Chapter 2

The conceptual framework

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Introduction

This chapter introduces the conceptual framework of the CHILD-UP research project. This framework is based on the combination of six conceptual dimensions that inform and shape the research design. These dimensions are: (1) the structural conditions of education and social life of children with migrant background (CMB); (2) facilitation as a method to create dialogue and to enhance children's agency; (3) hybrid integration as a no-essentialist view of diversity; (4) interpreting as language mediation aiming to enhance migrants' agency; (5) gender as a social construction and gendered agency; and (6) narratives as expressions of agency.

A preliminary observation is that the category of "children" is defined differently by different approaches; thus, how children are viewed and treated and their position in society are by no means universally similar. However, the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), to which all European countries are signatories, defines children as all individuals under 18 years old. The UNCRC establishes that children's points of view should be considered in decisions affecting children's lives. It states the right of children to be treated as children first, to have their best interest assessed and taken into account as a primary consideration in all actions and decisions that concern them (Article 3), while other factors affecting their condition should be considered as secondary. For example, in the case of CMB, they should be treated first as children, regardless of their migratory status. Moreover, the UNCRC has introduced the right to have children's opinions and participation taken into consideration (Article 12) for the first time in the history of interventions and policies addressed to children.

Constraining structures

The application of the UNCRC is conditioned by social structures that define a generational order (Alanen, 2009) that distinguishes between adults and children in terms of decisional power, sometimes marginalising children's rights. Since the 1990s, structural limitations of people's social life have been associated with the interconnection among different social and cultural factors, which is labelled *intersectionality* (Crenshaw, 1994). This concept has become popular in social sciences

(e.g. Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013; Hankivsky, 2014; Mason, 2010) and has also been related to migration and intercultural relations (e.g. Antyas, 2012; Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014; Ensor & Godziak, 2010; Kaukko & Wernesjö, 2017; Szalai, 2011). In brief, intersectionality means that "inequities are never the result of single, distinct factors. Rather, they are the outcome of intersections of different social locations, power relations and experiences" (Hankivsky, 2014, p. 2). Intersections are observed between several factors, such as race or ethnicity, gender, age, class, sexuality, abilities, geography, religion and migration. These factors may intertwine with the specific structures of politics, law, media, economics, education, families and healthcare, among others. It is the interrelation between factors and structures that may result in power relations and forms of discrimination. In particular, CMB's marginalisation and discrimination may depend on the intersection of factors and structures integrated into Western society (Twum-Danso Imoh & Ame, 2012).

However, intersectionality is associated with the narrative of the vulnerability and incapacity of children, obscuring their contribution to the construction of social relations. For instance, in the education system, the general narrative of children's incapacity triggers the need for adults to deliver knowledge, while children must simply learn it (e.g., James & James, 2004; Wyness, 1999). This narrative is strengthened in the case of CMB, particularly when their difficulties in language use and/or different forms of socialisation are observed. Against this background, the school can be assigned the task of "acculturating" CMB (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2012) through the conveyance of (1) knowledge (curriculum content, course content, etc.), (2) norms (rewarded and punished behaviors), (3) values (recognition of CMB as a cultural group), and (4) basic and tacit assumptions about diversity. Knowledge, norms, values, and assumptions about diversity are conveyed and evaluated in classroom interactions (Luhmann, 2002; Mehan, 1979), and structures of classroom interaction can lead to CMB's mere adaptation to the school context (Janta & Harte, 2016; Szalai, 2011). Thus, the education system frequently proposes predetermined knowledge, inviting CMB to adapt to educational expectations about their cultural identity (Baraldi, 2012). This definition of CMB as vulnerable, incompetent, and in need of mere adaptation hinders their potential exercise of *agency*.

Facilitation of agency and dialogue

The concept of children's agency is rather controversial (see Baraldi, 2014, 2022; Baraldi & Cockburn, 2018; James, 2009; James & James, 2008; Larkins, 2019; Oswell, 2013; Stoecklin & Fattore, 2017). In general, it relates to children's actions that are not simple outputs of children's experience of adults' inputs. In the CHILD-UP project, children's agency has been defined as children's active participation based on the availability of choices of action, which make their alternative actions available, and, therefore, can enhance change in social contexts (Baraldi, 2014) – for instance, classroom interactions – and children's personal trajectories of lived experience (Baraldi & Cockburn, 2018). While children's active participation

can happen at any time in communication, the achievement of agency needs the promotion of a child's right to active participation in relation to choice and social change, enabling them to gain epistemic authority (Baraldi, 2015b, 2021), that is, rights and responsibilities to access and produce knowledge.

Agency is not the outcome of individual actions; it is achieved in specific social conditions. The analysis of children's agency must focus on its social constraints (Bjerke, 2011; James, 2009; Kirby, 2020; Leonard, 2016; Mayall, 2002; Moosa-Mitha, 2005). Structural constraints of individual participation can be particularly inhibiting for children, who are included within a hierarchical generational order, for instance, in the education system, in which knowledge is conveyed by teachers on the one hand, and children's actions are evaluated by teachers on the other hand (Luhmann, 2002). This means that teachers are assigned much higher authority in producing knowledge, that is, *epistemic authority*, than children (Baraldi, 2021). This is shown by a long tradition of research on teacher–children interaction since the 1970s (Delamont, 1976; Mehan, 1979). More recently, however, research on teacher–children interactions has highlighted some mitigation of hierarchical forms of epistemic authority, depending on adults' promotional actions (e.g. Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Walsh, 2011), such as actions of scaffolding (Sharpe, 2008) or "revoicing" (O'Connor & Michaels, 1996).

Sociological research has also highlighted a more radical change in the education system based on the facilitation of children's agency (Baraldi, 2014, 2021, 2022; Baraldi & Iervese, 2017). Facilitation is achieved in specific interactions, including organised sequences of adults' actions that support children's agency and children's actions that display agency. In this view, agency is based on the facilitation of dialogue as a specific form of communication, which "implies that each party makes a step in the direction of the other", while it does not imply "that they reach a shared position or even mutual warm feelings" (Wierbizcka, 2006, p. 692). In adult–children interactions, dialogue is "the starting point, whereby children are consulted and listened to", ensuring that "their ideas are taken seriously" (Matthews, 2003, p. 268). Dialogue is both the form of facilitation, which can be defined as dialogic facilitation, and the result of facilitation showing children's mutual exercise of agency. Dialogic forms of interaction are visible in the organised sequences of facilitators and children's actions. Through dialogic facilitation, adults' actions support children's self-expression, take children's views into account, involve them in decision-making processes, and share power and responsibility with them (Hendry, 2009; Shier, 2001; Wyness, 2013). To sum up, facilitation is a form of communication designed to mitigate hierarchical forms of teaching and to encourage, enhance, and support children's agency.

Dialogue is based on: (a) the fair distribution of active participation in interactions (equity); (b) expressions of sensitivity to interlocutors' interests and/or needs (empathy); and (c) the treatment of disagreements and alternative perspectives as enrichments in communication (empowerment). Without these dialogic conditions, agency is only occasional (Davies, 1990; Kirby, 2020). Dialogic facilitation is a way of managing predefined assumptions, doubts, different stories and experiences, unpredicted emotions, divergent interpretations, and challenges. Thus, it is

possible to distinguish facilitation from hierarchical teaching. This difference is also a distinction between the enhancement and the lack of enhancement of children's agency, and thus between the upgrading and downgrading of children's epistemic authority, that is, their rights and responsibilities of producing knowledge in narrative forms. In particular, facilitating children's agency means dealing with children as persons who can express their own points of view, experiences, and emotions rather than dealing with them as fulfilling standardised roles, obeying orders, answering predefined questions, and showing school performances. Facilitating agency means empowering children's expressions of different points of view by showing sensitivity to these expressions. In summary, facilitating dialogue means promoting equity in the distribution of children's exercise of agency, while hierarchical interactions promote inequality in this distribution.

The CHILD-UP research project aimed to analyze children's ways of expressing agency, the structural conditions, and the possible ways of encouraging, enhancing, and supporting this agency in the education system. To this end, it was important to investigate children's and professionals' narratives and interactive classroom/group practices aiming to support non-hierarchical relationships between children and between children and adults.

Agency and learning

The fact that learning can be achieved through children's active participation in classroom activities has been well established (e.g. Davies, 1983; Dewey, 1955; Rogers, 1951). For instance, intercultural learning is considered as based on understanding and awareness of plural perspectives, relations among perspectives, mutual enrichments, equality, and cooperation (Grant & Portera, 2011; Guilherme, 2012; Huber & Reynolds, 2014; Mahon & Cushner, 2012; Portera, 2008; Radstake & Leeman, 2010). Again, learning is considered important in constructing meanings in social interactions, that is, to produce texts and oral stories, to compare different materials and stories and to give them a shared meaning, and share the outputs of activities (e.g., Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998; Kirova, Prochter, & Massing, 2019). Learning is also considered important in using multimodality, that is, learning to combine written, oral, and visual forms of communication, and in managing different media (e.g. Barromi-Perlman, 2016; Goldfarb, 2002; Kirova & Emme, 2017; Labelle, 2012). However, it is important to understand the relationship between learning and agency. Children's active participation in learning differs from children's agency as an autonomous choice of action. While teaching can provide mitigated control of knowledge production, when children are considered as learners, the autonomy associated with agency cannot be fully recognised. Children's agency as a choice of actions is not a primary interest in participatory approaches to teaching, which can be understood as strategies to improve learning. Agency can be associated with learning when research focuses on the interaction to observe if children's exercise of agency shows interesting contributions to the interactional construction of meanings. This construction of meanings is the only possible cue to show (indirectly) learning.

Gendered agency?

Children's exercise of agency can be associated with gender. According to Butler (2004) and Connell (2009), gender is a structure of inequality, which is constructed and embedded at the institutional, individual, and interactional levels of every society. In this perspective, gender is a set of lasting and widespread patterns, norms, values, expectations, discourses, and narratives for identities and relationships. This determines a gender order, that is, a specific system of relationships characterised mostly by binary identities and hierarchical relationships between men and women.

Gender differences and identities are produced in communicative processes and in a situated way: Through their participation and, in particular, through their exercise of agency in interactions, children may stress differences and construct gendered identities, although sometimes they do not. However, gender is interpreted as an ongoing accomplishment displayed, performed, "done" in social situations and everyday interactions (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Thus, in social interactions, children can ignore, reproduce, or negotiate gender structures. They can adapt, "redo," and "undo" gender; they can reject and try to subvert gender dichotomy and hierarchy (Butler, 2004; Connell, 2009; Connell, 2010; West & Zimmerman, 2009). Research should not take for granted that gender counts; rather, gender may be investigated as an empirical phenomenon that may or may not be evident in social situations. Adult–child interactions are particularly important in the process of gender construction. On the one hand, these interactions can empower children and support their agency in negotiating meaning, actions, and power. On the other hand, they can reinforce gender stereotypes and roles, also leading to gendered forms of exploitation and abuse. The analysis of interactions and narratives can highlight if and how gender is relevant in understanding agency.

Narratives as expressions of agency

Children's agency can be shown through narrative production when children can choose the ways and contents of narrating their perspectives and experiences, thus influencing the social situations in which they are involved (Baraldi & Iervese, 2017; Baraldi, Joslyn, & Farini, 2021). Narratives are produced in communicative contexts (Fisher, 1987), particularly as storytelling in specific interactions (Norrick, 2007). According to Fisher (1987), all forms of communication are stories, situational and historically and culturally grounded, so that narratives are omnipresent in communication. Narratives are social constructions in which the observed reality is interpreted and "storied" in different ways (Baker, 2006) so that the same events and phenomena can be narrated from different points of view and through different sets of categories. Somers (1994) describes the ways of constructing narratives, differentiating between narratives of the self (ontological narratives), public narratives, conceptual narratives (including scientific concepts), and metanarratives concerning "the epic dramas of our time" (p. 619), for instance, migration.

Facilitation of the production of narratives can provide the opportunity to high-light meanings and types of narratives and identities of narrating participants (Bamberg, 2011), by enhancing and supporting their agency. In the interaction involving children, for instance, interviews and classroom activities, facilitation of narratives can include points of view and emotions associated with past experiences, present life, future plans, and expectations. Narratives are concerned not only with story contents but, above all, with the rights and responsibilities associated with the activity of narrating (Norrick, 2007), thus showing children's agency as an authority in producing knowledge (epistemic authority). Facilitation can enable the construction of new narratives (Winslade & Monk, 2008; Winslade & Williams, 2011) by enhancing children's agency and dialogue.

Through facilitation, each child can produce different types of narrative concerning the self (ontological narratives), events, relations, and places having particular relevance for them, including narratives and metanarratives of migration. A narrative can display the teller's (1) personal identity when it concerns personal experiences, ideas, emotions, rights, responsibilities, and choices; (2) gendered identity; and (3) cultural identity, when it concerns membership in a national or ethnic group. Investigating children's rights of narrating, that is, rights and responsibilities of producing knowledge (epistemic authority), means observing three important features (Norrick, 2007, 2013):

1   Each participant contributes to constructing and negotiating a narrative in the interaction as a listener, teller, co-teller, or elicitor of new narratives.
2   Narratives can receive different comments from different participants; in particular, each narrative can be followed by response narratives that refer to it, enhancing the production of interlaced stories.
3   The interactional production of narratives can present problems of tellability, for their transgressive contents and reactions to these problems.

Children's agency is shown through: (1) the autonomous telling and elicitation of narratives; (2) participation in dialogic interlacements of narratives; and (3) the absence of problems of tellability, as any narrative is allowed and supported. Since promoting children's agency means promoting children's choices, children's participation cannot be instrumental in achieving any predetermined objective. Such a predetermination would contradict the conditions of children's agency because children's choices would be subordinated to adults' agenda.

Defining cultural and hybrid identities

The analysis of structural constraints of children's agency, particularly the analysis of facilitation, may focus on so-called "multicultural classrooms." In several studies, the definition of the multicultural classroom is based on the presence of participants from diverse cultural backgrounds (see Grant & Portera, 2011; Mahon & Cushner, 2012). In particular, studies on intercultural education show that cultural meanings and identity can be handled in various ways (Gundara, 2000; Gundara &

Portera, 2008; Mahon & Cushner, 2012). These studies indicate that cultural identity is commonly associated with communication within specific cultural groups. Intercultural dialogue is thus considered an enrichment based on acknowledgment of difference among cultural identities (Alred, Byram, & Fleming, 2003; Grant & Portera, 2011; Guilherme, 2012; Portera, 2008). However, this can be considered an essentialist perspective which "presents people's individual behaviour as entirely defined and constrained by the cultures in which they live so that the stereotype becomes the essence of who they are" (Holliday, 2011, p. 4).

Essentialism takes for granted that cultural identities are determined before any communication is established, and communication becomes "intercultural" since people with different cultural identities participate in it (Baraldi, 2015a). The essentialist ideology determines a process of "othering" (Holliday, 2011) based on cultural stereotypes, for instance, assigning migrant individuals to ethnic categories (such as Chinese, Moroccans, Nigerians, and so on) associated with cultural identities. Non–essentialist views stress the prefix *inter-*, which indicates the importance of relationships and communication and warns against insisting on predefined cultural identities based on an ideological narrative of cultural belonging (Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014). In this non–essentialist view, identity is seen as fluid and contingently constructed in communication (Baraldi, 2015a; Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013; Piller, 2011; Tupas, 2014). Some studies conclude that the concept of cultural identity can be replaced by the concept of hybrid identity (Baraldi, 2018; Jackson, 2014; Kramsch & Uryu, 2012; Nair-Venugopal, 2009), which means that identity is negotiated in communication processes through the manifestation of personal cultural trajectories (Holliday & Amadasi, 2020). In particular, children can show their personal cultural trajectories in communication. These manifestations of trajectories are negotiated in communication processes, so that they cannot be considered as manifestations of belonging to specific groups.

In this view, intercultural communication may mean either producing essentialist differences that block hybridity or producing threads that evidence hybridity (Amadasi & Holliday, 2017). The CHILD-UP research investigated the dialogic construction of threads, that is, of narratives showing hybrid forms of identity within classroom/group communication. Hybridity is conceived as the outcome of a complex intertwining of interactions designed to "open up many possibilities for how narratives can intertwine and express themselves" (Holliday & Amadasi, 2020, p. 11). In particular, the concept of "hybridity" refers to two aspects: (1) facilitation as production of interlacements of narratives of personal cultural trajectories in situated interactions; and (2) inclusion in these narratives of various conditions, events, and changes related to children's lived experience of migration. The implication of this approach is that the facilitation of narratives of personal cultural trajectories does not insist on cultural diversity and identity. In this non–essentialist perspective, classrooms/groups are the setting for the production of *small cultures*, that is, "cultural environments which are located in proximity to the people concerned" (Holliday, 2013, p. 3). Through facilitation, small cultures are based on sharing and interlacing different narratives about personal cultural trajectories.

In this view, the classroom – along with any other social context experienced by children – is conceived as "multicultural" since they support the production of diverse narratives of personal cultural trajectories rather than being the sum of individuals with different cultural identities. Intercultural communication may or may not be constructed in classroom/group interactions. Facilitation of children's agency creates the condition for participants' choices; however, it does not necessarily lead to intercultural communication, and it may or may not lead to the construction of cultural identities in interaction.

Hybrid integration

Against this background, integration in classrooms/groups is always *hybrid integration*, based on local negotiation of meanings. Hybrid integration is not a synonym for inclusion and is not distinguished from exclusion. Luhmann (1995) proposes the distinction between inclusion and exclusion, applied to society as a communication system: both inclusion and exclusion concern participation in communication. The meaning of exclusion is clear: it is exclusion from communication, for instance in education, politics, economics, or healthcare. However, the concept of inclusion as participation in communication is tricky.

Inclusion concerns persons rather than roles: excluding children means excluding their persons rather than the roles they fulfil, such that excluding a "pupil" from education means excluding the person of the child. The role of pupil (i.e., the role of learner) cannot be excluded from the education system unless the education system itself collapses. However, in the general conception of inclusion, including a migrant child in education may mean ignoring their person while supporting their role as a learner, since learning, for instance language learning, may be seen as a priority. Against this background, it is important to distinguish between participating by fulfilling a role and participating through personal expressions, that is, participating as a person. This distinction explains the importance of agency in understanding the inclusion of children as persons, and the association of inclusion with agency, based on the attribution of rights and responsibilities in producing knowledge (epistemic authority).

Against this background, all children can be understood as persons to be included, for instance, in the education system. Narratives of "personal cultural trajectories" show children as persons in communication; they show children's knowledge, experiences, and emotions. The narrated trajectories are defined as "cultural" since their narratives are based on past experiences, which give meaning to children's personal trajectories. While narratives of personal cultural trajectories are constructed in contingent communication systems, such as classroom interactions, the narrated trajectories were constructed through other contingent communication processes experienced by children in their past. Thus, personal cultural experiences can show children's diverse experiences. Diversity is the expression of these narratives, which are both contingently constructed in present communication processes and are based on past contingent communicative processes. The concept of diversity can be de-essentialised and associated with contingent and

fluid expressions of personal cultural trajectories in communication, that is, hybrid personal cultural trajectories. In this sense, diversity is necessarily hybrid even when the child's narrative is one of belonging to an ethnic or cultural group, even if the narrative evokes blocks.

Hybrid integration differs from inclusion. It is based on the *systematic interlacement* of personal cultural trajectories, that is, on the construction of threads. When several children participate in the communication process, for instance, in classroom interaction, their different narratives can interlace in a dialogic way. The adjective "hybrid" changes the concept of integration, which by no means reduces diversity. Hybrid integration means amplification, rather than reduction, of diversity, which is, however, expressed as dialogic interlacement of a plurality of narratives of personal cultural trajectories rather than as a casual sum of narratives of personal cultural trajectories. Hybrid integration means the enrichment of communication with various interlaced personal cultural trajectories based on the promotion of *all* children's exercise of agency in narrating their own trajectories. Hybrid integration can be distinguished from *disintegration* as the separation of narratives. Hybrid integration requires specific structural conditions, which must be compatible with personal expression. These are the conditions of facilitation.

Facilitation emphasises the shift from the top–down construction of knowledge, typical of the education system, to the bottom–up construction of knowledge. Bottom–up means starting from the local conditions of hybrid integration and moving beyond them, for instance, shifting hybrid integration from one classroom to other classrooms, to the entire school, to other schools, to the local community, and so on. The bottom–up process means shifting from local to local. All bottom–up processes are local, including those potentially relevant in the European Parliament; the United Nations Assembly; and the meetings of G8, G7, or G20. Despite the importance of the Internet and social media, local bottom–up processes are fundamental in making decisions, which always have an impact on local conditions and lived experiences. The experience of the pandemic – as well as the experience of the war in Ukraine – show the importance of local, situated interactions as basic ways of giving meaning to narratives of personal cultural trajectories, whether those of COVID patients or of ministers meeting together to face the problems of war.

Second-language learning, translanguaging, and language mediation

In the education system, as well as in any social system in which CMB are involved, a lack of language proficiency can prevent their exercise of agency. Thus, second-language learning is considered a primary strategy to integrate CMB in the classroom. Walsh (2011) suggests that second-language teaching can be realised through different "modes." The *managerial mode* has the function of transmitting information, organising activities, explaining materials, and managing changes among the other modes. It is based on the teacher's extended turns of talk to

explain or give instructions, while learners do not provide relevant contributions. The *materials mode* has the function of showing linguistic practices through the use of materials, promoting children's answers about the materials, checking and providing answers about the materials, and clarifying and evaluating. This mode is based on the Initiation, Response, Evaluation (IRE) scheme (Mehan, 1979), including focused questions, feedback on linguistic forms, and also forms of scaffolding to support children's correct answers. The *systems and skills* mode has the function of putting children in the conditions of producing correct forms and checking their use of language, giving correcting feedback, and highlighting correct answers. This mode is based on corrections, focused questions, repetitions and feedback on linguistic forms, once again scaffolding. Finally, the *classroom context mode* is the most facilitative one. It has the function of promoting clear linguistic expressions by giving context to them, that is, promoting oral communicative fluidity. It is based on facilitators' short turns, minimal repairs, feedback on contents, questions about themes, and clarification questions. Children are encouraged to produce extended turns of talk. The adoption of specific modes can be influenced by the language competence shown by the CMB. However, there seems to be no precise correspondence between the adopted modes and CMB's fluency.

A strategy to improve hybrid integration through the use of language is *translanguaging*. This term refers to the use of different languages in the classroom (Garcia & Wei, 2014; Wei & Lin, 2019). Translanguaging gives value to CMB's abilities to use their own native languages in the classroom while understanding other languages. However, a more important and effective way of preserving native languages as enrichments is *interpreting* (Cronin, 2006). Public Service Interpreting or linguistic and cultural mediation, as they are named in different countries, can help children and their families to participate in communication through the use of their own native languages. Thus, interpreters/mediators can be considered facilitators of migrants' exercise of agency in dialogic communication.

Since the end of the 1990s, Public Service Interpreting (PSI) has been analysed as an interactional achievement based on interpreters' coordination of interactions (Wadensjö, 1998). PSI can be considered a form of mediation (Baraldi, 2017), which may include intercultural adaptation (Baraldi & Gavioli, 2017). However, mediation as coordination of the interaction between participants who speak different languages, does not necessarily deal with the manifestation of participants' cultural identities. In a broader view, mediation is *language mediation*, that is, mediation between participants speaking different languages, not necessarily manifesting different cultural presuppositions or identities in the interaction (Baraldi, 2017). To provide language mediation, interpreters/mediators need to exercise agency (Baraldi, 2019), which is produced within the interpreter-mediated interaction and depends on the interplay of the conversational moves of all participants (Mason, 2009). Several studies show that interpreters' exercise of agency empowers migrants' active participation (Angelelli, 2004; Inghilleri, 2005; Mason & Ren, 2012). Interpreters' agency needs to be recognised and legitimised by institutional providers (Gavioli, 2015; Tipton, 2008). Recognition means acknowledging that interpreters' agency is based on other participants' attribution of rights and

responsibility of access to and production of knowledge, that is, attribution of epistemic authority (Baraldi & Gavioli, 2020).

Language mediation is based on a reflexive form of coordination (Baraldi, 2017). Reflexive coordination means that the interpreter's utterances focus on the conditions of the communication process, thus paving the way to alternative communications (taking opportunities, resolving problems, clarifying doubts). Reflexive coordination, therefore, describes what the interpreter's agency means in terms of mediation as coordination of the interaction. Baraldi and Gavioli (2016) show that reflexive coordination may be provided through renditions and non-renditions in dyadic sequences. Renditions provide the gist of what has been said by one participant, adapting or re-contextualising it for another participant. Non-renditions may clarify ambiguous, complicated, or incomplete utterances, which may make it difficult for the mediator to choose an appropriate rendition to clarify/explain what has been said.

In educational contexts, language mediation often occurs in teacher–parent interactions, parent–teacher conferences or meetings on a one-to-one basis. Some studies on interpreter-mediated interactions between teachers and migrant parents suggest a negative impact of interpreters' agency, which may lead to migrant parents' becoming assimilated rather than empowered. For instance, Davitti (2013) analyses conversations during mediated interactions between teachers and mothers in Italy and the UK, concluding that "interpreters' upgrading moves, by trying to elicit understanding in a context of minimal or absent uptake from the mothers, do not create any effective opportunities for the latter to express their thoughts and opinions" (p. 190). In her turn, Vargas-Urpi (2015, 2017) shows that interpreters' actions tend to exclude parents. Against this background, the CHILD-UP research investigated how language mediation can (or cannot) support the exercise of migrants' agency in teacher–parent meetings (see Chapter 9).

Conclusions: from a theoretical approach to field research

The CHILD-UP research project aimed to analyse facilitation of dialogic interactions involving children's agency as well as their parents' agency for language mediation. The research investigated how children's agency can be expressed through narratives of personal cultural trajectories and their results in terms of hybrid integration, particularly concerning the involvement of CMB and considering possible gender differences. The field research concerned the conditions of hybrid integration as realised (or not realised) through the exercise of agency of CMB. This means investigating how facilitative actions can promote CMB agency through the dialogic interlacements of narratives about personal cultural trajectories in classroom/group interactions. Overall research findings regard: (1) structural constraints of CMB's experience due to legislation, policies, education, and family life; (2) CMB's experience of school and peer relations; (3) CMB's use of language in classroom/group interactions; (4) narratives about CMB's condition as migrants; (4) facilitation of CMB's agency in classroom/group interactions; and

(5) to some extent, mediation of meetings between teachers and migrant parents. In the following chapters, the most important results of these research themes will be described, explained, and commented on.

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