collaboration patterns we first developed a measure that could provide us with a unit of analysis for the interactions between the students. We developed what we call a Collaborative Learning Episode (CLE) which was based on official student talk in which at least one of the students expressed difficulty with understanding or solving a problem and one or more students offered to help. Typically a CLE would start with one student saying "Did you already do problem number 5? How did you do that?" A similar unit of analysis was developed for the unofficial talk, called a Chat Episode (CE) involving at least two exchanges. A CE could start with for instance one student saying "Did you know Hassouni (an actrice) won a price?" and then another student would say 'Who is Hassouni"? In order to distinguish between official and unofficial talk, a set of rules was used that had been developed in the earlier study (de Haan, 2005) as also explained in section 2.1. Distinguishing between official and

unofficial talk was reliable with a Cohen's Kappa of .70. This part of the analysis was confined to the dataset taken from grade 8.

Modes of collaboration in the official discourse

After distinguishing the CLEs, the separate CLEs were then classified, based on the qualitative analysis in which we found that the students' interactions could be divided into two very different patterns, one that reflected a school-based, asymmetric tutor-tutee relationship, and another that reflected a peer-based symmetric relationship. A scoring instrument was developed also partly based on Foot et al. (1990) that enabled a distinction to be made between: (a) an asymmetric learning mode (ALE) and (b) a symmetric learning mode (SLE). See the results for a detailed presentation of these patterns.

Modes of collaboration in the unofficial discourse

In order to compare what is happening in the official and unofficial talk, similar collaboration modes were designed for the unofficial talk that focused on how students would exchange knowledge or opinions in the unofficial talk. We distinguished between:

a) an asymmetric chat mode (ACE) in which there was asymmetry between the students in knowledge or opinions and (b) a symmetric chat mode (SCE) in which students exchanged knowledge or opinions without one student controlling or dominating the group. See the results for a description. The scoring of the CLEs and CEs using these two categories was reliable. The interobserver reliability (Cohen's kappa) was 0.79.

In order to understand the interethnic relations in the groups, i.e. to be able to say who is addressed by whom, we divided every CLE and CE into four categories (see below). For these scores at the level of interactions, crosstabs were used to test if there were differences between

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the use of certain modes of knowledge sharing on the one hand and groups (ethnically mixed or not) or certain interactions in knowledge sharing (who explains to whom?).

Dutch student explains (to)/addresses minority student

Dutch student explains (to)/addresses Dutch student

Minority student explains (to)/addresses Dutch student

Minority student explains (to)/addresses minority student

Scoring per individual (unit of analysis 2)

As indicated, we also analyzed the transcripts at the level of individuals, and we calculated the ALE, SLE, ACE and SCE scores as well as a total score for each student. In this way we arrived at 5 scores per student, which were used to ascertain whether there were differences between Dutch and minority students (as opposed to differences based on interactions between students). For these scores at the level of individuals Mann Witney tests were used.

Results

In our presentation of the results, we use the excerpts to illustrate the different modes of interaction, thus, two different modes in each discourse type. The statistical analyses will show how these modes are characteristic for certain types of inter-ethnic collaborations.

The Dutch student as a tutor for minority students in the official discourse

As was mentioned before, in the on-task talk two very different discursive patterns were found. There was one that reflected a school-based, asymmetric tutor-tutee relationship and another that reflected a peer-based symmetric relationship. An example of the tutor-tutee relationship is given

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in Excerpt 1. The students were given the task to calculate how many smaller standard packets of sweets would fit into a family packet given a drawing of both the different sizes as well as the measure of the sides in centimeters. Typical for this tutor mode, one of the students, in this case Annelies, a Dutch girl, takes responsibility for the learning of the other students, here Maktoub, a Dutch-Morrocan boy and Goran, a Dutch-Yougoslavian boy, addressing them much like school teachers do. In Turn 1 Annelies sets the agenda by reading the assignment and assigning the responsibility for performing it to the two minority boys. When Maktoub comes up with an answer in Turn 3, Annelies evaluates his answer with a 'no' and encourages him to think better in Turn 5 : 'Think lo:::gically=..' in a typical teacher tone. When she is not satisfied with their attempts in Turn 6, 8 and 10, she finally decides to explain herself in Turn 11 and 13. She even checks their understanding in Turn 15, which is laughingly affirmed by Berend, a Dutch boy, most likely to take distance from this tutee position.

Excerpt 1: [i] Example of the asymmetric-tutor mode in the official discourse.

[Grade 7, Subgroup 3, 5-6-00]

1)Annelies:	>OK<, >problem 4<, how many times does a standard packet fit into the family pack? Well? Work it out.
2)Maktoub:	One, two, three?
3)Annelies:	What?
4) Maktoub:	Three times?
5)Annelies:	No: (..) Think lo:::gically=.
6)Goran:	((reads)) = How many times goes =
7)Annelies:	=Look.
8)Goran:	How many times
9)Annelies:	(..) >Yes<, (.) Look. Standard packet, three times like this (.)
10)Maktoub:	and three [times
11)Annelies:	[times like this. There you already have, just one packet you have already nine. And then you should take that three times because the three, that is there, is also here. =
12)Maktoub:	°Yes°.
13)Annelies:	and three goes three times nine, so you should take it three times. Three times nine is twenty-seven. (..)
14)Goran:	Twenty-seven times.=
15)Annelies:	=Do you understand?
16)Berend:	((laughs)) Yes.

In the other pattern of knowledge sharing, here called a symmetric learning mode (SLE), the exchange of knowledge takes place without one student taking responsibility for the other's learning. The children work together towards a joint solution or help each other to find the right solution. An example is given in Excerpt 2 where minority students work on the same task as in Excerpt 1. In Excerpt 2 Hassan, a Moroccan boy, is asked by Assad, also a Morrocan boy, to help him to do the assignment in Turn 2. Hassan is clearly acknowledged as 'the one who knows' and in Turn 6, 8 and 13 shows how the problem can be solved. However, Samira, a Moroccan girl is also accepted to contribute to this process in Turn 7 and 9. Even if Samira asks Hassan 'How do you do that?' in Turn 11, he does not explain in a teacherlike way, that is, not evaluating her or

encouraging her but rather shows her in Turn 13 the subsequent steps he took himself ('and then we look at the heights'). Although some students might be more knowledgeable than others, as in this case Hassan, they do not use this to behave in a teacher-like manner.

Excerpt 2: Example of the symmetric mode in the official discourse

[Grade 7, Subgroup 1, 5-6-00]

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1)Hassan:      One, two, three
2)Assad:       Three times three, is what?
3) Samira:                 I am here
4)Assad:                   One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.
                           (...)
5)Hassan:      ((counts up to twenty-seven))
6)Hassan:      For, here, is  (.) twelve centimeters, and
               here it fits three times, so three boxes fit here like this, and =

7)Samira:      =Three boxes fit like this=
8)Hassan:                  =And (.) going up three boxes also fit, isn't that right?=

9)Samira:                  =Yes, because three times three is [nine, four times three is
               twelve.
10)Hassan:                                              [Here three, here three, and
               here three, and here twenty-seven, twenty two, twenty-two boxes.

11)Samira:     How do you do that?
12)Hassan:     Just like that.
                           (...)
                           ((Hassan sits opposite Samira. He now walks to Samira's side of
               the table.))
13)Hassan:     Look here, twelve centimetres. (   ) Three times, so, three, (.) three boxes like
               this >and then we look at the height<. Here it also fits three times, so three boxes
               up, three boxes like this, and here also three times, so three boxes up, here three.
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In order to know if in the official discourse there were systematic differences in the use of these modes related to ethnicity we tested 1) if there were differences at the individual level between ethnic minority and Dutch students with respect to who explained more and what kind of mode they used (asymmetric or symmetric); and 2) if there were differences at the interaction level in

how the respective groups would address each other, i.e. in terms of the modes they used. Table 3 shows the difference between the ethnically mixed groups and the minority only groups in grade 7 (as there are only mixed groups in grade 8, the Dutch students being divided among the groups this analysis could not be done for grade 8). Interestingly, the modes are unevenly distributed over these groups in grade 7, the asymmetric mode being more frequently used in the ethnically mixed groups compared to the minority only groups (Chi2 = 42.7, p <.000) indicating that the tutor mode apparently comes typically into play in specific interethnic relationships. This finding is remarkable even given the fact that the symmetric mode is most used in all groups.

(insert table 3 here)

Table 4 gives a more detailed analysis of what is happening in these ethnically mixed groups. The results of the analysis show that the modes are unevenly distributed over the different categories of 'who explains to whom?' in the official discourse (for grade 7: Fisher's Exact Test p < .001; for grade 8: Chi2 = 23.7, p < .000). Both in grade 7 and in grade 8 the asymmetric mode is overrepresented when Dutch students explain to minority students. We also see that minority students never use this asymmetric mode when they are explaining to Dutch students. The asymmetric mode is more frequently used in grade 7 than in grade 8, which is probably due to the fact that the Dutch students are more spread out over the groups in grade 8, but when it is used, it is mostly the Dutch students who address minority students.

(insert table 4 here)

We used Mann-Whitney tests for the analyses at the level of individual students aggregating the scores at the level of interactions to the level of individuals as indicated earlier. We found that in grade 7 Dutch students explained significantly more often than their minority peers. This is true

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for the total number of explanations (all the CLEs U=10.0; p <.011, mean rank Dutch stu=18.00, mean rank min stu=9.59), the asymmetric mode (the ALEs U=7.0; p < .001, mean rank Dutch stu=18.60 mean rank min stu=9.41) and for the symmetric mode (the SLEs U=13.5; p < .023, mean rank Dutch stu=17.30 mean rank min stu=9.79). We found the same effects for the asymmetric mode in grade 8 (ALEs U=5.5; p < .006 mean rank Dutch stu=19.13 mean rank min stu=9.81). There were no significant differences in this grade between the Dutch and minority students for the total number of explanations and the symmetric mode. We also checked to ascertain whether it was not ethnicity but math performance that was responsible for the differences in the use of these collaboration modes, but no significant results were found.

Dutch students loosing their power positions in the unofficial discourse

As stated in the method section, we did a comparable analysis for the unofficial discourse which comprised 24.6 % of the total of all episodes against 75.4 % for the on-task talk. As in the official discourse, in the unofficial discourse knowledge was shared in different modes. There was an asymmetric chat mode (ACE) in which there was asymmetry between the students in knowledge or opinions. In these cases one of the students structured the discussion and, as in the asymmetric learning mode, took a dominant role vis-à-vis his or her fellow students not allowing them to share their knowledge on an equal basis. An example of the asymmetric chat mode is given in Excerpt 3. As Excerpt 3 shows, these asymmetric chats often had a conflictuous undertone. Here, Abel, a Dutch-Moroccan boy, is whispering 'Pa:mpaa;' in Turn 1. Françoise, a Dutch-Ghanese girl, is irritated by this as expressed in Turn 2 when she tells him to shut up. In Turn 4 she tells him she knows what Pampa means, and he obviously does not. Abdel first denies that he acknowledges her explanation in Turn 5. But then immediately

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does ask her to tell him again what Pampa means in Turn 7. She tells him once again in Turn 8 while at the same time she seems to look down on him because he doesn't know this yet. Like in this example, in the asymmetric chat modes, students would communicate what they knew in a top-down manner, stressing that they knew more than the other students.

Excerpt 3: Example of the asymmetric mode in the unofficial mode [Grade 8, subgroup 4, 12-10-00, A42]

1) Abdel:	°Pa:mpaa;,°, Pa:mpaa;	
2)	Shut up	
Françoise:	Pa:mpaa;	
3) Abdel:	>Yeah, I feel a bit<, cause you say all the time Pa:mpaa	
4)	Pa:mpaa, or so, pampa means grass plain in South America,	
Françoise:	you simpleton!	
	But, I am not talking to you, right?	
5) Abdel:	<Oh> yes, oke..when you say pa:mpaa, to whom are you	
6)	talking?	
Françoise:	What does pampa mean?	
7) Abdel:	Grass plain from South America, you (.) idiot.	
8)		
Françoise:		

In other cases knowledge was shared in a more symmetric manner, called here the symmetric chat mode (SCE). Here students exchanged knowledge or opinions without one student controlling or dominating the group. Students shared knowledge on an equal basis and each student could contribute to the discussion while his/her contribution was acknowledged by the others, see for instance how Ilham and Soraja, both Morrocan girls, build upon each others positions in Excerpt 4. They are discussing what criteria would count for someone to be called 'Dutch' using the example of Soenja, who apparently has a parent who has a (partly) Dutch background. One of the students claims that Soenja is not completely Moroccan in Turn 1, stressing the word 'all'. This is affirmed by Illham in Turn 1 saying that she is *also* Dutch. While the same student tries to question the Dutchness of Soenja in Turn 3, both Soraja and Illham make the argument that she is only *partly* Dutch, and therefore indeed Dutch, in Turn 4 to 6, while using words like 'so' in Turn 5 or an extensive 'yeah' in Turn 6 that give continuation to the other speakers' argument.

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Excerpt 4: Example of the symmetric mode in the unofficial mode [Grade 7, subgroup 2, 25-2-00, B18]

1) Student[1]	Hé, Soenja is not a, not all white (.) >all< Moroccan?
2)Ilham	No, she is also <u>Dutch</u>.
3) Student	Why, why would she be Dutch then, Not even, even <u>half</u>, is not <u>Dutch</u>.
4) Ilham	Well, yes, she is also <u>half</u> Dutch.
5) Soraja	So, Sonja, is <a quarter≥! Cause Sonja, she ( ) quarter.
6) Ilham	Yaeh:::: right, that's what I <u>say</u>, but she <u>is</u> Dutch!

If we look again at how these modes are divided over the ethnic groups in the unofficial talk, we can see in Table 4 that in grade 8, at the interaction level, the asymmetric mode becomes more frequent in the unofficial talk compared to the official talk, which probably means that relations of dominance are more frequently expressed in this discourse. However, within this more free, less-institutionally framed talk, the native Dutch lose their position as the main representatives of the more powerful asymmetric mode. They even seem to adopt a more dependent position given that they generally tend to participate less, although no significant differences could be found at the interactive level. If we look at differences at the individual level, the results of the Mann-Whitney tests demonstrated that there were no significant differences in the unofficial discourse between Dutch and minority students. The Dutch students did not explain or speak significantly more often than the minority students, irrespective of the mode (asymmetric or symmetric).

The overall conclusion of the analysis, taking the analysis of the official and unofficial discourse together, is that *for the official mode*: 1) in both grade 7 and grade 8 the Dutch explain significantly more than minority students do, although in grade 8 this is only the case in the asymmetric mode; 2) both in grade 8 and grade 7 the asymmetric mode is relatively

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[1] In those cases where the speaker was not identified, the word student was used.

overrepresented when Dutch students explain things to minority students. Interestingly, 3) these effects disappear *in the unofficial mode* where no significant differences were found between Dutch and minority students. The present study shows that power relations in classrooms between Dutch and immigrant students radically shift when students move from academic talk to more open, free talk. Whereas in their interactions with immigrant students, Dutch students are able to represent the more powerful role in the official, academic discourse, they lose this position in the unofficial, non-academic discourse.

Discussion

Ethnic and academic identities as local

The results confirm claims from other studies that both ethnic relationships and academic identities are fluid and depend on how they are enacted locally. 'Local' has a specific meaning in this study, as it refers to a particular discursive pattern *within* the school setting and not just particular schools. This means that the account that academic identities are not fixed to ethnic groups as stated at the beginning of this paper, must be extended in the following way. Firstly, even within the same school different discursive practices can be build that create different possibilities for students for ethnic positioning, and secondly, different discursive practices within the same school create different identity possibilities for different groups. These results point to how 'self'-constructed discursive worlds or boundaries do not necessarily coincide with institutional boundaries.

The institutional frame supports specific minority-majority relationships

More in particular, the results of this study have shown that ethnic relationships, both in terms of power positions, and in terms of their cultural content, vary even within the same institutional setting, depending on the particular frame that participants create. Whereas in the official, on-task talk, Dutch students were able to hold on to a higher status position vis-à-vis the minority students, and to adopt the institutionally meaningful role of the tutor while minority students adopt the tutee role, they were not able to maintain such a position in the unofficial talk. In both discourses, Dutch-minority relationships were shaped in a fundamentally different way. The translation of the relationship into an institutional frame lent itself to the expression of a more powerful position of the Dutch vis-à-vis their non-Dutch peers. In other words, the academic frame lent itself better for the domination of the Dutch students, as well as for the subordination of the immigrant students, compared to the non-academic frame. In terms of what Linell & Luckman (1991) have argued about asymmetries in the entitlements to certain topics or to certain perspectives on knowledge and how these might or might not translate into asymmetries in participation structures, our study shows how the translation of these rights and entitlements into participation structures can be specific to particular discursive frames, in this case to the official school discourse.

The higher identification with dominant positions in the academic domain by the Dutch students might be related to their majority position outside school and also that the school itself is considered Dutch, given that the staff is native Dutch. The distance minority students take towards these roles might be related to heir minority position outside the classroom as well as to a lesser identification with school more generally (see for a study that supports this interpretation, Andriessen & Phalet, 2002).

Academic identities as specific to inter-ethnic relationships

However, our findings also indicate that academic identities, as expressed in tutor-tutee positions, are not associated with a particular group as such, but only come into play in specific interethnic relationships. This was particularly clear from the findings in Table 3 that show that the tutor role was, for the Dutch students, almost exclusively evoked in their relationship with minority students. This finding was also confirmed by the teacher who claimed that Dutch students would say that they refused to have things explained to them by a minority student, keeping the privilege to explain exclusively to themselves. Thus, the general statement that the academic identities of Dutch students are defined by the teacher register, even as the general statement that the academic identities of minorities are defined by passive positions, do not hold. These identities come into play in certain relationships. Interestingly, the fact that the Dutch students were a minority in this classroom did not hinder them to take a position as tutor. However, the majority position within the classroom of the students with a migration background might have contributed to the switch in power position in the unofficial, non-academic domain. This indicates that majority-minority relationships are not always straightforwardly related to representations in numbers in a particular setting, but might also refer to positions outside them.

The relevance for pedagogy

Given the relative fluidness of both institutional practices and ethnicities, a relevant pedagogical question becomes 'How can different ethnic groups adopt an academic identity in relation to the (academic) identity of other groups?' The issue of how ethnic status relationships and academic status inform each other is relevant given the normalizing and selective function of school in which certain cultural practices are favored above others. Sorting students into categories of good and bad students of all kinds is inherent to this practice. In order to be successful, students must

take on specific identities that are not always natural to them or are seen as being in accordance with the characteristics of their own group. Taking on a school identity is, in many cases, related to taking a stance towards other ethnic groups and/or the mainstream group which makes 'school' a particular field for identity construction. Therefore, this identity work, while balancing between being a 'good student' versus rebelling against that category at the same time exerts pressure on both mainstream versus non-mainstream and minority versus majority categories. Teachers of multi-ethnic classrooms have to be aware of how different identity frames are introduced, or encouraged and how these are taken up by different students when they develop academic identities. Additionally, teachers have to be aware of how these identities impact on the particular positions of ethnic groups as, for instance, gender and ethnic background can impact on power relations in multi-ethnic classrooms. A systematic coupling of powerful academic positions with a particular ethnic group might not only have negative consequences for those students whose successful identification with school is hindered, but also for learning to cope with and gaining experience of different roles and identities for all students.

Table 1

The composition of the Groups in Grade 7

Group 7-1	Group 7-2	Group 7-3
Feliz (Dutch-Turkish girl)	Ferit (Dutch-Morrocan boy)	Annelies (Dutch girl)
Samira (Dutch-Morrocan girl)	Fouzia (Dutch-Moroccan girl)	Berend (Dutch boy)
Assad (Dutch-Morrocan boy)	Ilham (Dutch-Moroccan girl)	Goran(Dutch-Yougoslavian boy)
Hassan (Dutch-Morrocan boy)	Zakaria (Dutch-Morrocan boy)	Maktoub (Dutch-Morrocan boy)

Group 7-5	Group 7-5
Abdel (Dutch-Morrocan boy)	Chantal (Dutch girl)
Fahd (Dutch-Turkish boy)	Daniëlle (Dutch-Tjech girl)
Ikram (Dutch-Morrocan girl)	Farouk (Dutch-Moroccan boy)
Françoise (Dutch-Ghanese girl)	Mimoun (Dutch-Morrocan boy)
Lonneke (Durch girl))	Yalcin (Dutch-Turkish boy)

Table 2

The composition of the Groups in Grade 8

Group 8-1	Group 8-2
Ilham (Dutch-Morrocan girl)	Fahd (Dutch-Turkish boy)
Mimoun (Dutch-Morrocan boy)	Samira (Dutch-Morrocan girl)
Soraja (Dutch-Morrocan girl)	Hassan (Dutch-Morrocan boy)
Jaco (Dutch boy)	Said (Dutch-Morrocan boy)
Faroek (Dutch-Morrocan boy)	Tarik (Marokkaanse jongen)
	Annelies (Nederlands meisje)

Group 8-3	Group 8-4
Maktoub (Dutch-Morrocan boy)	Ferit (Dutch-Morrocan boy)
Abdel (Dutch-Morrocan boy)	Assad (Dutch-Morrocan boy)
Aziz (Dutch-Turkish boy)	Zakaria (Dutc-Morrocan boy)
Daniëlle (Dutch-Tjech girl)	Berend (Dutch boy)
Habiba (Dutch-Morrocan girl)	Feliz (Dutch-Turks girl)
	Françoise (Dutch- Ghanese girl)

Table 3

Number and percentages of the Episodes of Collaborative Learning (CLE) in the Asymmetric and Symmetric Mode in the Grade 7 and 8. N Grade 7 = 268; N Grade 8 = 383

	Asymmetric mode	Symmetric mode	Total
Minority groups grade 7	8 (6.2%)	122 (93.8%)	130 (100%)
Mixed groups grade 7	35 (25.4%)	103 (74.6%)	138 (100%)
Total	43 (16.0%)	225 (84.0%)	268 (100%)
Chi2 = 42.7, p <.000			
Mixed groups grade 8	55 (14.4%)	328 (85.6%)	383 (100%)
Total	55 (14.4%)	328 (85.6%)	383 (100%)

Table 4

Percentages of the Collaborative Learning Episodes and Chat Episodes in the Asymmetric and Symmetric modes in the Mixed Groups, divided by 'who explains to whom / who addresses whom'

Official Discourse: CLEs. *N* mixed groups in grade 7 = 138; *N* mixed (all) groups grade 8 = 383

Who explains to whom	Asymmetric mode	Symmetric mode	Total
Grade 7			
Dutch to minority	33 (23.9%)	66 (47.8%)	99 (71.7%)
Dutch to Dutch	1 (0.7%)	14 (10.1%)	15 (10.8%)
Minority to Dutch	0 (0.0%)	6 (4.3%)	6 (4.3%)
Minority to minority	1 (0.7%)	17 (12.3)	18 (13.0%)
Total	35 (25.4%)	103 (74.6%)	138 (100%)

Fisher's Exact Test p<.000*
* A *Chi2* was not possible due to a too low number expected frequencies

	Asymmetric mode	Symmetric mode	Total
Grade 8			
Dutch to minority	24 (6.3%)	51 (13.3%)	75 (19.6%)
Dutch to Dutch	*	*	*
Minority to Dutch	0 (0.0%)	13 (3.4%)	15 (3.9%)
Minority to minority	29 (7.6%)	264 (68.9%)	293 (76.5%)
Total	55 (14.4%)	328 (85.6%)	383 (100%)

Chi2 = 23,7, p<.000

Unofficial Discourse: CEs. *N* mixed (all) groups grade 8 = 125

Who explains to whom	Asymmetric mode	Symmetric mode	Total
Grade 8			
Dutch to minority	1 (0.8%)	5 (4.0%)	6 (4.8%)
Dutch to Dutch	*	*	*
Minority to Dutch	2 (1.6%)	8 (6.4%)	10 (8.0%)
Minority to minority	21 (16.8%)	88 (70.4%)	109 (87.2%)
Total	24 (19.2%)	101 (80.8%)	125 (100.0%)

Chi2 = not significant

* There is no category in grade 8 of 'Dutch explains to Dutch' because in none of the subgroups is there more than one Dutch student in a group, so interaction between Dutch students in a single subgroup is impossible.

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[i] The transcription notation was borrowed from Jefferson (1989)