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ΣΥΝΟΙΚΟΔΟΜΗΣΗ ΤΑΥΤΟΤΗΤΩΝ ΑΠΟ ΑΝΗΛΙΚΟΥΣ ΠΑΡΑΒΑΤΙΚΟΥΣ: ΣΥΝΟΜΙΛΙΑΚΟΣ ΧΕΙΡΙΣΜΟΣ, ΓΛΩΣΣΙΚΑ ΜΈΣΑ, ΚΑΙ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΈΣ ΣΥΝΈΠΕΙΕΣ

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Abstract

The present study examines the way in which identity intersects with the linguistic practices in environments that hold juveniles, specifically within the institutional settings of rehabilitation centers for delinquent adolescents. The study also explores the social consequences, as they relate to the formation of their identities, and their interpersonal relationships.

As the data gathered from the ethnographic study show, in their interaction, these young people present with behaviors that alternate between deviance and integratability (i.e. the ability and the possibility to be (re)integrated, a notion to be further defined in the main work). That is, they do not project permanently the one or the other dimension, nor is there a linear process from deviance to integratability. On the contrary, these adolescents go back and forth along the continuum, I argue, these two identity dimensions (integratable/deviant) form, until the end of their detention.

Are these findings confirmed by the systematic analysis of the young speakers' discourse? In what way can the linguistic tools utilized by the kids be used to serve as identity indexes of deviance or integratability? Through which linguistic and conversational means are these dimensions constructed? These are some of the questions, which the present study attempts to respond to.

For this purpose, focusing upon the dialogical (not the narrative) parts of the interaction, the present study analyses the co-construction of meanings and stances, in particular, the specific linguistic and discursive mechanisms through which the

speakers point to deviant or integratable stances, by the way of aligning or differentiating themselves in regards to the “voice” of the in-group and the out-group (the “voice” used in the Bakhtinian sense, i.e. as it regards the ways of speaking of a social group, as well as the ideological points of view and evaluations of the social practices and meanings, which these ways of speaking carry with them – Bakhtin 1981).

Repetition and reported speech, as linguistic tools which are primarily polyphonic (dialogical), and which constitute fields of encounter and internal dialogue of several “voices”, represent the main linguistic means under study, but also, because of their central role in the discursive co-construction of identity, as this role emerged from the examination of the data.

Besides the social positions of the young speakers, the study also analyzes the linguistic constitution of their agentive positionings, and the assumption, or not, of responsibility for their actions, past, future or even hypothetical; positionings which, on their turn, become indexes of deviance and integratability. The agency, the active imprint which a speaker recognizes in the protagonist of the referential action, together with the assumption of responsibility, entailed in the agentive positioning, constitute a stake for the short term or medium term detention of the adolescents in the Institution. Besides, the need to strengthen the reduced sense of responsibility observed in the juveniles is considered among the rehabilitative goals of the Institutions. Still, the passive agency or the deflected responsibility towards a blameful act in the young peoples’ discourse, are they to be viewed as stances always associated with deviant behavior? The sociolinguistic analysis of these adolescents’ discourse shows a more complex relationship between agency and deviant and integratable aspects of identity.

By means of the linguistic mechanisms and the conversational strategies which are explored, the young speakers manage to get through situations of interactional tension, often in rather resourceful and discursively and linguistically compound ways, situations which result when conversations turn strictly to the deviant actions of the adolescents and to their future, but are also born in the institutions, because of a two-fold aim emerging in the conditions of detention. On the one hand, these

adolescents are called upon to maintain the solidarity with their in-group, which besides facilitates their stay in the Institution, and, on the other hand, they need to demonstrate capabilities for reintegration, in order to speed up their release from the Institution.