Interaction in the Multiethnic EFL Classroom: A Case Study in Romania

Group 2

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Abstract

This study investigates multiethnic education and classroom interactions which we argue are conditioned and structured by teaching methods and socio-political, economical and historical contexts. We begin by explaining the larger national context in Romania pertaining to education, from which it funnels into the local community and the classroom environment. The analysis and data collected are centered around a specific case study in a village elementary school in near Cluj-Napoca (Romania). Our data includes recordings of an English as a Foreign language classrooms as well as semi-structured interviews conducted with both teacher and expert informants. The first half of the analysis provides the context and addresses the status quo in Romania by investigating the segregation of Roma and the affect it has on their opportunity for accessing education. In the second half of the analysis, the classroom interactions are reconceptualized using Grounded Theory methods. We discuss Cooperative Learning which draws on Contact Hypothesis, as a method of increasing intercultural understanding. We conclude by underlining that Cooperative Learning methods could provide the necessary conditions for diminishing the systemic segregation which we found as still being part of the EFL classroom.

Introduction

How does the elementary[1] school multiethnic environment, especially the English lessons, look like in today's Romania? How could this environment nurture inter-ethnic relations, notably for the Roma? These questions constitute the starting point for the present study.

The focus on the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom will be further elaborated[2]. What needs to be underlined from the beginning is the notion of *multiethnic environment/classroom/context*. By *multiethnic environment* we refer to those contexts where there is *some degree of ethnic diversity* which in the context of the current paper calls attention to those communities where Roma[3] are present. The particular interest in the situation of the Roma rests on Council of Europe's (COE) statistical estimation which posits Romania as the country in the European Union with the largest number of Roma[4]. In these circumstances one has to question what is the discursive and *de facto* situation of Roma in Romania in general, and in particular: What is the nature of a school with Roma pupils? How is English taught?

In order to peek into such a complex issue, we adopted a study case approach by which we aim at investigating the complex interactions pertaining to those EFL classrooms where (at least some) Roma pupils attend. The focus will be on the interactions within that environment, and not on the ethnic minority itself, ergo the use of the term *multiethnic environment.*

In order to understand the complex interactions pertaining to a multiethnic EFL classroom, we will first look briefly into the larger context in Romania pertaining to education, funnelling into the local community and finally, the classroom environment.

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[1] Elementary school in this paper refers to Kindergarten to 8th grade.

[2] Further elaboration in Study Case section on page 27.

[3] For a more extensive description of the different Roma groups in Europe refer to the COE's Descriptive Glossary of terms relating to Roma issues (2012).

[4] The Roma is not the only ethnic minority in Romania. At the last census of 2011 the largest ethnic minority in Romania are the Hungarians which constitute 6,9% of the total population of approx. 21.000.000 (1.227.623), followed by Roma 2,46% (621.537).

Education

Firstly, one should broadly explicate on the development of education in 'the West', particularly in Europe. Historically, the educational system has been heavily oriented around the industrial revolution's 'needs' i.e. a large skilled workforce which could further develop social, economic and political movements. (Illich, 1971; Robinson, 2015). Ivan Illich (1971) explains how this goal of the educational system reduced the human factor to merely statistical numbers and mechanized behavior.

The needs of post industrial education system evolved from its prior goals from providing elemental skills of reading, writing and basic arithmetic to reinforcing society's consumerist behaviour. In Althusser's terms, one could say that *education* became an *interpellating force,* an *ideological state apparatus* (Althusser, 1977:127-86), which has the function of securing the status quo.

Indeed, this is a crude oversimplification of social, economical and political processes which shaped education into what it is today, but we consider that this brief historical contextualisation of 'Western' education will suffice for the moment. We assert that the 'Western' mode of development of the educational system above, applies to some extent to the Romanian context.

Romania has its distinct territorial and ethnic history, particularly in connection with the Roma. *Who and what are the Roma, and what is their history and subjectivities?* A brief account of such questions is required even though they are outside the area of interest for the current paper.

Since there exists a disambiguation in the different ways that the Roma are referred to both by themselves and the non-Roma, we consider it relevant to elucidate the terminology related to their denomination. In the following paragraphs we intend to briefly introduce the Roma and highlight their position in a Romanian communist and post-communist social and educational context.

The Roma

The Roma are a heterogenous ethnic group spread all over Europe. For the purpose of this paper, three terms should be explained: Roma, Gypsy, and Tsigani.

In Romani, the language of the European Roma, "Roma" denominates "men" (COE, 2012: 6). The name 'Gypsy' originated with the belief that the Roma came from Egypt; the variations include 'Gitano' in Spanish or 'Gitans' in French. Tsigani, on the other hand, comes from Greek word "atsiganoi" which translates as "untouchables"; the variations include 'Cigány' in Hungarian, 'Zigeuner' in German or 'Ţigani'in Romanian (Kyuchukov, 2010: 13). Some authors use the terms 'Gypsies' and 'Roma' interchangeably, see Barany (2002), Achim (2004).

The Council of Europe (COE) recommends to use the term 'Roma' when referring to groups which include all Roma, Sinti and Kale (as well as the ethnic groups such as Dom & Lom, and the Travellers), including those groups who identify themselves as Gypsies (COE, 2012: 4). The diversity of the Roma people around Europe brings about a number of complex issues (which diverge from the scope of this paper) when discussing the history and culture of this ethnic group (Barany, 1994 & 2004).

The Roma have been victims of centuries long persecutions which continue to define their lives in modern Europe. According to Barany (1994) and Achim (2004) *marginality* is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Roma people living in Europe, despite being part of European societies for centuries. For over 700 years, the Roma have been subject to social, cultural, economic and political marginalization (Barany, 1994: 323). None of the regimes in Eastern Europe could approach the 'Roma problem' in a way that would avoid imposing harsh policies of integration on the minority: the choice has always been between complete integration/assimilation or total rejection and marginality (322).

Contemporary Romani culture, traditions and customs have been strongly affected by discriminatory practices enacted by the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, authoritative and totalitarian regimes, and current nation states (Barany, 1994).

Romani culture differs from place to place, and thus, one should be aware of the 'discursive trap[5]' when studying, researching or even talking about Roma or their culture. There are profound differences (language variants, religion, lifestyles, etc.) among various Roma groups within the borders of a country, and even more so from country to country (Barany, 1994 & 2004; Guy, 2001).

The problems concerning the Roma (social, economical, educational and political) are known by Romanian and international media and academics (e.g. Cozma et al., 2000; Lame, 2014; McDonald, 2009 & 1999; Symeou et al., 2009; Vincze, 2013 & 2010; Walker, 2010; Woodcock, 2007) as well by the average citizen of Romania. In spite of this, local, national and European policies and measures seem to crumble in the face of the historically (Barany, 1994 & 2002; Guy, 2001) fuelled racism which is expressed through various types of what Gernot Köhler and Norman Alcock (1976: 1) call 'structural violence': *"Whenever persons are harmed, maimed, or killed by poverty or unjust social, political, and economic institutions, systems or structures, we speak of structural violence"*.

But the current paper is not concerned with the general discourse on Roma, what is of special interest for us, as the following section will elucidate, is the situation of Roma within the Romanian educational system.

The Roma and Education

Far from being new knowledge, the plight of the Roma appears to have one of its roots in the educational system as many scholars indicate (Cozma et al., 2000; Lame, 2014; McDonald, 2009 & 1999; Symeou et al., 2009; Szakács, 2011; Vincze, 2010). The educational system is important to the integration process of ethnic minorities. However, the highest numbers of children who do not finish or never attend school, are among Roma children (Open Society Institute (Budapest) et al., 2007: 331).

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[5] The discourse revolving the Roma is quite nuanced as we will try to show throughout the paper, thus the term *discursive trap* refers to the problems of unethical depiction or misleading representation of Roma in writing or speech.

One of the main reasons that the Roma children's absence from school is a fundamental problem, is the ignorance and lack of incentive on the side of the government to incorporate the Roma children into the educational system (McDonald, 2009: 183). As will be discussed in the following pages, the legacy of the communist era remained in the educational environment long after the fall of the Iron Curtain in forms of authoritative, traditional ways and approaches to schooling.

Communism, Education and the Roma

The socio-historical overview of the Romanian context with regards to education and Roma, has had a profound impact on the current state of affairs in Romania, both in terms of social life and educational context.

During the communist era in Romania (1945-1990) the state crippled the educational system by the enforcement of Soviet ideologies, severe censorship and the imprisonment or murder of academics, teachers, educators who did not align with the Soviet doctrine. The Communist Party during its reign, promoted the less qualified but loyal teachers into positions of 'power' (Marga, 1998 & 1999). The effects of said policy and its repercussions are known topics of research (Anchan et al., 2003; Birzea, 1996 & 1995; Sadlak, 1990 & 1994; Tascu et al., 2002).

Starting in the 1960's, the communist government issued policies forcing the nomadic Roma to settle down. The majority of Roma were integrated into the system and *interpellated* into positions where they had to work in areas differing from their traditional occupations. These policies dissipated and destroyed Roma communities and their way of life, forcing them to rely on the state's market economy (McDonald, 1999: 186).

Education and the Roma after Communism

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 created social, legal and political structural confusion. In the aftermath of the 'televised revolution' (Birzea, 1996: 97), the state failed to rise up to the expectations of its citizens. The 'people' demanded immediate reforms on all levels (e.g. social, educational, economic and political). Due to the shifting context, educational reforms were slow and focused mainly on the content, not form. The educational reforms were aimed primarily at restructuring the curricula and secondarily, at the teaching methods and teacher training (Szakács, 2011: 104).

The first educational reform, which was promulgated in 1995, dictated the need for teaching materials, new curricula and stipulated the restructuring of institutions (Birzea, 1996). However, the changes in methodology and teacher training remains on the agenda since the reform in 1995. This is because it remains a marginal priority for legislators despite a demand from teachers (Niculae 2014, Enache and Crisan 2014; Carol and Elena 2013;).

The regime change affected the Roma population in a particular manner. Their existence became centered around the struggle for survival, which directly lowered their chances of accessing schooling, and thus continuing the historical discrimination process.

The reasons why Roma children are prevented from attending classes are due to circumstances of poverty i.e, the lack of transportation, hygiene, school supplies and clothing, and a lack of general information about the registration procedures. Roma children are also disinclined to attend classes because of psychological and emotional effects of bullying and rejection by children of other ethnicities (McDonald, 1999: 188).

A lack of necessary skills, experience, materials and teacher-assessments as well as reduced communication with the children and their families, by the school system, leads to a "Roma unfriendly" schooling environment (McDonald, 2009: 2).

As a result of a biased and insensitive approach to the Roma children by the schools, Roma parents are often distrustful of the institutions and are reluctant to send their kids to

school. Moreover, the inequality of education interrelates with underemployment and poverty of Roma adults. Discrimination of the Roma is present in other spheres such as healthcare, housing, retirement, etc. (McDonald, 1999; Vincze, 2013).

Having explicated some of the particularities pertaining to the Romanian context with regards to the history of Roma in the educational system, one can say that the main goal of this paper is to inquire into the types and roles of the interactions pertaining to a multiethnic classroom in the development of inter-ethnic relations, thus the problem formulation states as follows:

Which are the interactional and structural components of the teaching methods pertaining to multiethnic EFL classrooms in rural Romania, and how could these components affect the classrooms' inter-ethnic relation?

Research question
- *What is the situation of multiethnic education in Romania and how does it influence the education for Roma pupils in particular?*

Main concepts: Race, Racism, Ethnicity and Multiethnic Education

The following section introduces the central concepts relevant for the current paper which need specific clarification. The terms - race, ethnicity, and multiethnic education, set a more concrete frame for the problem area. Awareness of their mutual interconnectedness as well as the connection with the status of Roma in Romanian context are considered to be crucial.

For this purpose, David Theo Goldberg's *The Threat of Race* (2011) will serve to define the concepts of race and racism in a European context. James G. Peoples and Garrick A. Bailey's work *Humanity: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (2012) outlines the concept of ethnicity and ethnic groups. Lastly, James A. Banks' publication *Multiethnic Education: Theory and Practice* (1981) outlines what multiethnic education is and what are its the key goals.

Race and Racism: European Context

Goldberg (2011) conceives race as a complex, context-dependent phenomenon. Instead of viewing it in terms of binding set of ideas, race is *"[...] a way (or a set of ways) of being in the world, of living, of meaning-making"* (2011: 133). Race possesses the power to choose who belongs and who is outcast, guiding the discourse that surrounds it (151).

When talking about race in Europe, one major point of reference comes to mind: the experience of Holocaust. The colonial legacy of numerous European states is left out from the public memory, although it is exactly colonialism that set out the conditions for the eugenicist ideology in Europe. For the purpose of this paper, the focus will be on the context of Eastern Europe and the Roma, keeping aside (but not forgetting) the question of the colonialist past.

Goldberg insists that through the memorialization and focal point of race giving way to the Holocaust, European expansionism and colonial exploits are thrown to the background. Notwithstanding, the stress on the Holocaust is characterized by Stuart Hall as 'historical amnesia', the silencing of European colonial legacy, marking the Jewish experience as paramount over other groups who were targeted (homosexuals, disabled, political opponents, Roma etc.) (135). For Roma then, this is reflected in the lack of memorialization of their own victimization in the Holocaust.

Goldberg claims that it is impossible to deaden race, for it is a condition with a dynamic character, reflected in thoughts, lifestyles, dispositions. It stands for conditions that both emanates from and produces social conflicts (135). On top of that, race cannot be made invisible because the hatred it sparks is too palpable.

He contends that there is a conceptual distinction between racial conception and racism. It is outlined that racial conception is the view that groups of people (e.g. Roma) are distinctly marked by generalized and heritable traits which may be culturally, physically or psychologically impressed upon the member(s) (18). Goldberg argues that these markers of identification are geomorphically pre-supposed phenotypes, that when looked at, can be viewed as a map of *social geography* (17).

If race is read through the implied geographic identifications and the associated characteristics, than those who are considered to be concurrent with the geo-phenotypes in the national territory are deemed to belong. Those whose geo-phenotypes deviate are considered to have other racial origins, and are subsequently seen to *"pollute or potentially to terrorize the national space, with debilitating and even deadly effect"* (18).

If the purpose of mapping *social geography* is to *manufacture homogeneities*, then 'racism', according to Goldberg, is the so called 'military' who patrols and policies the borders. In less figurative words, racism is the exclusion through devaluation of, and the belief and claim of inferiority of the racially different (16).

Having outlined the conceptual differences of these two terms, it is our aim to inquire into the racist discourse surrounding Roma in Romania. However, it is not our aim to distinguish whether explicit racist practices in Romania are being upheld by our informants, local teachers, or the education system.

Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups

Ethnic group denotes *"(...) a social category of people based on perceptions of shared social experience or ancestry"* (Peoples and Bailey, 2012: 389). Ethnic groups usually differ in terms of cultural traditions and history, simultaneously creating a division between 'us' and 'them'.

Two main characteristics define ethnic groups: origin myths and ethnic boundary markers. Origin myths resonate with the particular social and historical events typical of a group, distinguishing it from the other ones, thus endowing it with a distinct social identity. The myth becomes 'the truth' when it is passed among people through the group's popular culture, and it is crucial for the sake of preserving the ethnic group identity (389-390). Ethnic boundary markers are factors such as: language, clothing, religion, phenotype, etc., which delineate the membership in the group. They stand for important proofs of belonging to the group for both insiders and outsiders. To avoid confusion with other ethnic groups, each group has to be represented by a combination of these factors (390-391).

Multiethnic Education

The goals of multiethnic education are manifold. A schooling institution which follows the principles of multiethnic education is more likely to affect the pupils positively and instill respect for ethnic diversity. A curriculum which includes information on minority histories and cultures, is valuable for both the children of the ethnic minority as well as those in the ethnic majority.

Multiethnic education has an 'eye-opening' function. Students engaged in such education are offered *cultural and ethnic alternatives* (Banks, 1981: 25) which allow them to acquire a greater understanding of themselves in relation to other cultures. Educational indifference towards ethnic diversity results in the likelihood of segregation in multiple dimensions of life (25).

An ethnic student immersed in an education which is unable to promote diversity, where educators depreciate certain cultures and even exclude them, can experience a sense of alienation, hostility and self-defeat (26). The child could be deprived of skills necessary for functioning in the society. The discrimination that the child experiences can lead to rejection of its own identity for the sake of successful assimilation into the dominant society. This proves problematic for both the ethnic students and the wider society (26).

Thus, the aim of multiethnic education is to create an environment where all ethnicities can obtain knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for survival within their respective ethnic groups, the mainstream culture, and the other ethnic cultures. This is achieved by voicing the *"(...) values, institutions, behavior patterns, and linguistic traits (...)"* (26) of minorities.

Methodology

The methodology chosen to orient the research methods used to collect data in this study on education of Roma is ethnography. This study is not meant to fulfil the strictest requirements of the term *ethnography,* because a full ethnographic study would require, among other things, extensive field work. Rather, this paper is inspired by the methods of ethnography, and the methods used to analyze the data follow the principles of a constructivist version of Grounded Theory.

Ethnography as Methodology

Ethnography was popularized after the socio-political movements of the 1960's and 1970's brought to light issues of power, discrimination and misrepresentation. Researchers began to question how knowledge was constructed and who could be said to represent a social group. This led to a change in the social theory used to guide social research. Whereas sociology was previously led by the positivist philosophy and quantitative, experimental and deductive methods, the new so called 'German tradition' or 'Chicago school' used interpretive philosophy and qualitative methods (Jones, 2010).

Positivists valued objectivity, verification or falsification of hypotheses, replicability of research and quantification (Charmaz, 2014: 6). *"The priority they gave to replication and verification resulted in ignoring human problems and research questions that did not fit positivist research designs"* (Charmaz, 2014: 6-7).

This research paper follows constructivist philosophies. The method of analysis used in this research paper, Grounded Theory (GT), was developed in part by a Chicago school graduate Anselm L. Strauss. Different versions of Grounded Theory and its interpretive and qualitative methods will be explained further in Analytical Methods.

Why Ethnography?

Ethnography was chosen as the guiding methodology for this study because of three factors. First, we had a strong interest in contemporary discussions on the situation of Roma in the Romanian (state) educational system. In other words, we wanted to be able to explore social processes at their inception (in school).

Secondly, we believed that it was necessary to immerse ourselves as much as possible in the milieu in order to understand first-hand the social world of our subject.

Thirdly, we found that the subject of Roma did not fit the traditional and social anthropological view of the 'other'. Traditional ethnography focused on colonial non-European others, while post 1980's ethnographic studies were founded on studying others in urban settings, such as those related to race, gender, or lifestyles (Jones, 2010: 23). The Roma have a long history of living in Romania and are mainly distinguished phenotypically and by lifestyle factors.

Finally, we operate under the belief that there is a lack of prior classroom ethnographic research in Romania which specifically aims at exploring the interactional multiethnic EFL classroom milieu.

Limitations

Possible limitations on the use of interpretive ethnography for this study consist of issues of responsibility, representation, and reflexivity.

Responsibility

As researchers in the field, it is important to be responsible, credible and accurate in the co-construction[6] and use of the empirical data. We strived to be responsible towards our research

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[6] The use of the word co-construct throughout the paper underlines our constructionist epistemological position, by which the researchers are aware and reflexive of their influence over the empirical data.

environment and participants by being clear on our motives for researching, anonymizing all personal details, and maintaining a sense of respect for all aspects of research. We aimed to be credible in the fieldwork and analysis by researching on as much relevant research and background information as possible. Finally, we ensured our accuracy by recording audio-video in the classroom, and audio recording of the interviews. Also, we complemented the data with field notes when possible.

Representation and Reflexivity

This study does not delve into issues of identity and therefore does not contain issues of representation typically found in ethnographic inspired studies. In regards to the representation of the minority group, Roma, this study's stance is provided in throughout the paper.

Regarding the principle of reflexivity within the ethnographic tradition, it presumes that the research team must, throughout the study, consider and account for how their prejudices, biases and subjectivity affect and shape the course and outcome of the study. This is in line with the constructionist approach of ethnography used in this research.

Reflexivity or positioning refers to the understanding of how the fieldworker considers his/her position in relation to the informants while in the field. The position is not given in advance or fixed. It influences the quality and amount of information that can be obtained in the field. *"Viewing the research as constructed rather than discovered fosters researchers' reflexivity about their actions and decisions"* (Charmaz, 2014: 13). In this sense, the question of whether the researcher is **seen** as an insider or outsider to the group will affect the type of information the informants are willing to share (see: Abu-Lughod, 1988)[7].

In the school where the recordings of the English classes were done, friendly relations were established with an informal meeting where we were invited on several occasions for lunch and given a tour of the school's facilities. While the research team was still seen as a group of

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[7] In the article Lila Abu-Lughod describes how a bedouin tribe in which she was conducting a field study, positioned her in different ways both as an insider and an outsider. Both positions would limit as well as open up for access to certain types of information from the informants.

outsiders, it was possible to establish a friendly environment where open discussions could take place.

One member of the group is Romanian, thus it came natural that the responsibility of finding and contacting a community and school was attributed to him. To find a school which would allow us to record their English lessons and also agree on a number of interviews with the staff, he had to appeal to his personal network. Ergo, the responsibility for the trust invested in him by the people in his milieu, which opened and facilitated the communication and collaboration with the school, had to be considered in the writing of the project. This situation directly affected the purpose of the current paper, in which the research team had to treat their informants with extra caution besides the usual degree of respect and consideration. But the effect this situation had on the goal of the paper, was not only of a constrictive nature but also of a generative nature. It forced us to conceive the approach in a more careful manner, thus restraining from simply conducting a systematic critique of the school. It guided us into looking, not for someone to blame, but to conceive a situation in which everybody could benefit (the school, the community and to serve the purpose of the current paper).

As stated in the introduction, we consistently used the term Roma when interviewing and in general conversation. We are aware how this placed us as outsiders in regards to local vocabulary use[8].

Data Collection Methods

"The purpose of ethnographic field participant observation,(...) is to observe people in their natural surroundings, their everyday behavior, interactions, routines and rituals, along with the artefacts and symbols that bring meaning to their lives, while of course, conversing and listening to their narratives" (Jones, 109: 2010).

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[8] The term Roma is not fully understood by the majority of people in Romania, thus one could be seen as an outsider when using Roma instead of the 'common' term *Ţigani.*

The fieldwork strategies undertaken for co-constructing data during this study include nonparticipant and participant observations (audio-video recordings and field notes) and semi-structured interviews. These were all conducted in an overt manner in situ.

Nonparticipant Observations

One of the methods of co-constructing the ethnographic data has been done by means of nonparticipant observation (NPO). This implies that the researcher is not directly implicated with the people and the activity being observed. In traditional participant observation, the researcher would be present in the locale being observed. By doing so, the researcher would affect and disturb the informants in the given situation, thus influencing the informants' behavior and subsequently tempering with the outcome of the analysis. However, the nonparticipant observations were conducted using a video recorder to distance the researchers from the setting.

As observers through non-participant observation in the audio-video recordings of the EFL classrooms, we are challenged when aiming to address the classroom's natural interactions when they are not being systematically observed. Yet, the method in which the data was collected, was by means of systematic observation. This dilemma is coined by William Labov as the *Observer's Paradox*, where the presence of an observer will have a disturbing impact on the people being observed (Labov, 1972: 209). The pupils were aware of themselves being recorded, studied, and as a result are more likely to alter their behavior and possibly interact differently than they would have had they not been recorded. In attempting to diminish the effect of this paradox, the teacher set up the camera in the classroom prior to the actual recordings, in order for the pupils to pay less attention to the disturbance of the recording device, in preparation for the legitimate recording. We are conscious that the environment was disturbed by the presence of the camera, however, the recordings are useful as a means to gain insight into the teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions occurring in the classrooms.

Participant Observations

Observations also include witnessing the physical settings and characteristics of the researched field. Observations of the environment of the school such as classroom decorations, building layouts, and physical conditions provided a better understanding of the ambience in which the students learned. *"Field notes are documentations of what was witnessed and may include conflicts or utterances that you regard as important at the time"* (Jones, 2010: 142).

Scant fields notes were produced during the field trip and consisted of observational notes on who, what, where, when, and how. They also included spoken utterances outside the interview sessions, such as those spoken by interview participants before and after the interviews, or during social meetings.

Semi-structured Interviews

The interviews conducted during the field trip were semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2011: 151), which allowed for the opportunity for both the interviewer and interviewee to interpret questions and answers, hence leading the interview in desirable directions. The interview guides (Appendix D) includes a number of overall questions that serve as a guideline for the interview. The interviewer should however react and build on the given answers by asking supplementary questions (151). This interview form enables a flowing conversation which can be useful when encountering sensitive subjects such as ethnic minorities and cultural differences. Here, the interviewer should start with overall questions on the subject, narrowing it down to personal opinions. The questions should both serve the *thematic* frame of the interview and the interpersonal relation. The interviewee is able to present personal views on the different subjects in question, and the interviewer can lead the conversation in a desirable direction adequate for the later analysis of the answers (151-152).

The interview guides used in the current study aimed at creating an interpersonal relation, that would set the atmosphere for the sensitive topic of minorities in the schooling system and in society. The questions avoid being too direct, and are open-ended to allow for interpretation.

Additionally, it should be mentioned that two of the interviews (with T1 and P2)[9] were conducted in Romanian. It was therefore necessary to include a chapter describing the process of translation. This can be found in the Appendix E.

Choice of Informants

Two sets of interviews were carried out for the purpose of this study: teacher and expert interviews. The excerpts used from the teacher interviews are included in the Appendix B. The segments from the expert interviews can be found in the Appendix C.

The teacher interviews consisted of four individual interviews. Three interviews were conducted in the village where the school is located. Additionally, one interview, with T1, was conducted via Skype. The interviewed teachers were chosen on a basis of possibilities that were available to the researchers[10].

Among the teachers that were interviewed in the area of Cluj-Napoca are the current principal of the school, as well one of its former principals. The latter is now retired, and was interviewed because her experiences with teaching were valuable for creating a picture of how the teaching practices changed (or not) throughout the years. The remaining is an English and Geography teacher. The teacher from southern Romania is an elementary school teacher. She teaches in a village school where the percentage of the Roma students in the school is around 40-50% (Appendix B, ex. 1).

All of the interviewed teachers wished to be anonymized. For that reason we chose to use the following abbreviations throughout the paper:

- T1, the elementary school teacher from southern Romania
- T2, the English and Geography teacher from the school in the vicinity of Cluj-Napoca

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[9] See Choice of Informants on page 19.
[10] See Representation and Reflexivity on page 15.

- P1, the current principal of the school from the school in the vicinity of Cluj-Napoca

- P2, the former principal from the school in the vicinity of Cluj-Napoca[11]

The second set of interviews - the expert interviews - were conducted with Florin Moisă and Christina McDonald. Moisă is the Executive President of the Resource Center for Roma Communities (RCRC) in Cluj Napoca, Romania. Christina McDonald is the Manager of Sponsored Projects and Research at East Stroudsburg University, Pennsylvania, USA. Specifically, they were chosen because of their experiences with the issues of education and Roma minority in Romania. In addition, McDonald spent more than 10 years working on various educational issues for the Open Society Foundation (OSF) and Open Society Institute (OSI) in Central and Eastern Europe, and her work has an important role in this study. Thus the group contacted her for more information about her experiences in the field. Moisă was interviewed while the group was in Romania, whereas the interview with McDonald was conducted via a Skype call from Denmark. Both researchers agreed with the use of their names in this study.

Limitations of Data Collection Methods

Practical limitations to the fieldwork strategies undertaken for data collection include disadvantages in language, time, issues regarding consent, and comprehensiveness of records.

Language

We chose to focus on EFL classes for a couple of reasons. From a practical perspective: the language for the written report is English and therefore required minimal translation for the analysis. When necessary, translation was provided by the research member fluent in Romanian. The other reasons for choosing the focus on EFL classes will be discussed in the following chapter (Study Case).

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[11] Transcripts from P1 are P2 are not used directly in the paper.

Time

Clearly, time is a major limitation to this study. Traditionally ethnographers would stay for an extensive period of time to learn language, cultural features and norms, hence gain the position of an insider. *"Fetterman (1998:35) suggests a period of six months to one year as an appropriate time to engage with the language, observe patterns of behavior and allow the researcher to internalize the basic beliefs, fears, hopes and expectation of the people under study"* (Jones, 2010: 109). The timelines required for this research paper severely limited the practicality of a full ethnographic study, and therefore ethnographic methods served as an inspiration, rather than a rigid framework.

Fragmented Field

The current type of study could be described as a *fragmented field*, since time-constraints forced the research team to utilize different methods of co-constructing data, that vary and are non-consistent. Dorthe Staunæs explains how her study of two multiethnic classrooms in Denmark was based on a *fragmented field*, since her methods of obtaining data consisted of observations, interviews, the informants' own pictures, etc. (Staunæs, 2004: 76). Her study serves as an example for a way of doing a classroom ethnography inspired study, where the interplay between the various methods support one another. It enables the researcher to work outside the ethnographic tradition, where the researcher should immerse oneself in the field and use a considerable amount of time in order to establish a direct connection between the field observations, recordings and the informants. By being selective and connecting the data, it is possible to obtain the desired knowledge on the field in a significantly shorter time frame (Staunæs, 2004: 76). The *fragmented field*-type of study is 'exclusive' since it is the fieldworker who connects the different parts of the data to be analyzed. Hence, the interplay between the different types of data creates a picture as a whole (Rubow, 2010: 230-231). The visits at the school and interviews had been agreed in advance. Staunæs calls this *agreed anthropology* since our presence and the recordings are in a mutually agreed place and time frame (Staunæs, 2004: 75-78).

Informed Consent

For ethical reasons it is important to obtain *informed consent* from participants in research. The information given to the participants should include a statement of which form of data will be collected and how it will be used in the study (Silverman, 2005: 257-259)

Many of the contacts we had were set up prior to going to Romania. This was necessary due to the ethical aspects of recording a classroom. Since we were investigating a public institution, the school had to be properly informed of the purpose of the study. Consequently permission from the school, teachers and parents was necessary. For the school to be willing to set up cameras and film the classes, they had to approve of the project. Due to the informal nature of our contact to the school, the consent consisted of a verbal agreement[12].

Informed consent was likewise applicable for the interviews conducted in situ. An interviewee should be informed of the overall purpose of the research, and understand and agree on how the data obtained from the interview will be used. In doing so, the researchers should be aware of the balance between informing the interviewee sufficiently (in order to gain access) and not disclosing too much information which could interfere with interviewee's subjectivity and thus, jeopardize the purpose of the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2011: 89-91). At the school the principal gave permission to interview both him and his colleagues, if they agreed as well. Before we started recording the interviews, the informants both within and outside the school, were introduced to the overall purpose of the study, the questions in the interview guide and they had the opportunity to be anonymized.

Grounded Theory as an Ethnographic Analytical Method

This project uses Grounded Theory (GT) as a guiding method in the analysis. However, GT takes a different approach to traditional ethnography because it *"(...) gives priority to the studied phenomenon or process – rather than to a description of a setting"* (Charmaz, 2014: 38). In theory, GT both provides a framework for data co-construction and a tool for analyzing.

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[12] More information in the Study Case section on page 27.

"Stated simply, a Grounded Theory method consists of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories from the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2014: 1). Thus the data provides the 'ground' for the theory.

The method for developing theory has the researchers begin reviewing collected data immediately. The data is then marked with 'codes'. Codes are concepts or phenomena that are repeated throughout the data. The codes are then collected under concepts and then further into categories. Categories are then used to develop theories. More data can be collected and coded to further develop and refine the newly constructed theory (Charmaz, 2014: 113-115).

Why Grounded Theory

Whereas traditional ethnography has a clearly defined border between data collection and analysis, GT ethnographers keep an open-ended approach and move frequently between data collection and analysis. *"This logic aids in overcoming several ethnographic problems: accusations of uncritically adopting research participants' views; lengthy unfocused forays into the field setting; superficial random data collection; and reliance on stock disciplinary categories"* (Charmaz, 2014: 42).

The interactive approach to data co-construction and analysis proved to be an attractive feature in determining our research methodology. Ultimately we chose GT as the basis for analysis because it provided structure to data co-construction as well as allowed for a flexible theoretical answer to the research question. However, since its inaugural cutting edge publication, GT has matured into a number of differing versions. Sociologists Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss first explained their strategies for developing theories from data rather than developing testable hypotheses from existing theories in their research on dying patients in hospital settings published in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (1967) (Charmaz, 2014: 6).

Glaser and Strauss each had different academic views; their contrasting epistemological philosophies contributed to the development of GT (Columbia University *positivism* and

Chicago School *critical theory*) (Charmaz 2014: 8). Glaser was an advocate of positivism and therefore *"(...) imbued the method with dispassionate empiricism, rigorous codified methods, emphasis on emergent discoveries and (...) somewhat ambiguous specialized language (...)"* (Charmaz 2014: 9). Whereas Strauss, a student at Chicago University *"(...) brought notions of human agency, emergent processes, social and subjective meanings (...) and the open-ended study of action (...)"* (Charmaz, 2014: 9).

Since the initial publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967), GT has been refined by a number of other researchers, who were drawn to its ability to conjoin two philosophies (positivism and critical theory). In the 1990's researchers moved GT more towards its constructionist side.*"The constructivist approach treats the research as a construction but acknowledges that it occurs under specific conditions- of which we may not be aware and which may not be of our choosing"* (Charmaz, 2014: 13).

They emphasized grounded theories flexibility and discarded its mid-century assumption on an external, neutral and passive observer (Charmaz, 2014: 13).

The version of GT used for this paper is based on Kathy Charmaz's evolution of GT from the 1990's social constructionist versions. Charmaz explains how her version of GT developed due to her frustration over the fact that 1990's constructivist grounded theorists often *"(...) treated their analyses as accurate rendering of these worlds rather than as constructions of them (...)"* and that they *"(...) erased the subjectivity they brought to their studies rather than acknowledging it and engaging in reflexivity"* (Charmaz, 2014: 14).

We choose Charmaz's version of GT *"(...) because it acknowledges the subjectivity and the researcher's involvement in the construction and interpretation of data (...)"* (Charmaz 2014: 14). We believe that Charmaz's version distinctly imbues the idea that learning is ingrained into social life, and that this concept highlights the foundation of our research question.

How Grounded Theory is Performed

Grounding theories' base for analysis is coding. *"Coding is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing and emergent theory to explain these data"* (Charmaz, 2014: 113). Codes define in words what is happening in order to create generalizable theoretical statements that transcend time and place (Charmaz, 2014: 113).

It is important to use codewords that reflect actions. This avoids coding for types of people or individuals (Charmaz 2014: 116). Even so, coding remains a subjective process. *"Our perspectives, social locations, and personal and professional experiences affect how we code"* (Charmaz 2014: 118). For this study, our team benefited from comparing the differences in each member's coding of the same data, allowing us to overcome some of the subjectivity in the process.

The coding process can be divided into three phases, initial coding, focused coding and axial coding. *Initial coding* is the first process in which the researcher codes the phenomena, followed by *focused coding* where the researcher assesses endo-normatively the initial codes while constantly checking with the data. In *focused coding* the researcher investigates how well the initial codes accounted for the data (140).

The final phase, *axial coding*, allows the coding to be more systematic. *"During initial coding you fracture data into separate pieces and construct distinct codes. Axial coding is a strategy for bringing data back together again in a coherent whole"* (147).

While not necessarily revealed in the final written product, memo writing, the intermediate step between the coding process and developing the theory, is critical. Memo writing involves pausing to analyze codes and increase the level of abstraction. It gives the researchers time to reflect on the emerging categories.

Categories describe ideas, events or processes in the data. *"A category may subsume common themes and patterns in several codes"* (189). Categories are designed to be conceptual and abstract generalizations of codes, but are written out specifically.

Study Case

In order to engage in an 'ethnographic like' study, one had to find the context which would serve the purpose and aim of the problem formulation. Doing so, for us it meant to find a ethnically diverse community in Romania where one could record English lessons at the local school in order to examine and look for possible connections between classroom interaction and inter-ethnic relations.

As agreed with the informants, neither their identity nor the location of the school is disclosed in the study. At the same time, if one considers the constructionist epistemological and ontological position adopted in this study, this information could not strengthen or weaken the upcoming arguments. Also, a diverse community should not be understood as a community in which a certain or fixed number of ethnically diverse people is required in order to be classified as 'diverse'. For the purposes of this study a diverse community is defined as a community which according to the knowledge of (some of) the locals, there are at least a small number of ethnically diverse people residing within community.

The Focus on Language Classes

Firstly, it is necessary to explicate our motivation for researching EFL classrooms/lessons. Why would any lesson or subject matter performed by a diverse classroom not suffice for the purpose of the study?

Besides the methodological implications previously mentioned, it was important for the study to record English lessons because of the characteristic implications which English teaching and learning have in setting the context of a classroom. EFL classes are known to be 'different' than other subject matters, in terms of the approach to the teaching and learning process (Andersson, 1969; Peiser & Jones, 2013; Sun, 2013; Young & Sachdev, 2011). The transdisciplinary nature of the EFL classroom enables the teacher to be flexible and creative with both curricula and teaching methods (as the analysis will also show).

Transpose these characteristics of EFL lessons in the context of ethnically diverse classrooms, and the relevance of EFL classes opens another 'dimension'. This new dimension could be understood in terms of the 'seemingly neutral' ideological and linguistic space[13] into which both the ethnically diverse pupils and the teacher enter when engaged in an EFL lesson.

In this instance 'neutral' refers to the EFL classroom/context as being a sort of 'new' linguistic and cultural space into which the pupils intend to enter with the help of the teacher. In other words by 'neutral' one should understand that none of the individual involved in the EFL classroom are native speakers of English, thus both language and context are neutral to both pupils and teacher. The association of the term (neutral) with 'seemingly' is intentional because it should open space for further enquiry. Is it really neutral for everybody regardless of their mother tongue, ethnicity or social status? Thus, by engaging with EFL classes, the analytical dimension of classroom interactions opens up in various ways, as this study will exemplify in the upcoming analysis.

The School and the Community

The research team managed to contact and establish a relationship with one rural community from the vicinity of Cluj-Napoca[14]. The commune to which the village belongs has a population of approximately 2600[15], out of which the official number of Roma is unknown. The reason for this depends on the matter of self-identification, which is a common situation when it comes to the official number of Roma in general (Open Society Foundation, 2010: 62). From our informants we learned that the 'local knowledge', is that 'a number' of Roma families live in their commune.

The classes that have been recorded in this study were chosen to fit certain requirements: it had to consist of a multiethnic student body and it had to be EFL lessons. Namely they were supposed to be conducted by the same teacher in the same school. They were supposed to range

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[13] This will also be described further in the discussion on page 62.

[14] Cluj-Napoca is the second largest city in Romania. http://www.visitclujnapoca.ro/en/despre-cluj/istoria-cluj-ului/ (accessed 05.05.2016)

[15]http://www.recensamantromania.ro/noutati/volumul-ii-populatia-stabila-rezidenta-structura-etnica-si-confesionala/ (accessed 05.05.2016)

from 1st grade to 6th grade and be comprised (preferably) of pupils of both Romanian and Roma ethnicity.

With regards to the school, 180 pupils were enrolled at the time of the study in both kindergarten and elementary school (K-8). The official number of Roma pupils again is not available, but the school principal confirmed that there are couple of Roma pupils in each class, a situation to which we had to settle, considering that all the other leads and contacts refused to allow their English lessons to be recorded. It was indeed a compromise, but it was decided that even if we operate under the given presumptuous circumstances, the study could still be carried on, precisely because of goal of the study. Namely, the interest in the classroom interactions which will be discussed further. These interactions could be regarded as examples of micro manifestations of larger systems of organisation (social, political, economical) and as being independent of the actual number of Roma (or any other ethnicity) residing in the community or participating in the classrooms.

It is important to understand that the goal of the study is not to systematically identify how pupils of different ethnicities interact with the teacher or each other; nor is the goal to look for who discriminates who and why. Instead, the goal is to examine the multiethnic classroom interactions which are conditioned and structured by teaching/pedagogical methods (which in turn are conditioned by the socio-political, economical and historical context), in order to better understand the possible input and role which these methods could have in diverse classrooms and possibly in development of inter-ethnic relations.

Analysis

The following section consists of two parts. Firstly, Status Quo will introduce the current discourse around Roma and their opportunities for education. The section will consist of what was found from the interviews (performed during and after the field work), which will be supported by relevant literature. Here, the two main factors, that were found to be the issue

concerning the opportunities for Roma in the educational system, will be disclosed; namely, *segregation* and *schooling environment*. This serves as the contextual setting for the whole analysis and discussion, and aids in answering the problem formulation. As a public institution, the school, and what happens in the classroom, is affected by the general society and the discourses that prevail in it.

Secondly, the section called Classroom Interaction Analysis will analyze what phenomena are seen in the recordings of five EFL classes[16]. With the Status Quo as the contextual background, this section serves to illustrate how the teaching is carried out in diverse classrooms in Romania, and how the pupils respond to it. The analysis of the recordings builds on the methods of Grounded Theory, hence the aim is to reconceptualize the phenomena and create a new or different perspective on the data. This will be used for a later discussion of the status quo regarding education of Roma, and what kinds of teaching methods are used in the classrooms that this study reveals.

Status Quo

The following section will present the discourse pertaining to the Roma and their access to quality education. A number of articles on the current situation of the Roma in Romania will serve as the theoretical background to support the data obtained from the interviews with Florin Moisă, Christina McDonald, and the teachers T1 and T2.

The experiences of the Roma, related to the educational system in Romania, are interdependent with their experiences in the other aspects of societal life. The early experience with and within preschool and elementary school institutions affect their future possibilities significantly. Factors[17] that condition these experiences have been confirmed by Moisă and McDonald and will be used to outline the context in which the Roma currently find themselves.

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[16] The five classes to which we had access to record their English lessons are described in the Study Case section (see page 27).
[17] See the Introduction on page 3

A complex net of social, economic, political and cultural factors are tightly connected with inequity in education - and thus in everyday life of a considerable number of Roma. The following pages will shed light on these factors and their impact on the lives of Roma children and pupils. The main argument and the main challenge for the current state of Romanian education will be elaborated on below by presenting the two principal factors that affect it - segregation and schooling environment. The interviews (Appendix C, ex. 1) that were conducted, as well as the literature (e.g. Huttova et al, 2008: 39-40), indicate that the education and inclusion of the Roma pupils could be meaningful for the whole society. However, they also suggest that any sort of progress of the current situation is challenged by a common (mis)conception of ethnic difference which is viewed as impairment. Thus, the Status Quo section inquires into the main discourses pertaining to the situation of Roma children in education.

Segregation

The first part of this section investigates the segregation of Roma and the affect it has on their opportunity for education. Segregation occurs on the socio-economic and educational levels. The focal point of this study is education, since the access or lack of access to education in the case of Roma is closely related to their general opportunities in society.

Education for Roma is a concern that has been given much attention in recent years, and that has lead to programs and policies working on improving the situation.

"(...) however, these programmes are riddled with systemic problems and often fail to specifically address the segregation of Roma in education; miss precise targets for indicators and monitoring mechanisms; employ outdated methods and data; and lack consistency in funding and implementation" (Open Society Foundation, 2009: 5).

Inclusion of Roma into the society has and continues to be a goal for many NGO's concerned with desegregation. Their focus has been education, housing, employment and health (Open Society Foundation, 2010: 19).

The following part of Status Quo will entail the issues of segregation that the Roma encounter relating to their education. The social status of the Roma and its impact on their economic situation will be explained in order to clarify how it influence their opportunities for education.

Socio-economic Segregation

The discourse on the Roma in Romania is built on the general assumption that they are different from the majority of the society[18]. They are a minority group seen as 'the other' within the society. The ethnic Roma are referred to in a number of ways in Romania: Ţigani, Ciori etc. What terms the Roma use to identify themselves, and what terms are used by the mainstream society, can have an impact on social division.

In this study the term *Roma*[19] is used since it is the Romani word for the members of the group. Depending on the term that is used to describe the group, certain discourses can be maintained through language. Moisă emphasizes that: *"The word gypsy, ţigani, zigeuner, gitans, sinti, whatever, all these are given by others. (...) In the Romani language: 'me som Rom'. And Rom in a very deep root is human being"* (Appendix C, ex. 2). Thus, using negative loaded terms created by anyone other than the Roma themselves can be said to be a variation of 'linguistic colonization'[20], that enhances the negative discourse. Moisă stresses that if the Roma themselves wish to be called Ţigani it is *fine*. But the term has a lot of negative connotations, which the Roma might not realize enhance the negative discourse (Appendix C, ex. 2.1).

During an interview T1 stated that the pupils themselves claim to be *Ţigani* (equivalent to Gypsy). The issue is, according to her, not how they identify, but that they learn that *"(...) we all have the same rights, we are all equal human beings and that we have to learn how to get along with each other"* (Appendix B, ex. 1.2).

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[18] See Introduction on page 3
[19] See The Roma section on page 5
[20] By linguistic colonization one refers to that process in which an outsider, in this case non-Roma, attributes a term to a certain group of people, without considering nor consulting the opinion of the named group.

She continues by expressing that the pupils did not seem to know how to identify, but that they use *Ţigani* to refer to themselves, and *Ţigănie* to the place where they live. By identifying with this term they risk reproducing the social discourse that they are subjected to. The categorization of pupils as Ţigani appears to be the reason that many are left behind and not given the same opportunities as other pupils. In some cases they are subject to direct discrimination as exemplified by T1:

"I know for a fact from another teacher that she left all the Gypsies behind because she wanted to 'clean up' their class. And that's it. Simply because they are Gypsies" (Appendix B, ex. 1.3).

Moisă explains that the issue of segregation is anchored both in social and economic spheres. The discriminatory discourse creates a marginalized position for the Roma due to various social and socio-economic disadvantages.

In some Roma communities traditions are important for their self understanding, which further complicates the possibility to be included and keep up with the rest of the society. According to Moisă, the 'traditional Roma communities', meaning those who kept and depend on their old trades[21], could be regarded as being 'extra difficult' when it comes to their inclusion. Their way of living is not fully understood and even considered obsolete by the majority. Nevertheless, new technologies and media have a tendency of providing the children and young people with new and more critical perspectives (Appendix C, ex. 2.7).

The Roma communities had difficulties keeping up with the industrialization, social and cultural changes and economic development in Romania (Guy, 2001; Achim, 2004; Barany, 2002). They lost their traditional trades which was a loss of both identity and source of income. This created the need to strengthen traditions and forced the Roma to take less desirable jobs, moving them down on the socio-economic ladder and separating them further from mainstream society (Appendix C, ex. 2.3). In the traditional communities, certain rules are practiced to

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[21] Some examples of traditional Roma trades and crafts in Romania are (or were): *băieş* (mine worker) *lingurar* (spoon maker)*, căldărar* (craftsmen who produces and/or fixes brass vessels).

preserve and keep the culture. However, Moisă claims that this is a *mechanism of defence* that they (some Roma) appeal to, in order to preserve their ethnic identity (Appendix C, ex. 2.2).

Moisă explains that he often meets adult Roma who have never held a formal job and survive day to day on series of contractless, or temporary jobs. For many, it is difficult seeing the purpose of 12-years of education when an instant result of one's work is to provide bread on the table. In a similar way, cases when the parents have experienced exclusion and marginalization in schools enhances their mistrust of the schools. In some cases, because *"(...) the parents never went to school - they don't understand why it is important"* (Appendix C, ex. 2.15). Without an external influence from schools, social workers, policies etc, the poverty cycle will continue, since it is difficult to wait for the reward for their work when they are at the bottom of society. Education is the best way to break the cycle, Moisă argues (Appendix C, ex. 2.5).

T1 supports the claim that isolation of less fortunate communities worsens the poverty cycle:

"Many parents don't work. They don't have the possibility to travel to Bucharest or anywhere outside the village, so they have great difficulties commuting to a job if they find one. In the village there are almost no jobs. And many of them don't know how to read and write…many of them don't know how to sign their name" (Appendix B, ex. 1).

From a socio-economic perspective, residential segregation has a great impact. Jana Huttova et al. (2008) list two major causes for the current situation of the Roma in education: residential segregation and school segregation.

The issue of residential segregation has been brought into question through research which has shown that segregated housing is interrelated and in this case, directly affecting segregation in the neighborhood schools (Huttova et al., 2008: 40; Vincze, 2013).

Furthermore, although ethnic segregation in school has 'officially ended' with the *Desegregation Order no. 1540* of 2007 (Szakács, 2011: 129-130), children of marginalized

ethnic groups are still segregated in school but in a covert manner, as one of our informants states (Appendix B, ex. 1.3).

Huttova et al. conclude that the schooling situation of Roma children is a direct consequence of their segregated living (Huttova et al. 2008: 40-41). In some cases, eviction to the cities peripheries creates further residential segregation. This limits the displaced families from integrating into mainstream society and also affects the segregation from schools, the job market and healthcare.

The social status and socio-economic structures thus create a gap in society that hinders and complicates children's opportunities for equal education.

Education

The socio-economic factors presented above affect the education of Roma. The segregation of the Roma in the general society is interrelated with the segregation practiced in the education system.

The absence of the Roma children from the schooling process has for more than 15 years been seen as the most fundamental issue that they face (McDonald, 1999: 183). The effort needed to bring the children who come from less fortunate backgrounds in proper schools is a difficult task for many parents. There is a risk of a cycle of illiteracy in the sense that illiterate parents are unable to read or write the enrollment papers needed to sign up their children for school. Katy Negrin[22] from the EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program writes:

"Many Roma parents are illiterate and cannot read the notifications sent to them to enroll their children in kindergarten or school. In addition, families often live in marginalized settlements, often illegal or unregulated. Their children are not included in the usual call for enrolment, that is, Roma parents may not receive enrolment notification" (Negrin, 2005 in Bennett, 2010: 79).

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[22] Katy Negrin is also a senior editor of a series of OSF monitoring reports on Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma.

In many cases Roma settlements are isolated from the dominant society and the people in these settlements or communities are often located[23] at long distances from schools in the mainstream communities (Open Society Institute (Budapest) et al., 2007: 397).

Moisă emphasized his concerns on the impact that distance often has, when a child is to attend school. According to him, few Roma children attend preschool due to the geographical positions of the Roma communities - often far from schools:

"They don't go to preschool because they don't have one available. (...) If you live in a disadvantaged area, and there is no kindergarten near you. So the effort the parents need to do to in order to bring the child to kindergarten which is like 3 or 4 miles or kilometers or in the next village. It's huge for them. So they will prefer to keep the children there. But also I can say that in the traditional communities, kindergarten is not existing practically. The women are staying at home with the children (...)" (Appendix C, ex. 2.16).

The absence of the Roma children in the preschools affects their later appearance in elementary school. Roma children's attendance at preschool in Romania is lower than in elementary school (Sykora, 2010 in Bennett, 2010: 80)[24]. The tradition of keeping the children around the home further legitimizes their lack of attendance in preschool.

Children who attend school in Romania risk being placed in special schools and classes if they fall behind their peers. This is the case with many Roma, but also children from the majority group who come from less fortunate families (Appendix C, ex. 2.18). The placement of the children in certain classes due to their performance or ethnicity can be an issue that makes the segregation even more explicit. The separation of Roma children has become linked to ethnicity in spite of the claims that such classes have been created for all children affected by poverty (McDonald, 1999: 194).

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[23] It has to be mentioned that in some occasions, their residence might be the result of a forceful eviction (see Vincze 2013)

[24] (Bennett, 2010: 79) Sykora for UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS op. cit. 2010 p. 12.

"The society is moving fast, very fast. If you don't keep the pace with society, you will just remain very, very back. The effort needed to bring back people who are left there, to the mainstream, is huge (...) Imagine how much effort your parents did for you. How much effort was done for each child that is let's say average today, from the first day of life, from the first kindergarten and school and homeworks and everything. It is a huge effort. You cannot estimate the real cost of it" (Appendix C, ex. 2.8).

The possibility of Roma-only schools have been contemplated in Romania. McDonald explains that during her work in Eastern Europe, the topic of Roma-only schools was a part of the general discussion on integration and segregation. She states that from a Roma rights' perspective they:

"(...) were very fearful of any Roma school to be created, for fear again that segregation is unequal education. And scientifically it has been proven that integrated schools: the minority kids perform better. So having social interaction with their (...) majority peers (...) impacts their learning outcomes and their social outcomes" (Appendix C, ex. 1.7).

The argument is that *anything separate is unequal* (Appendix C, ex. 1.6). Separate schools will therefore only worsen the situation, since the problem in the first place is social separation from the dominant society. Thus, the main argument stressed by McDonald is that integration should always be prioritized over segregation in order to decrease the negative discourse and poverty (Appendix C, ex. 1.8).

This section has introduced the socio-economic conditions which affect education for the Roma in Romania today. The specific focus on the two levels of segregation presented above served to underline the complexity of the situation that the Roma minority finds itself in. The next section investigates the schooling environment in Romania, and how it influences the education of Roma.

Schooling Environment

Since a classroom could be seen as a "micro-cosmos" on its own, it is important to pay attention to the phenomena that are manifested there. McDonald notes that the interactions between the pupils and teachers are critical, and can change children's lives (Appendix C, ex. 1.2). However, education represents a "shaky" ground, for it can serve as a tool for both integration and exclusion of the minority children (Huttova et al., 2008: 26). Therefore, teaching methods and classroom interactions which might affect the diverse classroom environment will be investigated in the second half of the analysis, and further elaborated on in the discussion.

In order to create a space where all children can express their needs, traditions, values, etc. regardless of their cultural, religious, or ethnic background (in other words, to set a ground for multiethnic education) McDonald (Appendix C, ex. 1.3) emphasizes that new teaching methodologies and principles have to be introduced into education. This can only be done by challenging the biases and prejudices which are inscribed in people's everyday practices. It can be argued that these (biases and prejudices) exist due to the negligence of difference and simply understanding it as a disability (Huttova et al., 2008: 27-36)

According to Moisă, breaching the preconceptions about Romani pupils, as well as breaking the cycle of poverty and segregation is highly dependent on the teacher's effort to support the pupils in the learning process (Appendix C, ex. 2.4). Only when this is done, once the needs of the minority pupils are considered, the children will respect the school and feel included in the wider collective (Appendix C, ex. 2.11).

The role of teaching methods and classroom interactions in this process is vital. One of the starting points can be reconsidering the curricula that are currently used in the schools. Moisă (Appendix C, ex. 2.12) points out that the curricula needs to reflect the life of the child. A similar point can be found in the work of Huttova et al. (2008: 44) who claim that the curriculum content and teaching methods do not correspond to the diversity of the student body. The lack of representation of any group taking part in the education supposedly encourages their exclusion.

The issues with the curricula are manifold: from linguistic exclusion to teacher-centered approaches and monoethnic curriculum. Linguistic exclusion is a significant issue, and often results in classifying the pupils as children with intellectual disabilities and consequently placing them into special schools (Open Society Foundation, 2009: 7). The belief that they cannot keep up with the learning process results in the placement into separate classes, even schools (Open Society Foundation, 2009: 7). McDonald (Appendix C, ex. 1.5) is adamant in saying that the curricula need to be diversified in terms of language and content from early education. She mentions that there have been initiatives to implement Romani language classes at some schools, nevertheless more effort is necessary in order to help establish multiethnic education.

The problematic school situation, where the teachers do not pay attention to the pupils' needs and consider them incapable of following the subject matter or interacting with their peers, often goes hand in hand with resistance to including the Roma children in the schooling by whole communities (Open Society Foundation, 2009: 6).

Moisă and McDonald mention **two initiatives** that have been launched with the aim to improve the current state of affairs namely, the low capacity of schools to handle discrimination (Open Society Institute (Budapest) et al., 2007: 332). The first group are the community mediators, the second are teacher assistants. Both are focused on improving the communication between the Roma communities and the educational institutions, although differences can be found in some instances.

There are two types of **community mediators** described by Moisă – health and school mediators (Appendix C, ex. 2.14). The school mediators are trained and employed by the school which is managed by the local government, and thus is financed by the state. They step in when a Roma community requires help with managing the children's school attendance, teacher-pupil and teacher-parent communication, as well as to ensure that the children have ID cards. Since many parents encountered difficulties, with education and institutions in general, there is a high level of circularity to the distrust on the part of the parents towards their children's participation in the classes. The school mediator's role is to negotiate with the parents about the importance of

their children's education and at the same time make sure that the children are not left out from the schooling process.

Many communities' living conditions are undermined by poverty which make the access to education increasingly difficult for the children. Some Roma children are circumstantially born into large unemployed families, where the poor housing conditions of the hovels or slums aggravate social and individual handicaps, disabilities or chronic health problems (Bennet, 2010: 79). These disabilities (learning disorders or otherwise) range from a spectrum of mild forms of impairment to mental disability. Bennett stresses that although there is better recognition of these children who do infact have disabilities versus those who are just behind in school, they are continuously being segregated to special schools rather than mainstream public schools, where they could have the opportunity to integrate themselves in society. The health mediators' job is then to raise awareness about the importance of healthy and safe environment for the children within the Roma communities, health system, as well as educational institutions. The prevention of the unjust placement of healthy Roma children into special classes or schools is one the crucial steps to creating educational environment based on multiethnic principles.

The **teacher assistant** position was implemented as a part of anti-bias education[25]. Educators who undergo the program (Education for Social Justice Program - ESJP) are trained to raise awareness about the discriminative practices in education which "feed" the inequity between the Roma communities and their Romanian counterparts (Appendix C, ex. 1.4). Their role is extremely important because, as Moisă concluded, the problem of educational exclusion and segregation, as well as low performance of minority children, need to be addressed immediately (Appendix C, ex. 2.10). Huttova et al. (2008: 27-28) note that it is up to the whole community of parents, teachers, and institutions to actively work on bridging the gap between the Roma parents and schools.

However, Moisă (Appendix C, ex. 2.13) also points out that the curriculum is becoming increasingly difficult and the teaching jobs are highly undervalued. If the curriculum is challenging for the majority pupils as well as for the teachers, one has to realize how big of an

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[25] For more information about the ESJP program refer to International Step by Step Association: http://www.issa.nl/members/program_news_ESJ.html (03/05/16)

obstacle it will present for the minority children from disadvantaged communities. More so in the rural areas where the teachers' chances to undergo continuing education are significantly lower than those of the urban teachers (Appendix B, ex. 2.).

The community mediators who can create a bridge between the Roma and the schools are endangered by limited funding and a net of bureaucratic regulations (Open Society Institute (Budapest) et al., 2007: 332). On the other hand, the report mentions that there is a noticeable progress in terms of Romani language and teachers being incorporated into the mainstream institutions (Open Society Institute (Budapest) et al., 2007). The remaining problem is still the one emphasized by Moisă - the lack of representation of Roma in the curricula.

Education: The Basic Issues

As suggested by researchers (e.g. Huttova et al., 2008; McDonald 1999; Cozma et al., 2000; Open Society Foundation, 2010) and supported by the informants contacted in the field, many of the Romanian Roma face innumerable issues when accessing education. A number of policies and projects[26] have been implemented by the Romanian government with the set goal to improve the overall condition of the Roma, yet the adverse situation remains (Open Society Institute (Budapest) et al., 2007: 332). According to Moisă (Appendix C, ex. 2.9), they have 'failed completely' despite all the available resources, still a lot of effort is needed for the reforms to work effectively. In order to create an inclusive space where these reforms can be carried out, the society needs to become aware of the outcomes and implications which can arise from ignoring the Roma issues.

This is important because the Roma - the largest minority group in Europe - belong to some of the most vulnerable groups in terms of marginalization and educational and social exclusion (Huttova et al., 2008: 39). Open Society Foundation (2009: 2) asserts that education is crucial to tearing down the circle of marginality and poverty inscribed in Roma experience in

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[26]"Strategy for the Improvement of the Condition of the Roma" (2001); The Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups, with a Special Focus on Roma (2003)"; "The Decade of Roma Inclusion" (2005-2015)"

Romania. This claim is supported by Moisă, who states that education is the best way of breaking the circle of poverty. The role of other institutions, such as social security and local authority support, is vital (Appendix C, ex. 2.5). The current status of education in Romania could be suggesting that the Romanian society might not be encouraging multicultural views. Huttova et al. (2008: 43) mention that:

"[...] both the formal and informal school curricula are biased against minority cultures by attaching higher status to a White, middle-class culture, and thereby marginalizing expressions of minority cultures [...]"

Thus, the underlying problem in this area is that **difference is understood as a disability**. Arguably, the racist discourse is present in the educational setting just as it is on the wider societal level. There are two major points of departure for the discussion of this situation in education and its link with social matters: segregation and the schooling environment.

The teachers' qualifications, expectations and attitudes indicate the quality of education that can be offered to the pupils, and are crucial for the minority pupils' experience in the educational institutions and their further involvement in society at large. The pupils' learning outcomes are proportionate to the quality of teaching (Huttova et. al., 2008: 42). In other words, the pupils' success or failure is to a high extent dependent on the teaching methods. In the environment where the children are not supported, where their needs are neglected, exclusion becomes the "easy" option.

Moisă stresses that schools have to consider the Roma children's needs and tailor the curricula accordingly (Appendix C, ex. 2.11, 2.12). Only when the child sees itself reflected in and understood by the environment around him, he can leave the trap of marginalization.

Since segregation has been the common 'solution' to the problem, we should keep in mind that segregation, in all of its forms and aspects, creates inequity. More importantly, integrated schools and inter-ethnic contact could provide the context necessary for the amelioration of the performance of Roma pupils at school, as well as the improvement of the mutual relationship between the minority and majority pupils. Since minorities' academic

achievements in Europe are generally weaker than those of majority pupils' (Huttova et al., 2008: 31), this point is more than relevant here.

Moisă remarks that the importance of school attendance is often neglected by the Roma parents themselves. Not having undergone or finished their schooling, they can underestimate the role of education in their children's life (Appendix C, ex. 2.17). It is up to the society to take action in order to put an end to the negligence and indifference, and to stop the trend of segregating the Roma children (Appendix C, ex. 2.16). This can be done only by raising the quality of education (Appendix C, ex. 1.2).

To conclude this section, we will support these aforementioned claims by a reference to Huttova et al.:

"Any type of segregated education is regarded as problematic for two main reasons: firstly, it's an obstacle to society's wider goal of social integration, and secondly because of the adverse effects of social composition on student attainment. There is compelling evidence concerning the peer effects of segregation on student outcomes, where the positive impact on achievement levels resulting from a greater mix of abilities exceeds any negative impact on the achievements of high-attaining students" (Huttova et al., 2008: 40)

Therefore, the underlying argument is that the education of Roma impacts them on individual, communal, and societal level, and can lead the society towards a more just and democratic future. The current section aimed to introduce the context of education in which the classroom recordings took place. The teacher and expert interviews were used to outline the main issues and challenges pertaining to the Romanian education in relation to its biggest minority, the Roma. Both the literature used in the study and the findings from the field point to the existence of racialized discourse in the Romanian educational system. The Status Quo analysis implies that a significant amount of work with regard to curriculum and teaching methods is necessary in order to establish a more inclusive schooling environment on the national level. The following section presents the analysis of classroom interactions on the local level.

Classroom Interaction Analysis

The following section picks up from the assertion made by Huttova et al. (2008:40-44), in which they attribute the problem of school segregation to be one of the main cause of difficulties that Roma children face in schools in Romania. As previously said, since 2007 in Romania, ethnic segregation in schools was abolished from a legal perspective, but as suggested by the information gathered from the field, considerable questions are raised. Is school segregation, of Roma pupils, really a matter of history? Or is it still there? And if so, in which manner does it manifest itself?

To grapple with these questions in this paper, it is possible to investigate such issues by looking into the interactions[27] of multiethnic classrooms[28]. In other words, the upcoming section will look into *the interactional and structural components of the teaching methods pertaining to the multiethnic EFL classrooms, and how these could components affect the classrooms' ethnic diversity.*

It has to be stressed again, that the central elements of interest for the current study are the **interactions conditioned and generated by the governing teaching methods**[29] used by the teacher during the English lessons. In other words, how the pedagogical context influences interactions, must be taken into account. In the current study, Grounded Theory (GT) methods have been used as guiding (not canonical) analytical methods for the empirical material recorded from the EFL multiethnic classrooms. The use of GT methods enabled the researchers to

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[27] Due to the nature of the empirical data, it is not of interest for the current paper whether the teacher treats or not pupils differently because of their ethnicity or phenotypes. Of course such events would have been relevant, but they lack from the data. Thus, what concerns the current study are the classroom interactions and their possible input into the inter-ethnic relations.

[28] During the length of the paper the term *multiethnic classroom, diverse classroom,* or simply *classroom,* refer to the same context, namely those classrooms which are constituted pupils of at least two ethnicities without considering the rapport between them. As well, as previously stated regarding the matter of identity and self identification, we are not concerned whether the pupils identify themselves as being Roma or not (or any other ethnicity).

[29] In the current study, the term *interactions* refers both teacher-pupil interaction as well pupil-pupil interaction, because both are under the influence of the governing teaching method(s) which will be further explicated.

identify, code, categorize and conceptualize the phenomena which concerns the classroom interactions and most importantly, 'forced' the analytical process to align itself with the empirical material.

The difficulties, from a GT perspective, in the analysis of audio-video recordings would consist in finding the right balance between descriptive and conceptual writing; between inductive, deductive and abductive reasoning (Charmaz, 2014), as well in finding the right balance between emic and etic perspectives; all while keeping track of our objective and problem formulation.

In order to do so we have decided on structuring the following stretch of the analysis as follows. The first section would present both theoretical and practical limitations pertaining to the analysis. The second section would comprise of a descriptive and analytical overview of the methodological steps which were followed, and led the team to code, group, categorize and conceptualize the interactional phenomena under study. The final section would then serve as a brief sum up to this section of the analysis.

Limitations

To begin with, it has to be stressed that GT principles are being used only in the analysis of the classroom recordings. During the length of the study, the main limitation consisted in getting access to schools; this situation reduced the possibilities to co-construct an extensive data corpus of recordings and interviews. Without having the possibility of following up on the data co-construction process after further developing our theoretical sensitivity (Charmaz, 2014: 29-30), the team was limited to a one time shot at co-constructing a decent data corpus. Other significant limitation can be identified in the limited amount and diversity of classroom recordings. We were able to record only one EFL session from five different classes (1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th and 6th grades), totaling to approximately 5 hours of audio-video recordings. Without having the possibility for an endonormative comparison for the methods specific for each class,

the goal of the analysis is then to paint a general overview of the interactions generated by the teaching methods used in all classes.

Reconceptualizing Classroom Interaction

The 'nature' of the schooling environment, generally in Romania (and probably in other countries), has certain particularities when it comes to the types of interactions available between teacher and pupils and pupils amongst themselves. The teacher is directing the lessons according to his/her lesson plan which in turn has to be in sync with the **curricula**; curricula which according to Moisă (Appendix C, 2.12) and Huttova et al. (2008: 44) are of essence when it comes to bettering the educational context for all pupils, especially but not only for those belonging to an ethnic minority. Thus, the aim is to look into what the generative powers of curricula are, in terms of classroom interaction.
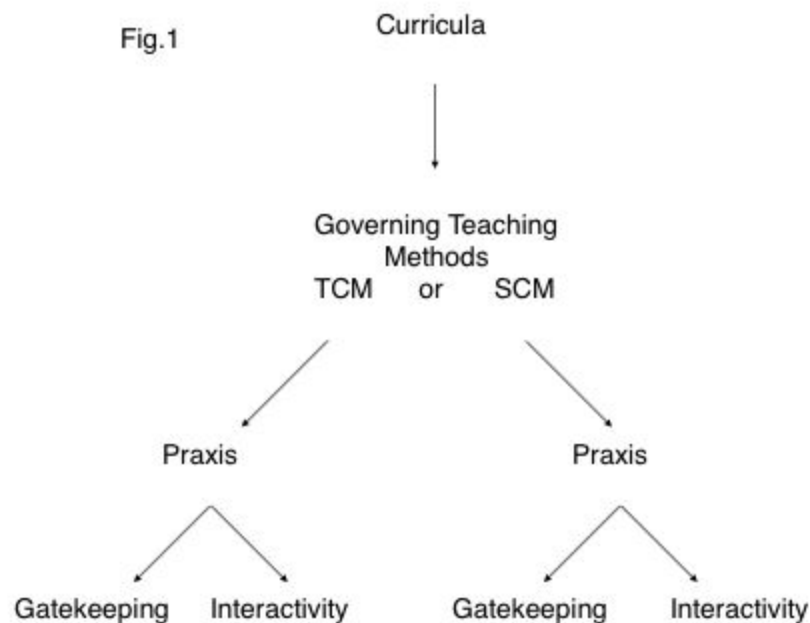

Fig.1

Figure 1 illustrates the chain of influences embedded in the educational process which is of interest for the current paper and which will be further elaborated.

The **main phenomena** observable in the classroom will be henceforth referred to as *Praxis* in order to underline its practical nature. In doing so, one aims at separating the structural components (curricula and governing teaching methods) from the interactional components (the classroom interactions/Praxis) so that one can better underline and exemplify the relations between structure-interaction and their effect on inter-ethnic relations.

As illustrated in Fig. 1 the term *Praxis* encompasses the classroom interactions (relevant for our frame of enquiry) which take place under the influence, or as a result of the governing teaching methods (GTM) (table 1: marked red), which in turn are conditioned by the curricula.

But before explaining what *Praxis* is, a clarification of what it is meant by **governing teaching methods** is needed. They can be described as being a mix of 'classical' teacher-centered methods (TCM) with student-centered methods (SCM)[30].

By TCM we refer to those teaching methods in which the teacher's role is to direct the lesson, and the pupils role is to attempt to 'learn' as much as they can, both in school and at home (homework). The teacher directs the lesson from the front of the classroom while the pupils (seated individually or in pairs) face the teacher in a quiet and orderly manner in order to incorporate and make sense, as best as possible, of the instructions/information coming from the teacher.

The second, but less common SCM, can be described as the method of teaching which came into existence as an oppositional response to the 'classical' TCM. Student-centered methods thus shift the center of attention and the center of knowledge production, from the teacher to the student, hence encouraging the students to develop in a more autonomous manner (compared to TCM). In theory, SCM help students acquire life-lasting learning skills and practices in an 'organic' self-paced, self-regulated manner (Catalano and Catalano, 1999: 59-62; Papalia, 1976: 48-50 and Sweeney, 2011).

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[30]In terms of keeping in line with the school program and the curricula TCM is considered to be more time efficient than SCM, even though the teacher is well aware of the possible benefits of the latter (personal communication from the headmaster and English teacher).

By **interactions** we refer to those classroom manifestations conditioned and generated by the governing teaching methods employed by the teacher. This means that the analysis will focus on the (possible) effect of these methods rather than on teaching method itself. By doing so, the attention will turn to the 'channels' of interaction which are 'naturally' part and parcel of the governing teaching method. In other words, we will attempt to unpack the classroom interactions in order to see how they change (or could change) when the governing teaching methods change; and to see if these changes in interaction impact (or not) and/or affect (or not) the alleged[31] inter-ethnic relations present in the classrooms.

The term *Praxis* should be understood not in the Marxist sense (Wenger, 1998: 281), but as the term which describes the main phenomena indexing the classroom interactions, as illustrated below in Table 1. The interactions coded **Gatekeeping** (the activity/interactions generated by the teacher) and **Interactivity** (the activity/interactions generated by the pupils) are the two **main categories** forming *Praxis* (each main category has its own subcategories which will later be explicated).

Table 1

Teacher-centered methods (TCM) or Student-centered methods (SCM)			
Praxis			
Gatekeeping		**Interactivity**	
Feedback	**Organization**	**Cooperation**	**Engagement**
Orating	Scaffolding	Browsing/Scanning	Scanning/Scanning
Tending	Channeling	Enquiring/Inquiring	Inquiring/Inquiring

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[31] Here one has to consider the limitation regarding the question of identity and identification discussed earlier (see page 15)

Gatekeeping

Before we start explaining what *Gatekeeping* is and what its function is within the analysis, one has to remind that, the governing teaching methods which the teacher uses can be described roughly as a mixture of (predominantly) TCM and (on occasions) SCM.

The category called *Gatekeeping* refers to the activity of the teacher, activity which positions the teacher in the role of a conductor between the structure set by curricula and delivered through the GTM employed by the teacher which conditions the classroom interactions.

By naming this category *Gatekeeping*, we intend to underline complexity of the role of the teacher and of the phenomena pertaining to this role which can be observed in the data. In other words, the attention turns to the input/contribution of the teacher into the multiethnic classroom *Praxis*.

In layman's terms a gatekeeper is that individual who has the task to secure anyone's access to certain things or places. In this case, the teacher has the role of a gatekeeper to 'information/knowledge land', a 'land' where pupils (allegedly) ought to and want to enter. The term here is used in the form of an -ing verb, which informs us of the fact that it is an ongoing (not finite) action, thus underlining the fluidity of teaching methods (the interchangeability between TCM and SCM). It the context of this paper, *Gatekeeping* serves as a flexible analytical concept/category which conceptualizes the activity, responsibility and input of the teacher into the multiethnic classroom *Praxis*.

In order to better understand what *Gatekeeping* is and what its role in the analysis is, an explanation through its constituting elements is necessary. This brings us back to the coding process where two distinct types of phenomena emerged from the data as part of the category *Gatekeeping*, which were categorized as *Feedback* and *Organization*.

Feedback

Feedback is one major interactional element which appears to bear significant weight in classroom *Praxis*. *Feedback* should be regarded as having two characteristics, namely it can be seen as being a by-product of the teaching method (TCM or SCM), and it should be seen also as possessing generative capabilities. This means that classroom *Feedback* is not mere feedback, it is also a driving force for the interactions, it conditions the subsequent interactions. Thus, the category *Feedback* as part of the *Gatekeeping* phenomena refers to both; types of interactions which are **generated** by the governing teaching methods and also to its **generative** capabilities. Within *Feedback*, two main subcategories were identified: *Orating* and *Tending* (as shown in Table 1).

Orating

The first subcategory and most present phenomenon in the data, is called *Orating.* By this we refer to those instances when the teacher is responding or adding input to pupils cues (which could take the form of questions or to situations where the teachers added input is required) in such a manner that the **whole class** can hear the answer or instructions, thus avoiding to use time for answering individually (Appendix A, ex. 1 and 1.1). It is a common situation **generated** and encountered in the context of TCM, where the instructions given to a whole class simultaneously, unavoidably create a multitude of questions and situations, to which the most efficient (time wise) way to respond is by offering additional information in the same collective manner.

Orating is less visible in the data after the shift to SCM[32], due to the nature of the interactions and tasks. By setting the students in groups, the instructions delivered to the whole class can be further elaborated and questions clarified firstly within the study group before the teacher's input is called upon, thus allowing the teacher to perform a variation of *Feedback* what was called *Tending*.

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[32] A clear change in teaching method from TCM to SCM is visible during the recorded lessons in the 1st grade (after min. 21), 2nd (after min. 26), 4th (after min. 28), 5th (after min. 17) and the 6th grade (after min. 4).

On the one hand, in terms of the generative capabilities or effects of *Orating* on the multiethnic classroom one could say that this method is somewhat neutral, approaching the whole class without lendings itself to the 'dangers' of discriminatory selectiveness. On the other hand, *Orating* does not seem to address the diversity of learner types and needs pertaining to the multiethnic classroom. By considering everybody equally receptive and stimulated by this type of interaction, some pupils (in theory) might be left out. Even though the data does not directly support this sort of effect, it does support the existence of the phenomena *Orating*. Thus, it can be said that *Orating* (could) covertly discourage those types of learners which do not identify with the 'whole class' or who could just be a different type of learner with a different type of intelligence (Gardner, 1985).

Tending

The second subcategory is called *Tending* and refers to those instances where the teacher offers an **individual response** to a pupil's cue; cue which most of the time takes the form either of a question, a comment which has the function, or is interpreted as a form of enquiry (Appendix A, ex. 1.3), or a lack of response (Appendix A, ex. 1.4), all which **generate** a response from the teacher's behalf, response which is directed at one specific pupil.

According to the informants met in the field, SCM and thus its characteristic group/individual *Tending*, is regarded as time consuming and possibly ineffective method of offering feedback or additional information, for the right reasons. Imagine a teacher answering to all or most pupils questions individually, it would fragment the flow of the lesson to the point where the lesson plan and goals are unattainable.

Having said this, it must be stressed that it is also noticeable in the data, that *Tending* appears more often in the context of SCM - but not exclusively. *Tending* is also part of TCM, but to a marginal extent, regarded more as a 'time-consuming' method than a valuable tool.

What is of important to underline at this moment is that in the context of SCM the students are allowed and encouraged by the structure of the task to cooperate and solve problems

at group level, relying on each other's knowledge and capabilities. The teacher is able to tend to groups and individuals (Appendix A, ex. 4.1) in detail, having more time to spend with each group before moving to the next group.

In terms of the possible **generative** capabilities in the multiethnic classroom, *Tending* in the context of TCM could generate feelings of 'being discriminated' given the nature of the context, in which the teacher can tend to one pupil at the time, thus unavoidably leaving others unattended. The opposite can be said about *Tending* in SCM context, where diverse pupils work together in groups before asking for support from the teacher. Thus, *Tending* to a whole diverse group can be seen as a method which reduces the possibility of involuntary exclusion of certain pupils. The inclusive properties of *Tending,* in the context of SCM, could be said to 'function' regardless of the ethnic diversity of a given classroom, because of its structure not because of how it is used by the teacher. This should serve as an example of how a different curriculum, one with an emphasis on SCM, would change the dynamic of the classroom interaction, and maybe even the development of further inter-ethnic relations.

Having exemplified some of the implication of *Feedback,* as an elemental part of the *Gatekeeping* phenomena, one has to further describe the other main element, namely the category called *Organization.*

Organization

By *Organization*, one refers to those elements of *Gatekeeping* which can be roughly described as the structural elements/components which are used by the teacher during the lessons (classroom organization, types of tasks, materials used); elements whose characteristics vary depending on the governing teaching method (TCM or SCM). In order to explicate on the meaning and role of *Organization,* a further breakdown is required. As one can see in Table 1, two distinct subcategories emerged from the data: *Scaffolding*, *Channeling*.

Scaffolding

This subcategory indexes the phenomena which can be observed in the data as those instances where the teacher uses either a ritual[33] (the first few minutes of each classroom are dedicated to such rituals), or when the teacher appeals to some *a priori* knowledge which the pupils could have gained either in another subject matter in school or in their daily life (household items and activities) (Appendix A, ex. 4.2 and 4.3) for the purpose of structuring and delivering the lesson plan.

Thus, *Scaffolding* in the EFL classroom can have a complex role and can take different shapes and forms. What is relevant for the current analysis are the possible roles and properties of *Scaffolding,* and not the types nor shapes of it.

A major limitation in discussing *Scaffolding* rests on the fact that one cannot detect what pupils actually know or do not know, one can only observe the presence and effect of the teacher's *Scaffolding* in how the pupils react/interact in various instances, as it will be shown in the following section.

In the context of TCM, *Scaffolding* relies on the **individual** a priori knowledge of each pupil, which could of course exclude some of the pupils. The implicit assumption of *Scaffolding* in TCM context, by which all (or most) pupils are expected to understand and perform according to the structure and delivery of the lesson plan, creates the possibility of some pupils to fall and even remain behind the rest of the class. A recurrent and notable characteristic of *Scaffolding* in the context of TCM, can be observed in those instances when the teacher repeatedly relies on one or a couple of what are considered to be 'good' pupils (the ones who the teacher knows that possess this required a priori knowledge) to either stimulate the other pupils or to carry the lesson forward. Of relevance are as well, are those instances when the teacher encourages the pupils to rely on other sources of knowledge like: dictionaries or textbooks (Appendix A, ex. 5.1 and 5.2). This as well can be seen as an appeal to the individual's a priori knowledge or ability (how to use a dictionary or the textbook).

Thus, it can be said that in the context of TCM, the teacher's *Scaffolding* appeals to the individual, thus creating the situation in which those who know what is expected of them

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[33] At beginning and ending the lesson, as a means to set the pupils in and out the context of the lesson.

participate in the lesson, and those who do not are 'marginalized', not intentionally, but systemically.

What is notable and consistent in the data is that when the governing teaching method shifts towards SCM, all the instances categorized and described as *Scaffolding* seem to function at a different more effective and inclusive level. For example, if pupils are encouraged to work together, they create a common pool of a priori knowledge to which all the involved pupils can add and benefit from. This supports the inclusion of pupils regardless of their differences, as well as enabling the teacher to move further with the lesson (Appendix A, ex. 5.3).

Channeling

This subcategory refers to a number of phenomena or instances. On one hand it refers to those instances where the teacher checks for comprehension or engages either the whole class or at group level, or by engaging with one individual pupil (Appendix A, ex. 1.5). On the other hand it refers to those instances where the teacher is directing or drawing the attention of the pupils towards a new task (Appendix A, ex. 1.6) or back on to an ongoing one (Appendix A, ex 5.4).

The phenomena can be identified in the data as the sequences initiated by the teacher with a specific intention. It is not a reaction to the pupil's cues as *Feedback* is, thus it can be said that the role of *Channeling* in *Gatekeeping* is one of generating interaction with the pupils for the purpose of moving forward the lesson plan whilst in the same time making sure that children are engaged and focused.

In terms of the possible input of *Channeling* on a diverse classroom, the data repeatedly shows how individual *Channeling,* in the context of TCM, is a far less inclusive tool than *Channeling* in SCM context, where pupils (regardless of their ethnicity) engaged at group level have better chances of clarifying the instructions received at group level; and also have better chances of keeping each other involved and focused with the task in hand (Appendix A, ex. 5.5).

To sum up the main category *Gatekeeping,* one can say that the phenomena under scrutiny revealed some of the complexities pertaining to the multiethnic classrooms to which we had access to. These insights revealed some of the possible effects which a shift in curricula ergo

teaching methods (from TCM to SCM) could have over the diverse classroom environment. In the following section, the attention will be direct towards the 'other side of the coin', namely the second **main category** *Interactivity*.

Interactivity

The second main category of *Praxis* refers chiefly to the interactional activity of the pupils. In other words, if the previous section questioned the activity of the teacher one can say that this category starts from asking the question 'what are the students doing during the ELF lessons?'

During the coding process what became evident was the fact that the activity of the students could be divided into two dimensions - *Cooperation* and *Engagement* - which are represented in Table 1. What was decided then to be excluded from the analysis of the pupils activity, was the dimension which concerned their own cognitive and internal mechanisms used in solving individual tasks and other activities to which we have no intention nor possibility to access.

In the following section, the subcategories of *Interactivity*, **Cooperation** and **Engagement,** will be explicated in the context of the interchanging governing teaching methods (TCM or SCM). This would enable to see if, and if so how, these categories could change and weigh into the development of the interactions of a diverse classroom.

Cooperation

The phenomena coded and categorized as *Cooperation* refers to those instances where the pupils are involving, each other or the teacher, in interaction. In other words, *Cooperation* indexes **the interactions generated by the pupils** not by the teacher.

In order to begin and unpack the complexity of the process, it is necessary to discuss the two sets of subcategories relevant for the current study called **Browsing/Scanning** and **Enquiring/Inquiring.** They are brought forward to the detriment of other elements pertaining to

the activity of the pupils which are independent from the activity of the teacher (e.g. the explicit mode of cooperation of student-student, their internal mechanisms - emotional and psychological) because they are either impossible to detect and analyze, or they lack the interactional facets which concern the current problem formulation.

This means that the two subcategories, referring to those instances where the pupils either perform *Browsing/Scanning* and *Enquiring/Inquiring* are of relevance because they present a level of flexibility, meaning that they are context dependent, and because it is a phenomenon present in the data. By saying that these subcategories are context dependent one suggests (and exemplified below) that they appear in the data interchangeably, depending on the GTM context (either TCM or SCM).

Browsing/Scanning

The name of this subcategory describes the type of activity which the students are performing, in the context of TCM; namely it points to both, the casually act of 'looking' (browsing) and the more systematic and formal action of looking (scanning), for other possible sources of information/help, other than the teacher.

In other words, it can be said that in the context of TCM, the students seem to perform *Browsing*. This could be interpreted as a direct result of the fact that they are expected to perform the task alone, and seeking for peer help could be interpreted as not within the frame of the tasks (Appendix A, ex. 1.7 and 1.8). Another characteristic of *Browsing* is that it occurs without the explicit suggestion from the teacher. All these properties of *Browsing* suggest that these diverse pupils possess the propensity for searching help from their peers even if the context is not facilitating such interactions.

This brings us to the next point, where the situation emerges during the lessons and the governing teaching methods shift from TCM to SCM[34]. In this new context, the activity described above and categorized as *Browsing,* evolves/changes into what is categorized as

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[34] This is observable during the recorded lessons in the 1st grade (after min. 21), 2nd (after min. 26), 4th (after min. 28), 5th (after min. 17) and the 6th grade (after min 4).

Scanning

Intentionally using a slightly different term underlines the subtlety and importance of the activity performed by the pupils in different pedagogical context (TCM or SCM). *Scanning* implies a more methodical, careful examination of the possibilities of finding support from their peers. Also, *Scanning,* is a part of the task indicated by the teacher, thus the pupils are both allowed and encouraged to search more efficiently for other sources of information (Appendix A, ex. 1.9; 4.4; 5.5).

What is of relevance and importance to point out here, is the fact that the shift from TCM to SCM visibly impacts the inter pupil interaction. How would a classroom which values pupil to pupil interaction look like? This sort of question will be touched upon in the upcoming *Discussion* chapter. For the moment, it is important to confirm that the pupils display a degree of propensity toward cooperation, and the presence of a complex shift in classroom dynamics in terms of interactions, when SCM are used.

Enquiring/Inquiring

As a subcategory of *Cooperation, Enquiring/Inquiring* refers to **those instances where the pupils actually ask or exchange information with their peers**. These instances are tightly enmeshed in the same instances as the ones earlier mentioned concerning *Browsing/Scanning*, meaning that *Enquiry/Inquiry* is what follows immediately after pupils look for sources of information (they act on it).

The two subcategories go through the same changes (in terms of their visible effect on the pupils) when the governing teaching method shifts from TCM to SCM.

This means that *Enquiring*, which is a casual form of saying that one is asking a question, is characteristic for TCM context. The pupils have little if no opportunity to interact with their peers, even though they are showing inclination towards such activity (Appendix A, ex. 1.7 & 1.8).

When the context shifts to SCM, *Enquiring* becomes *Inquiring,* a more formal and systematic form of the same activity[35]. *Inquiring* appears in the data as a sustained activity of the pupils, encouraged by the teacher and structure of the task (Appendix A, ex. 1.9; 4.4; 5.5). It is in a way an organic effect which follows after one searches for information; namely the pupil begins to access and interact with the newly found source (after browsing/scanning follows enquiring/inquiring). As in the case of the other subcategory, *Enquiring/Inquiring* **informs on the role and possible importance of this type of interaction** in the diverse classroom, matters which will be also examined in the Discussion chapter.

Having explicated on the two closely interrelated subcategories of pupil's cooperation, their complexity, and possible input into the activity and relations of the diverse classroom, we will further examine the other category which constitute pupils *Interactivity,* namely *Engagement.*

Engagement

Engagement refers to those instances where the **pupils are seeking and demanding interaction with the teacher**. It is a general characteristic of all recorded classrooms but only under certain conditions, as we shall further elaborate. The pupil's engagement with the teacher can be characterised in the same manner as the subcategories as *Cooperation*. Strictly speaking, the act of **Scanning/Browsing** and **Inquiring/Enquiring** is also context dependent but in a different manner and with different meaning and effect on interaction.

Scanning/Browsing

If subcategory indexes the pupil's activity when looking for additional sources of information (in the case of *Engagement* with the teacher), then it is noticeable that in the context of TCM, 'they' the pupils are carefully and methodically *Scanning* for the opportunity to interact **with the teacher.** It appears throughout the data where TCM is the governing teaching method. Although the effect of *Scanning* does not explicitly appear in the data, it is possible to see that

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[35] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/words/enquire-or-inquire (01/05/16)

the pupils are chiefly preoccupied with finding the opportunity to show the teacher that they understand and are knowledgeable, situation which diminishes pupil to pupil cooperation and thus increases the chances of creating an environment based on individual competition, which could be regarded as excluding the less competitive or less engageable by this type of teaching method (Appendix A, 4.5).

Thus, the pupils *Scanning* in TCM context, position the teacher in a situation where he/she can activate only one pupil at the time, and the energy and goal of the teacher then goes into 'how to activate all or most of the children' (thus unavoidably running into time constraints).

Interestingly, the data is also showing how *Scanning* becomes *Browsing,* when SCM come into effect. This shift in the governing teaching method is changing the way in which the pupil engages with the teacher. By having the opportunity, being encouraged to work with each other and not working towards displaying individual knowledge, the pupils rely on each other to solve the task. They can be said to be appealing to the teacher in a more casual manner, ergo *Browsing* (Appendix A, ex. 4.6)*. The pupils make use of the teacher in different manner which can be seen as more efficient in terms of information dispersion and also in terms of creating an inclusive environment in the classroom.

Inquiring/Enquiring

When it comes to the act of asking the teacher for help, a similar situation revealed itself. In the context of TCM, the act of formally engaging with the teacher was coded and categorized as *Inquiring*. This subcategory can be regarded also as an indicator for the type of relationship between the pupils and the teacher, which could be described as oppositional. Meaning, that the teacher in this TCM context functions as the sole option for the pupils when it comes to seeking and asking for help. Hence, the position of the teacher can be said to be that of a *gatekeeper*.

In the context of SCM, the situation changes. The pupils are not as bound to the teachers help, as in the TCM context. In this manner they shift the balance in their relationship towards engaging not only the teacher but also their peers.

It can be said then that pupil's *Enquiring* not only relaxes their relation with the teacher, but it also allows the teacher to help pupils in a tentative manner, having more time to offer a

detailed feedback. Oppositely, in the case of pupils *Inquiring*, it forces the teacher to use rather simplistic feedback in order to be time efficient.

To sum up, it is possible to say that the purpose of these categories and subcategories, which otherwise could easily be disconsidered, is to underline the subtleness of classroom interaction and its malleability when it comes to different teaching methods (TCM or SCM). Additionally, these categories highlight the importance of the curricula in setting the right (pedagogical) scene for the development of inter-ethnic relations. In other words it can be said that the type of classroom *Praxis,* at all its sub-levels, conditioned by the curricula (TCM or SCM), influences how the teacher interacts with its pupils and also how pupils interact with each other and the teacher. Thus, by systematically sustaining either oppositional, as in the case of TCM, or non or less oppositional, in the case of SCM, the curricula could have considerable effects (in a long term) on the development of the pupils understanding and behavior in inter-ethnic relations.

Summary

This chapter has presented an analysis of the classroom recordings, and teacher and expert interviews gathered for this study. The analysis moved from a national discourse (macro level) to a concrete study case (micro level). The former, named Status Quo, served as an introduction to the general discourse on education, Roma and the issues related to them, such as segregation, poverty, teaching methods and curricula. Interviews with T1 and T2 teachers, as well as Florin Moisă and Christina McDonald were used throughout the section together with relevant literature to pinpoint the current state of Romanian education and the situation of Roma in relation to it.

Education is of primary importance in this paper, and the analysis has pointed out a number of reasons why this is so. Status Quo has outlined the complex situation of socio-economic segregation of Roma. As suggested by the researchers (Moisă and McDonald) and the literature, the segregation and marginalization of the Roma minority group is visibly

reflected in the education of the Roma children, more precisely, in the accessing quality education. As stressed in the section Education, the Roma have been persecuted and marginalized for centuries in Romania, and the analysis brings to light the fact that this situation still impacts them on many levels, including their chances for quality education.

When talking about education then, the cycle of segregation and the accompanying poverty is tightly interrelated with the state of educational institutions, their methods and methodologies. These are decisive for the environment that the educational institution can create; as said above, education can be a ground of both inclusion and exclusion (Huttova et al., 2008: 26). Moisă (Appendix C, ex. 2.12) as well as Huttova et al. (2008) call for changes in curricula and teaching approaches in order to create space with principles of multiethnic education. The classroom interactions are 'essential' in this process/environment. McDonald and Moisă have mentioned some successful steps towards more inclusive schooling environment, such as the community mediators, teacher assistants, hiring of Romani language teachers, implementation of Romani language classes into some schools, etc. However, due to lack of funding and gaps in legislation, these efforts are often not efficient enough to make a change for the Roma communities and the Roma children enrolled in Romanian schools. In addition, Moisă also points out that curriculum, which has a vital role in education, is becoming more problematic for both students and teachers. It is therefore crucial to pay attention to curricula and their impact on the classroom interactions.

The *Classroom Interaction Analysis* did not directly provide proofs of segregation which were discussed in Status Quo; rather, it pointed out to those structural and interactional components of *Praxis* (the main phenomena that was observed in the clasrooms), which might affect the interethnic encounters. The results of the second part of the analysis will be further elaborated in the *Discussion.*

Discussion

EFL Context and its Role in Multiethnic Education

To focus the study case on EFL classrooms entails a special setting for intercultural understandings. In order to learn a foreign language, one must understand the cultural background because *"(...) it is well known that language and culture are inseparable from each other"* (Xue, 2014: 1492). It is therefore crucial in an EFL classroom to teach language and culture simultaneously. As well as a space for cultural understanding, it also becomes a space for cultural interaction.

In a diverse EFL classroom both the culture and the language being taught are at the beginning, unfamiliar to the pupils regardless of whether they belong to the majority or a minority of the local society. In this sense EFL classrooms are neutral spaces of learning, where the pupils are supposed to be equal in the learning process. From this perspective the neutral capacity of the EFL classrooms could function as a *third space*, but not in the context of identity formation in a postcolonial context as conceptualized by Homi Bhabha (Bhabha, 2012; Hall & Gay, 1996: 53-60). Instead, t*hird space* in this paper should be seen as a safe and novel space where pupils, regardless of their ethnic background, can enter and attempt to embody/enact a new role: that of an English speaker. Thus, this *third space* creates the possibility for the pupils to enact/embody a sort of *thirdness* as conceptualized by Jessica Benjamin (2004). She sees *thirdness* as a relational process co-created by individuals, a process which develops and transforms the individual diversity into a capacity or ability which one should be aware of, in the process of co-participation in a given process (Benjamin, 2004: 7-8).

Even if the EFL classroom and context can be conceptualized as a *third space*, as both literature and experience in the field indicate, that is far from being the case. Most of the Roma pupils bare a socio-historical disadvantage which could impede their access to the *third space* which in turn could hinder their performance in school considerably.

Before moving on, it has to be mentioned that the recordings from the classrooms should not be regarded as being able to disclose anything other than what occurs in the classrooms

themselves. Hence, the findings cannot be characteristic neither for the whole surrounding community, nor for the rest of the educational system in Romania. Thus, the data solely serves to disclose the discourse and interaction observable in the data.

The Classroom Data in Context

Keeping in mind the racialized status quo[36] of the Romanian educational system, especially with regards to the Roma, one has to further discuss the findings in a synthesized manner.

It is of importance to reconsider the 'nature' of the findings from the classroom data in more theoretical terms. Having exemplified how the classroom interactions are overtly affected by the governing teaching methods (comprising of mainly TCM and occasionally SCM), and how they could affect or weigh into the development of inter-ethnic relations of a diverse classroom, we will bring into play a nuanced perspective on the role of student-centered methods and the role of EFL context in the reduction of inter-ethnic bias in a diverse classroom/setting.

During the second part of the analysis, the term student-centered methods has been used in order to roughly describe those teaching methods and activities which emphasized and encouraged pupil to pupil cooperation. In other words, those SCM methods could be described in more concrete theoretical terms as being Cooperative Learning (CL) inspired methods.

"Cooperative Learning is a generic approach to teaching that has spawned a variety of methods to facilitate learning together in small groups. [...] It is a way to establish a 'certain relationship' between students and teachers which creates 'that certain climate' that encourages students to engage their thoughts, knowledge and feelings in the learning process" (Sharan, 2010: 196-197).

The term Cooperative Learning covers a range of varied approaches where pupils of different backgrounds are put in heterogeneous groups. It should be stressed that not any kind of

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[36] See Status Quo on page 29

group work can be labeled as CL. The overall aim of CL is to create an inclusive space for pupils of all racial, ethnic and social backgrounds. The CL methods which are most present in the data can be described as being a variation of what is known as the *Johnson method*, in which the *"(...) students work in small, heterogeneous groups to complete a common worksheet, and are praised and rewarded as a group"* (Slavin, 1995: 630).

The reason for bringing up this concept now, rests on the fact that during the analysis the main purpose was to examine, from a practical standpoint, the classroom interactions in the context of the two types of governing teaching methods observable (TCM and SCM), and not to categorize and go deeper into what the actual these teaching methods mean and imply from a theoretical standpoint. In other words, one had to first establish what sort of classroom interactions can be identified in the recorded EFL classrooms, scrutinize and reconceptualize these seemingly neglectable facets of interactions, and then bring them into play.

Contact Hypothesis

But is Cooperative Learning actually useful in the pursuit of improving inter-ethnic relations or to reduce inter-ethnic prejudices and biases? In brief, CL methods draw heavily on Gordon Allport's Contact Hypothesis (also known as Contact Theory) (1954) which suggests that it is exactly the case: if people of various backgrounds (racial, social etc) spend enough time exposed to interpersonal interacting, their prejudice and bias towards the 'other' reduces (Valentine, 2008: 323).

Thomas Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp's (2006) longitudinal study suggests that Contact Hypothesis became a full-fledged tested and confirmed theory. Also, Pettigrew (2008) reflects on the possible application of Contact Theory (CT) in further social, academic and political contexts:

"(1) There is a continuing need to specify the processes of intergroup contact that explain its many effects. This is a call for continued efforts to determine the many mediators and moderators that are involved. (2) A greater focus upon negative contact is required. Cross-group interaction that leads to increased prejudice has not been studied systematically. (3) Rather than just a situational phenomenon, intergroup contact needs to be placed in a longitudinal, multilevel social context. (4) Finally, more direct applications to social policy are needed in which intergroup contact is viewed within specific institutional settings" (Pettigrew, 2008: 1).

Cooperative Learning as a Method of Increasing Intercultural Understanding

When it comes to Cooperative Learning and its benefits on improving schools' inter-ethnic relations, its potential and positive results are known in various contexts (e.g. Brewer, 1996; Henze, 2001; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Oortwijn et al., 2008; Sharan, 1980; Sharan, 2010; Thijs and Verkuyten, 2014; Qin et al., 1995; Ziegler, 1981).

But, as other scholars suggest, CL methods might not be sufficient for supporting the argument brought forward by Contact Theory (e.g. Brewer, 1996). Other elements need to be part of the educational (or social) context, in order for CT to be efficient. Gillian Peiser and Marion Jones (2013) argue that:

*"Over the last two decades, European educational policy documents have increasingly stressed the need for the school curriculum to develop young people's openness to and acceptance of other cultures [and that] policymakers in different countries have responded to such directives in their national curricula in a range of subject disciplines, **with special focus on this in the area of modern foreign languages**"* (Peiser & Jones, 2013: 340-341, emphasis added).

This supports the aforementioned discussion in which the EFL context was conceptualized as a *third space* - linguistic and cultural - where ethnically diverse non

native-speaking pupils attempt to learn English. There are official directives at a European level, such as the *"Resolution on the European Dimension, European Commission 1988; the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, Council of Europe 2008; the Recommendation on Education for Democratic Citizenship, Council of Europe 2002; the Report of the International Commission for Education, UNESCO 1996"* (Peiser & Jones, 2013: 340). These are directly aimed at underlining and promoting the importance of modern language learning in reducing inter-ethnic bias and increasing intercultural understanding, and thus suggesting that reforming curricula is of essence if such goals are desired.

This brings the argument back to the observable phenomena from the data. We cannot say that what is observable in the data are only, or predominantly CL methods, but we do have evidence[37] that CL methods are neither missing nor are they unknown to both teacher and pupils. What should be further discussed, is the fact that the data variation in interaction was present depending on the pedagogical context (TCM or SCM).

Considering the racialized discursive background pertaining to the Romanian context, one could easily connect the imaginary dots and see how the macro structural components (educational policies that shape the curricula) condition the teaching methods employed by the teacher which directly influences the classroom interactions.

Given the salience of *Gatekeeping* in the EFL classrooms, more questions arise: If *Gatekeeping* is present to a high degree in the *third space* of the the EFL context, then how do the classes which deal with other subject matters look like? What sort of inter-ethnic interactions do they nurture?

Also, if *Interactivity* has showed how the slightest change in pedagogical context, considerably impacts the types of interactions in the classroom, then one has to ask: How would these interactions look like and what would they mean for the development of inter-ethnic relations if the top-down structures (from curricula through teaching methods to the classroom) would align in accordance with and with consideration to their potentially synergistic effect?

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[37] See Classroom Interaction Analysis on page 44

Gatekeeping is one way of doing *interaction* in the classroom, one which indirectly spurs oppositional relations between the teacher[38] and the pupils. Prolonged exposure in such a context could 'program' the pupils into believing that this oppositional way of acting in relation to other people is 'the norm'. This situation leads us to question: how would the Roma pupils (or other ethnic minority) manage this sort of oppositional context, since they already have a socio-historical difference which is regarded as a deficit and since they are more likely to be in a position of economical insufficiency, and since they are the ones who seem to be caught in this discriminatory circle?

That is why we can say that segregation is covertly still present in the educational system, in the form of *structural segregation.* Because the structure (curricula) is not in sync with the social and economical demand, this situation allows and enforces these sort of classroom interactions to take place.

If this is the case, the idea of pupils performing *thirdness* in the EFL classroom via CL methods seem to complement the missing link in the implementation of CT as advised by Marilynn B. Brewer (1996). CL in the EFL classroom seems to create an interesting synergy between context and practice when it comes to the development of 'healthy' inter-ethnic relations. Given the discourse on Roma in education as seen in the Status Quo chapter, the classroom recordings serve as a picture of how the CL methods can be used as a means to decrease inter-ethnic bias on the micro level. As emphasized earlier, it was stressed by our informants that a change in the educational system is the most crucial to better conditions for the Roma in Romania.

If one looks at the whole picture (macro-discursive, structural and micro-interactional) it becomes somewhat understandable that ethnic segregation is *de facto* still present in the educational environment, not in an overt manner, but as a built-in propensity of both educational and social systems.

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[38] Even though the teachers bare the role of gatekeepers, they ought not be considered responsible for this type of interaction. Teachers' actions as *gatekeepers* should be regarded as being the manifestation of the educational system.

Conclusion

This study investigated how the current circumstances of multiethnic education in Romania affect the opportunities for education of minorities - with emphasis on the Roma. Furthermore, the interactional and structural components of teaching methods in a multiethnic EFL classroom in rural Romania, was studied in order to see if these components could affect the classrooms' inter-ethnic relations. The guiding problem formulation and research question were as follows:

Which are the interactional and structural components of the teaching methods pertaining to multiethnic EFL classrooms in rural Romania, and how could these components affect the classrooms' inter-ethnic relation?

- *What is the situation of multiethnic education in Romania and how does it influence the education for Roma pupils in particular?*

When it comes to *talk* about equal opportunities for education in the case of the Roma in Romania, we found (confirmed) that the discriminatory practices and discourse are part and parcel of the context. Historically rooted, discriminatory and socio-economic marginalization are a few of the facets embedded in what appears to be, an endless circle of poverty in which a big part of Romania's Roma are ensnared.

In light of the current state of affairs regarding education of the Roma in Romania, this study investigated EFL classroom interactions in rural Romania. A Constructivist Grounded Theory approach was employed in the analysis of the empirical material in order to dissect and (re)conceptualize the main phenomena observable in the data, which was labeled *Praxis*. The data showed two distinct types of phenomena embedded in classroom *Praxis*: the first one had the teacher as main actor and the second one had the pupils as main actors.

The teacher centered phenomena was labeled as *Gatekeeping*, in order to emphasize the *power role* in which the teacher is *interpellated*, when TCM are used in the classroom. The student centered phenomena were grouped in the category *Interactivity*, which indicated how the

classroom interactions generated by the pupils themselves are directly affected by the governing teaching methods (be it TCM or SCM).

Contrasting the breakdown of classroom interaction with the current state of affairs in Romania's educational system, lead us to align with other researchers, who assert that Contact Hypothesis, in the EFL context, provides the proof that Cooperative Learning methods could better the conditions for learning and interactions in a multiethnic classroom, because prejudices towards *the other* (ethnic, social, racial) are diminished with time and exposure.

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Appendix:

Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix C

Appendix D

Appendix E