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Forging inclusive practice in ethnically-segregated school systems: Lessons from one multiethnic, Bilingual Education classroom in Sri Lanka

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Forging inclusive practice in ethnically-segregated school systems: Lessons from one multiethnic, Bilingual Education classroom in Sri Lanka

This paper offers a perspective on bilingual education (BE) as inclusive education. Ethnolinguistically-separated schools and classrooms in Sri Lanka resulted from an enduring, mother tongue instruction policy which abetted a deeply ethnically-divided nation. More recently, Sri Lanka has experimented with a BE programme in pursuit of enriching the perceived value of the local mother tongues as well as building students' knowledge of English as a global language. This article presents analysis of the inclusive practice of two Sri Lankan BE teachers in their attempts to advance social cohesion through bilingual education. We demonstrate the logic of practice focussing on four features of the teachers' work: promoting interethnic relations through regular change of seating arrangements; equal delegation of responsibilities and absence of favouritism; cooperative group work in ethnically heterogeneous groups; and, promoting heteroglossic language practices or translanguaging. The positive, inclusive consequences of these practices are corroborated by focus group data gathered from students in the school. We argue that teachers have a significant role in changing the logic of practice in the classroom, and that the implicit rules teachers encode in their pedagogy can reorient exclusionary, ethnocentric identity positioning towards more inclusive, supraethnic identities.

Keywords: bilingual education; Sri Lanka; inclusive education; supraethnic identity; medium of instruction; Bourdieu

Introduction

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a key aim of inclusive education is to 'eliminate exclusion that is a consequence of negative attitudes and a lack of response to diversity in race, economic status, social class, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability' (2009, 4). One important way to promote social inclusivity in multiethnic societies is to

create a sense of solidarity irrespective of ethnic differences thus promoting a national, supraethnic identity amongst the peoples (Eriksen 2010; Rubdy 2005; Wodak and Boukala 2015). Supraethnic identity transcends cultural classification of ethnicity, reconciles ethnic conflict and misunderstanding, creates togetherness of differences, and promotes unity within diversity.

To achieve supraethnic identity, the education system of a country, as a central institutional structure, is pivotal (Coleman and White 2011; Lopes and Hoeks 2015). In the context of ethnic and cultural diversity in Sri Lanka, however, the ethnically segregated education system perpetuates an ethnically exclusivist society, as seen in the following interview accounts:

When we were young we only associated with Sinhala students and Sinhalese. When I came here and heard Tamil I got scared instantly. I wondered if they would talk to me, I have no place to go. I wondered if something happened I may have to hide somewhere. That's how I felt in the first few days – A **Sinhala Student**

There was a difference. From Grade 1 to 5 it was like, let's say, we were like from another planet and those people were like from another planet. Though we existed we never got to interact – A **Tamil Student**

The above quotes recount the lived experiences of two Sri Lankan students who studied in one partner research school of the first author at the time of data collection, but who were previously alienated from each other due to ethnically polarised classrooms commonly seen in Sri Lankan public schools. Traditionally Sinhala students and Tamil students are educated, separately, in Sinhala medium schools and Tamil medium schools through Mother Tongue Instruction (MTI). This segregation has a historical root in a thirty-year long civil war that ended in 2009 (Buckland 2005; Cohen 2007; Coleman 2007; Davis 2015; Saunders 2007; Wickrema and Colenso 2003).

Today, as a post-conflict country, promotion of an inclusive society is given the utmost importance at policy level as well-reflected in the National Education Goals.

Paradoxical to its legitimate policy of promoting such inclusivity, the very same educational system is implicitly perpetuating ethnic exclusionism, culpable for misunderstanding and alienation among the Sinhala speaking and Tamil speaking communities. For instance, out of 10,162 Sri Lankan public schools, Sinhala speaking children attend Sinhala medium schools while Tamil speaking children attend Tamil medium schools, except those attending 47 bi-medium schools which offer both Mediums of Instruction (MOI): Sinhala and Tamil (Ministry of Education (MOE) 2016). This is in addition to a few semi-government/private schools that offer both languages as MOI. Even in the 47 multiethnic, bi-medium schools, students of diverse ethnicities are segregated due to separate MTI (Wijesekera 2011). The only exception is the Bilingual Education (BE) classrooms in multiethnic bi-medium schools. BE in bi-medium schools has created a new social space where all students of ethnicities study a few subjects in the core curriculum through English Medium Instruction (EMI).

In this paper, we offer a perspective on BE as inclusive education; as enhancing the experience of belongingness, of fostering mutual respect, recognition, interdependence and reciprocity, among ethnically diverse groups in post-war countries such as Sri Lanka. Drawing from a larger multi-site case study conducted in three multiethnic schools in 2016, this paper provides a snapshot of one BE classroom in a remote area of Sri Lanka. The analysis shows how teachers promote inclusivity through creating interethnic interactions and promoting cross-linguistic flexibility in ethnically heterogeneous cooperative groups.

In the following sections, we outline the traditional ethnic exclusivity against the backdrop of MOI in the Sri Lankan public school system, followed by a discussion of

the new social space created through the BE programme in multiethnic schools that bring ethnically diverse students together. Next, we outline the theoretical framework and methodology used, followed by analysis and interpretation of data. We then draw conclusions and offer implications.

Language, Medium of Instruction and social exclusivity in Sri Lanka

Every situation where language is involved ‘bears the traces of the social structure that it both expresses and helps to reproduce’ (Thompson 1991, 2). In other words, power inequalities originate from social structures in historical contexts that surround language interactions (Bourdieu 1991). Indeed, the historical contexts of Sri Lanka – the civil war, the policy of MTI, the new National Education Goals, and the developments of BE included – create a unique opportunity for the study to grapple with transformation of ethnocentric identity in the ethnically diverse students in multiethnic and hence multilingual BE classrooms. Eriksen (2010, 23) defines ethnic identity as ‘the application of systematic distinctions between insiders and outsiders; between Us and Them’. Language is ‘fundamental to collective and personal identity’ and inseparable from one’s self (McCarty, Skutnabb-Kangas, and Magga 2008, 299), and constructs ‘ethicized construction of otherness’ (Gabriel 2014, 1211), which polarises social groups.

In Sri Lanka, language is the main classificatory criterion between the two most contesting ethnic groups – the Sinhalese and the Tamils (Chandra 2006). Baker and Wright (2017, 73) argued that ‘language can be a component in social conflict’ and ‘[c]ontact between ethnic groups with differing languages does not always occur in a peaceful and harmonious fashion’. Bormann, Cederman, and Vogt (2017) asserted that linguistic differences is the ‘most violence-prone’ or conflict-fuelling factor with regard

to ethnic conflicts in contrast to common claim by researchers that religion is the most salient in civil conflicts.

The education system of a country is central to the development of a tolerant and inclusive society (Albaugh 2014; Coleman and White 2011). Conversely, it can also deepen 'ethnic, religious and other identity based conflicts' (World Bank 2005, 7). Sri Lanka sets an illustration for the latter, with education policies that harbour linguistic nationalism and partition. For instance, lack of equity in education coupled with the sanctioned MOI played a key role in violent group mobilisation of not only separatist Tamil militant groups in the North but also Sinhala youth in the South (Bannon 2003; Buckland 2005; De Votta 2007; Sandagomi 2009; Saunders 2007). Furthermore, in both conflicts, English language proficiency played a key role in upward social mobility since finding better paid jobs had been frustrating for educated youth with a lack of English (Kandaih 1984; National Education Commission (NEC) 2003, 2016, 2017; World Bank 2011).

Colonisers' exclusivist language policies in post-colonial countries have contributed to social divisions (Baker 2011; Bickmore 2012; Brisk 2006; Bush and Saltarelli 2000; Hinkel 2011; Tawil and Harley 2004; Weinstein, Freedman, and Hughson 2007). Sri Lanka is no exception, where these divisions were later used for political gains. The three-tiered school system implemented by the British was a strategy to choose a few English-educated elites to fulfil the demands of lower echelon administrative positions (Sandagomi 2009), which resulted in intense socio-economic and political inequality (Bickmore 2008; Kandaih 1984). This disparity affected the Sinhala rural population more since more English-medium schools were established in Tamil populated areas by the missionaries during the British rule. Subsequently, the educationally and socially more disadvantaged Sinhalese demanded that Sinhala, the

language of the majority (75%), be made the official language in Sri Lanka, which they won with the support of the opportunist Sinhala politicians who used this issue for political outbidding. Making Sinhala the sole official language united the Tamil community towards their demand for Tamil as an official language. Even though Tamil was later accepted as an official language, the extent of damage that the ‘Sinhala Only’ act had done to inter-ethnic relations in the country was immense (Cohen 2007; Nadesan 1957; Navaratna-Bandara 2002; Wickrema and Colenso 2003).

Although only the Sinhala language was given official status, both Sinhala and Tamil have been MOI in schools since the introduction of free-education in 1945. In most cases, however, Sinhala and Tamil were offered separately except for a few schools that offered both Sinhala and Tamil MOI. The separated model of MOI generated an ethnolinguistically exclusive school system (Cohen 2007; Kandiah 1984; Wickrema and Colenso 2003; Wijesekera 2011). This polarisation parted Sinhalese and Tamils, resulting in a ‘narrow formulations of identity’ (Cohen 2007, 64) and obstructed the education system from nurturing a supraethnic identity and an inclusive society in Sri Lanka. In abolishing English Medium education in public schools from 1945, English education became the prerogative of a small section of the upper class society. This move partly fuelled two insurgencies in the South as well as more general ethnic conflict among youth since educated youth failed to find well-paid jobs without English language proficiency (NEC 2003).

With the aim of rectifying the pitfalls, the newest proposals for Sri Lankan Education Act by NEC (2017, xvi) recognises,

The conflict between the terrorist group [...] and the government which ruined the country during the last 30 years is over and the opportunity for children of all ethnic groups to socialize together and build one nation has dawned. Education will be the best investment to build up unity in diversity.

However, whether the Sri Lankan education system is the ‘best investment’ in bringing ethnic cohesion is questionable when children from different ethnolinguistic backgrounds are separated from each other through MOI by the very same education system. With regard to MOI in Sri Lanka, Lo Bianco (2008, 42) argues that ‘[b]ilingual education and socio-political issues are in few places as inextricably connected as in Sri Lanka’. We now turn to an introduction of bilingual education in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka’s BE programme

The BE programme in Sri Lanka does not have an explicit or legitimate policy per se. It is a collection of letters and circulars that neither mention language policy nor BE pedagogy (Perera 2014; Wijesekera 2018). The BE Teacher Training Manual (National Institute of Education (NIE) 2009) mentions that there is neither clarity nor policy in the programme. The BE programme started without giving much attention to the system’s capacity for implementation and monitoring, and was introduced solely as a means to improve English language proficiency in students (NEC 2003). The education authorities later identified that BE can enable the learner’s ‘understanding of other languages and cultures [...] celebrate diversity in a pluralistic society [...] so they neither be too ethnocentric nor chauvinistic’ (NIE 2009, 53).

The most recent NEC document (2014, 123) on MOI defines the BE programme as ‘an important initiative of medium of instruction in a language other than mother tongue to adopt the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as a model’. Coyle (2007, 546) defines CLIL as ‘an integrated approach, where both language and content are conceptualised on a continuum without an implied preference for either’. Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) place CLIL on a continuum – one end emphasises the teaching of content whereas the other end emphasises the teaching of target language. Given the lack of English language proficiency in BE students in initial grades, the Sri

Lankan CLIL programme encourages techniques such as code-switching translations, and translanguaging as scaffolding mechanisms so as to make both content knowledge and the target language (English) more comprehensible. Wardhaugh (2010, 84) defines code-switching as ‘shift from one code [language] to another’, whereas translanguaging is ‘the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system’ (Canagarajah 2011, 401). As such, code-switching differs from translanguaging theoretically – code-switching considers shuttle between separate codes, and languages are considered as separate systems. In contrast, translanguaging considers heteroglossic environment where all languages in an individual’s linguistic repertoire as one single system. Here, heteroglossia is a ‘theoretical orientation to and understanding of, linguistic diversity’ (Blackledge and Creese 2014, 1). Heteroglossia discards the idea that languages are separate entities, and considers that the ‘boundaries’ between named languages (as separate entities) is diminished when a whole repertoire of languages in a social space becomes one single meaning-making tool. Such a heteroglossic environment creates a space for ‘... people with different histories, and releases histories and understanding that had been buried within fixed language identities constrained by nation-states’ (Garcia and Wei 2014, 21), or in the present study, constrained by ethnicities.

It is natural that students and teachers utilise their full linguistic repertoires (Creese and Blackledge 2015; Garcia 2009; Garcia and Wei 2014; García-Mateus and Palmer 2017; Pennycook 2017; Sayer 2013) in the BE class. In the Sri Lankan context, this means that Sinhala and Tamil can be used to fulfil communicative demands when their English language – the legitimised language during the subject done in EMI – is not proficient enough. This creates a heteroglossic linguistic landscape in the BE classroom – ‘an orientation to language as a diverse set of resources that is highly

productive as a descriptive umbrella term for both specific practices such as code-meshing and poly [linguaging] – and translanguaging’ (McKinney 2017, 28). According to Garcia (2011, 6), such BE contexts ‘develop multiple understandings about languages and cultures, and foster appreciation for human diversity’, where boundaries demarcating linguistic identities may blur. A heteroglossic approach to bi/multilingual learning creates equal languaging opportunities that allow children to build multiple identities and achieve transformative potential towards social cohesion (Garcia 2009). This approach defies existing dominant ideologies and resists powers it may have been subjugated to in monoglossic contexts where languages are considered as separate entities; it ‘disrupt[s] the socially constructed language hierarchies’ that contribute to conflicts between groups who speak different languages (Otheguy, Garcia, and Reid 2015, 283). More democratic and equitable linguistic landscapes are a potential path for mutual understanding (Creese and Blackledge 2015). This can lead to greater inclusion through changing ethnic group boundary demarcations and fostering personal relationships.

In addition to the benefits of heteroglossic language environments in promoting inclusivity, English may act as a neutral (Kachru 1986) or unmarked code (Canagarajah 2000) or a tool of reconciliation (Kennett 2011). English is the legitimate language in the BE class. Moreover, it is at the apex of the hierarchical linguistic market, both local and global. In Sri Lankan multiethnic BE classrooms, contesting linguistic resources – Sinhala and Tamil – exist together with English that has more capital value. The power disequilibrium created by the imbalance between Sinhala (the language of the majority language with more capital value) and Tamil may be neutralised by English. For instance, taking examples from English-Hindi and English-Swahili bilinguals, Ritchie and Bhatia (2010, 48) contend that individuals switch to Hindi or Swahili to mark in-

group local identity while switching to English to indicate ‘neutrality, and identity as participants in the wider world’. This may happen in the Sri Lankan multiethnic BE pedagogy that English may act as a neutralising media between the two historically competing languages – Sinhala and Tamil.

It is hard to dispute, empirically, the mutually constitutive effect of MTI (Sinhala/Tamil), ethnic exclusion, ethnocentric identity construction, and the historically divided nation in Sri Lanka. Through linguistic mechanisms of BE, students may form a new linguistic community different from the linguistic community in monolingual social spaces such as monolingual classrooms and homes. These ‘new forms of social relations in the classrooms’ may destabilise identities of students, as Tollefson (2015, 183) affirmed. Question remains, however, in terms of how to destabilise such a narrow formation of identities when students are exposed to ‘new forms of social relations’ in the multilingual BE classrooms. This paper grapples with this very question through a Bourdieusian sociological lens.

Theoretical framework

The study was situated on the premise that practice within a social space (field) is the sum of the interplay between subjective dispositions (habitus) of individuals who inhabit that space, and the objective structures (capital) that define individual positions within the space (Bourdieu 1990, 2004). For the purpose of this study, the BE programme was conceptualised as a *field*, a relatively autonomous social space characterised by specific ‘socially situated conditions’; ethnic identity was conceptualised as ethnic habitus (Bourdieu 1990) that (mis)matches the BE field; and valuable resources recognised within the BE field were conceptualised as capital. In this vein, Bourdieu’s three conceptual tools – field, habitus, and capital – theoretically frame the current study and underpin data analysis of the study.

The study grapples with the realigning of ethnic group identity of the students in the multiethnic and multilingual BE classroom. Both identity and language are socially situated. As systems of embodied dispositions, language and identity exist both in the context as well as in people – ‘in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 127). Within a given field, certain dispositions (e.g., a particular language or a particular way of doing, thinking, and being – the habitus) accrue value and become capital, whereas other dispositions may be arbitrarily depreciated or accrue penalty. According to Bourdieusian perspectives, language and ethnic identity can be considered as the ‘principles of selection, of inclusion and exclusion’ through ‘an institutionalized and therefore conscious and organized process of segregation and discrimination’ (Bourdieu 1984, 162). These principles only make sense within a certain site of struggles where social groups with different languages and ethnicities vie for favourable positions that accrue them symbolic power within a field. Located within a larger field of education, the BE field, with its multiethnic pedagogical principles, is a relatively autonomous field that differs from the monoethnic, monolingual classrooms in the Sri Lankan school system. Such difference will soon become clear in our analysis.

Habitus, historically and socially acquired systems of dispositions, are durable yet transposable, and not immutable (Bourdieu 1977). Habitus is ‘an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions’ (Bourdieu 1990, 55). Yet, habitus’ generating limits ‘are set by the *historically and socially situated conditions* of its production’ (Bourdieu 1990, 55, our emphasis). Simply, the historically acquired dispositions of individuals have capacity to generate in dialectical relation to situated conditions of the field they inhabit or pass by. It is therefore arguable that habitus of ethnic identity, though durable and transposable, may morph into different

dispositions when individuals move across fields, for example, from a monoethnic, monolingual classroom to a multiethnic BE classroom. The realigning of habitus will be discussed momentarily when we analyse our data.

The field's situated conditions or objective structures are shaped by specific capitals valued in that field. As a field-specific resource, capital has potential capacity to reproduce itself in identical and expanded forms, either economic, cultural, social, and symbolic (Bourdieu 1986). This study specifically looked at how linguistic capital would facilitate accrual of social capital among students of different ethnicities within the BE field. Bourdieu defined social capital as:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to ... membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word ... they may also be socially instituted and guaranteed by the application of common name (the name of a family, a class, or a tribe or of a school, a party, [or of an ethnic group] etc.) (Bourdieu 1986, 248, our addition).

We argue that in ethnically homogeneous social spaces the membership or the 'collectively owned "credential" that entitles them [members] to credit' would be ethnically exclusive social capital. In contrast, where ethnic heterogeneity is considered as a resource or capital ethnically inclusive membership gains credit. This in turn nurtures ethnically inclusive dispositions in students or supraethnic habitus.

Furthermore, the ethnic group identity is mainly demarcated by language – Sinhala-speaking and Tamil-speaking in this research context. In ethnically heterogeneous BE classrooms, ethnically inclusive membership is shaped through interactions among the linguistically diverse BE students. The study is premised on the hope that BE pedagogy in multiethnic schools might create a new social space with specific 'socially situated conditions' – a new field where 'a transformation of one's whole vision of the social

world [or habitus]' may occur (Cross and Naidoo 2012, 228, our addition). We now proceed to report on the study.

Methodology

The selected data presented here is drawn from a larger, ethnographically-informed, qualitative study, conducted by the first author, which examined multiethnic BE classrooms in three multiethnic schools in Sri Lanka (Wijesekera 2018). Data included classroom observations (5–6 weeks) during which time two content subjects were taught through English by two BE subject teachers. Audio-recordings of classroom interactions were also gathered. Focussed group discussions (FGDs of 60–90 minutes) with students representing each ethnic group – Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim – were also conducted and transcribed. Semi-structured interviews (60–90 minutes) with the BE teachers whose lessons were observed, and with other stakeholders such principals, parents, officials from the Ministry of Education authorities and National Institute of Education of Sri Lanka were also recorded and transcribed. This triangulated and cross-analysed data discovered what and how ethnic group re/orientations took place among ethnically diverse students in the multiethnic BE classrooms in Sri Lanka.

Data, participants, and analysis and interpretation in this paper

In this paper, we present analysis of data that shows the commendable inclusive practices of two BE teachers in one school – South College (a pseudonym), which has limited infrastructure facilities and comes under the purview of Provincial Council in one of the most under-developed provinces in Sri Lanka. The two teachers were Jani, a female teacher, and Sisira, a male teacher, both in their mid-thirties and both Sinhalese (the names are pseudonyms). They teach Mathematics and Citizenship Education (CE) respectively through English. They are graduands in Science and Social Science

respectively. They are bilingual in Sinhala and English, but they cannot speak or write Tamil. Jani has a Postgraduate Diploma in Education while Sisira was completing his Postgraduate Diploma in Education at the time the research was conducted. Neither of them had received any kind of education or training with regard to BE and diversity responsiveness required in multiethnic, multilingual classrooms. In addition to data collected through semi-structured interviews with these two teachers, interview data with two parents representing minority Tamil students, and data collected through focus group discussions with BE students in this class are presented in this paper. Data were analysed inductively using Bourdieu's theoretical framework (discussed above) as a lens to explain the themes arising.

Analysis and interpretation

Teachers' inclusive pedagogical practices

Analysis of the data illustrates the teachers' intervention in creating positive 'socially situated conditions' that enabled the reorienting of exclusionary, ethnocentric identity positioning of students and promoted social inclusivity. In particular, the two BE teachers in this school used several strategies to promote interethnic relations and equality in the BE classroom: i) regular change of seating arrangements; ii) equal delegation of classroom responsibilities; iii) cooperative group work in ethnically heterogeneous groups; and, iv) heteroglossic language practices or cross-linguistic flexibility. Each of these are discussed in turn in the following sections.

(i) Promoting interethnic relations through regular seating rearrangements

In the BE class at South College, no significant congregation of students from the same ethnicity was evident. It was observed that the teachers rearranged seating to facilitate

interrelations among the students of different ethnicities. During Focussed Group Discussions (FGD) students revealed – ‘When the class teacher changes places she gets Sinhala and Tamil students mingle together, puts Sinhala and Tamils close to each other’. The excerpt below from the Math BE teacher’s response to a question on grouping techniques explicates this.

I get them seated like one Tamil one Sinhala student, most of the times students have been mixed like that [...] they are not separated as Sinhala, Tamil and Muslims they are always together [...] they are seated like that.

The teachers regularly rearranged seating to facilitate interethnic relations and it has become the routine of the classroom. Another important contribution is that since the students of diverse ethnicities were made to sit in close proximity to each other, when they were given freedom to get into groups they formed ethnically heterogeneous groups as it was convenient for them. This shows the beneficial nature of physical proximity and social proximity. It appears that physical proximity brings students socially together and reduces intolerance towards diversity. This can be true in the other way also – students have become socially closer and therefore proximity becomes possible. We argue that the ‘socially situated conditions’ that prevail in the usual monoethnic Sri Lankan classrooms, which are ethnically exclusive, have been restructured in the BE classroom. Students spend more time together, allowing opportunities to disconfirm previously held negative stereotypical perceptions about the ‘other’ ethnic group, and develop solidarity, mutual respect, and recognition (Dixon 2006). As a result, ethnic exclusionism reduces, while in-group solidarity grows, developing a perspective that all members in their new group belong to each other. These observations will further be corroborated with the change of students’ dispositions towards ethnically diverse others that is reflected via motivation to learn

the language of the 'other', recognition and respect for the culture of 'others' as students reported, later in this discussion.

(ii) Delegation of responsibilities and absence of favouritism

In the Sri Lankan educational context, class monitorship is an important leadership role with many responsibilities, for example, maintaining teaching/learning record books; liaising between the class and the teacher. The students reported that the appointment of monitors is done by roster so that students of all ethnicities have equal chances. The students reported, 'Teacher changes monitors and we all can be monitors'. Such alternate monitorship was observed by the first author. For example, at the time when classroom observation was first started in this class, a Muslim girl was the class monitor and a Sinhala boy was the assistant, and then another two students became monitors. The teacher is seen here to be utilising her legitimate authority to intervene potential power disequilibrium that might have otherwise occurred due to majority versus minority power relations. The parents of the 'minority' Tamil community discussed the importance of teacher practices in creating understanding among the students as shown in the following excerpt:

Father: ... this understanding depends on teachers also because children are innocent and they do know nothing.

Mother: If a teacher takes a side and discriminate between people it will be a disaster. That is the dangerous side.

Father: If we take 9 D that madam has no favours for my son because I am a teacher here. If a punishment is there it applies equally to everyone which is really good.

Mother: ... if the administration is proper everything goes smoothly otherwise everything falls apart.

These parents discussed the absence of favouritism based on ethnicity, using the issue of punishment to exemplify their argument of the importance of teachers' impartiality. These views reflect the importance of the BE teachers' responsiveness to diversity.

Both examples of teacher practice, that is the equal delegation of responsibilities and absence of favouritism or biases, facilitate positive relations among the students of diverse ethnicities. What is important to the discussion is the teacher's deliberate action through the pedagogic authority that s/he enjoys – being the legitimate authority in the BE pedagogy – to evenly distribute power or social positioning among the students of diverse ethnicities (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). These teacher practices bring students to more equal positioning, and hence social proximity is created among them. Had the teachers not acted in this way, the power relations may have been more unequal, creating a minority versus majority hierarchical social stratification. In such a context, the majority population would typically take dominant positions (Bourdieu 1984), which is not a positive socially situated condition for inclusivity.

(iii) Cooperative group work in ethnically heterogeneous groups

During the entire period of classroom observations, students formed ethnically heterogeneous groups through engagement in cooperative group work. Teachers sometimes instructed students to form random groups by asking to count from one to five. At other times, students were given freedom to form groups of their choice. Whether teacher instructed or student volunteered, students formed ethnically heterogeneous groups and worked towards common tasks – essential conditions for positive intergroup relations. When asked what his preferred technique of grouping was,

the Citizenship Education (CE) teacher at South College replied that mixed grouping has become the norm of his CE classroom due to the group activities he designed.

... you can see it. That I don't have to tell them to get into mix groups. They do it automatically because now they know it. Also to complete all activities they need each other's help.

As the CE teacher pointed out, 'to complete all activities students need each other's help', and therefore they 'automatically' formed 'mix groups' or ethnically heterogeneous groups. This indicates that students do not think deliberately, but they form ethnically heterogeneous groups in a practical sense – their body just knows. In effect, forming ethnically heterogeneous groups has become an embodied disposition, because the logic of practice in the pedagogy designed by the teachers is such. The above commentary also illustrates that the promotion of interdependence among ethnically diverse students was clearly premeditated by the teacher. For their part, in a practical sense, students were thinking and acting with mutual interdependence through the feeling for the game, because of the 'rules of the game' set by the teacher. To explicate this interdependent relationship that was created by cooperative work in ethnically heterogeneous groups, we present a transcription of classroom interaction that took place in the class when preparing for a group activity.

During the following lesson, the teacher divided students into ethnically heterogeneous groups by using a counting technique. He assigned a name for each group using topics covered in a previous lesson related to diversity – Unity, Brotherhood, Peace, Harmony, and Co-operation – where students were required to write the Sinhala and Tamil equivalents of the name of their group before starting the actual activity.

Teacher: Now students? I will divide you into five groups. Let's count numbers from 1 to 5 remember your number.

Students: One two three {each student count from 1 to 5}

Teacher: {to group 1} Now number one, your group is PEACE. {Hand over a task sheet with word written in large letters – Peace} What is it in Tamil?

Tamil students: <L1>Samathanam</L1> (Tamil) சமாதானம் {a few students in other groups also join}

Teacher: What is in Sinhala?

Sinhala students: <L1>Samadanaya</L1> {Mainly Sinhala Students} ?????

Teacher: {to group 1} Your question is what a disaster is or must define what a disaster is, first in English then in Tamil and Sinhala. In Sinhala what is it called? Now your group? What is your name? {ask from the next group}

Students: Unity.

Teacher: What is it in Tamil?

Tamil students: <L1>orrumai</L1> ஒற்றுமை

Teacher: In Sinhala?

Sinhala students: <L1> ekamutukama, samagiya</L1> සමගිය ?????

Teacher: Now, what droughts are, [so] mention the definition. You must write what droughts are, in English, Tamil, and Sinhala. In your groups there are Tamil, Muslim, Sinhala students, we learn in English. After completing your team

work finally let's present. {goes to group 4} Who are number four? YES, what's your name?

Students: Brotherhood

Teacher: In Tamil?

Tamil students: *Sahotharathuvam* சகோதரத்துவம்

Teacher: In Sinhala

Sinhala students: *Sahodarathwaya* සහෝදරත්වය

Teacher: Now when you complete your team work. Cooperativeness must be there. Unity must be there. Then what are the other groups? Brotherhood must be there, harmony must be there according to your team name complete your work. Identify damages caused by droughts, think about man, think about environment. You must write at least three, write in English, Tamil and then in Sinhala right? End of the period you must present.

What is evident in the excerpt is even though English dominated the teacher's language, there was no teacher imposed restrictions on the use of Sinhala and Tamil by students apart from the legitimate linguistic resource in the BE pedagogy – English. Given this ubiquitous flexible language use in the absence of sanctions, students were able to use the whole linguistic repertoire available to them, and ultimately opted to shuttle freely between languages to fulfil their academic and communication needs. In fact, the teacher tried to promote the use of all three languages to facilitate content comprehension. For instance, though the teacher did not know Tamil they elicited Tamil and Sinhala equivalents from students for important words during content delivery.

During classroom observations, the teacher directed students to clarify and establish important terms and words in Mother Tongues (MTs) by posing questions to the whole class. For example, the teacher asked for Tamil clarifications by posing questions such as ‘what is it in Tamil?’. There seemed to exist both explicit and implicit promotion of MTs by the teacher. This kind of teacher practice encouraged linguistic flexibility, which resulted in free navigation between all the resources available in the students’ linguistic repertoire.

Here, the CE teacher endeavoured to nurture awareness of the benefits of diversity through ‘lived experiences’ using the BE classroom’s ethnic heterogeneity advantageously by facilitating emergence of heteroglossia in the BE classroom. His approach to lessons set an exemplary example for ‘teachers’ equity-oriented perspectives for language’ (Zuniga, Henderson, and Palmer 2017, 72) in the BE pedagogy. Thereby, he created diversity responsiveness and inclusivity in the multiethnic classrooms where languages were hierarchically powerful and carry symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991). These activities benefited students in many ways, as observed. Writing the concepts such as brotherhood, unity, etc. in their mother tongues (Sinhala and Tamil) may have enhanced students’ emotional attachment to pluralism, respect for others, and importance of unity because they quickly understood the concepts in their mother tongues. This teacher, whose first language is Sinhala, was not at all conversant in Tamil. Yet, he got students translanguaging where even the Sinhala students were persuaded to use minority’s language, Tamil. This may also have enhanced respect for each other’s languages ‘without presupposing a conscious aiming’ (Bourdieu 1990, 55) since the use of each other’s languages in addition to English was indispensable to complete the activities, while promoting self-esteem of each linguistic

community through recognition for their languages in the class. These acts directly cater to the aims of the BE programme that is promoting bilingualism and biliteracy.

These activities in ethnically heterogeneous groups have the potential to create an in-group sense of collective identity. The ‘socially situated conditions’ becomes positive interdependence, individual accountability, interaction, social interpersonal skills, and group or team processing. With the existence of such conditions, mutual familiarity, understanding and recognition of ethnically diverse others is at stake; and inclusive social capital gains the highest symbolic value, with ethnocentrism having lesser value. Following Bourdieu (1990), we argue that in this dialectic relationship the opportunity emerges for a reorientation of the ethnocentric habitus towards an ethnically inclusive habitus.

(iv) Heteroglossic language practices

The heteroglossic language practices in the BE classroom were discussed further with students during the FGDs at South College. All students, irrespective of their ethnolinguistic orientations, equally claimed that it helped them in various ways, for example, in grasping subject matter more effectively when peers translated and explained. In fact, they declared that ‘it’s like learning in all three languages’. In the question on what language they would prefer in the BE class the students had following to say:

Students: All three languages. It is easy to understand what they teach [in chorus].

Student 2: Even if we study maths in English, but we are thinking in Tamil, in our MT.

Author 1: But your math teacher doesn’t know Tamil? So she will only explain in Sinhala. Is it okay for you?

Student 2: Yes, because [but] we can ask and learn from Sinhala friends.

Student 1: And we can learn new Sinhala words also.

Student 5: Also we can improve our English knowledge also.

Student 2: When he [teacher] speaks even in English, and when he says [repeat the same] in Sinhala we can match [compare] those words and improve our knowledge. Because if he says a word, if he says ‘education’ and {addyapana}[Sinhala equivalent for education] we can know what it means.

Student 1: We can study or learn the English language more with more understanding.

These Muslim BE students whose mother tongue is Tamil considered teacher’s code-switching to Sinhala to be an opportunity for them to learn Sinhala. If they could not understand any lesson/facts delivered by the teacher in English, Sinhala peers helped them by elaborating in Sinhala. They also appreciated group activities assigned by the CE teacher because those activities required all three languages, which was like ‘studying in all three languages’, contributing to better comprehension and learning. In summary, the above comments clearly indicate the benefits of drawing flexibly on linguistic resources or translanguaging. Even in situations when teachers were not proficient in minority language they were still able to promote minority language in the class and create greater linguistic democracy.

Working in a heteroglossic language environment and having the ability to translanguage contribute to making identities more flexible and to developing desired identities (Creese and Blackledge 2015; Garcia 2009; Garcia and Wei 2014; Sayer 2013). In the context of this study, this can be interpreted using the overarching theoretical underpinnings of Bourdieu. The logic of practice in the heteroglossic BE

field is different from that in monolingual classrooms and families. From students' commentaries it is also implied that now the logic of practice in the BE field is one of interdependence and recognition of all languages, including the languages of other ethnic groups. Such logic helps to transform a once monolingual, monoethnic habitus to a multilingual, inclusive, and supraethnic habitus. Before coming to the BE programme, students *hated, feared, and felt like hitting each other* (Wijesekera 2018). They now see the diverse others as part of their own group, with whom they collaborate and cooperate to achieve common educational tasks set by the teachers. The most valued capital that structures this logic of practice is that of inclusive social capital: membership of a group that is inclusive of all ethnic diverse others.

It is also noteworthy that the heteroglossic trilingual environment gives due recognition not only to the majority population's language, Sinhala, but also to the minority population's language, Tamil, even in the face of the high status ascribed to English. The excerpt presented above illustrates mutual trust and interdependence among the students of different ethnicities, as a result of mutually building content knowledge in group tasks utilising different languages. A heteroglossic linguistic environment with ethnically heterogeneous groups enhances positive attitudes towards all languages and recognition of the speakers of languages which were once othered. This in turn contributes to a collective identity, or one-group sense, where reciprocity and interdependence become indispensable and mutual acquaintance is promoted. This also evidences habitus reorienting in dialectic relation to the logic of practice or the socially situated conditions of the BE field. In order to feel like 'fish in water', ethnolinguistic orientations need to be repositioned or reshaped in response to the heteroglossic linguistic practices in the BE class.

Above all, respect, recognition and interest in learning each other's languages are covertly enhanced in the context where values assigned to different linguistic capital tend to become relatively similar and 'open' to renegotiation (Grenfell 1998, 74). In other words, Sinhala and Tamil languages, which have traditionally been 'dividing tools' to separate Sinhalese and Tamils, are not equally valued. The social condition created in the BE class, or the 'network of linguistic relations' (Grenfell 1998), in fact, can also be considered departing from the historical view that the education system of Sri Lanka, due to the Mother Tongue Instructions since the 1940s, has acted as a dividing mechanism or system of national disintegration; one that has created alienation or 'narrow formulations of identity' (Cohen 2007, 64) between Tamil speaking and Sinhala speaking communities. In fact, this was explicitly expressed by the principal of this school in a semi-structured interview.

When the students are in one class they all act as one group because they get opportunity to work together to achieve one single objective within that context. Among them things pertaining to each other are discussed. When this is like this, a new community is formed even though unofficially. They have a certain understanding about each other's culture and they begin to respect each other.

The principal reiterated how a feeling of 'one group' sense emerges because students of diverse ethnicities work together to achieve educational common goals. The diversity-responsive 'socially situated condition' encourages solidarity among ethnically diverse students. By 'framework' above, he meant not only legitimately demarcated 'classroom' (physical space) but an emergence of a better insulated social space – 'a new community' (Wacquant 2015).

Conclusion

The present article explored how inclusive practices unfolded within Sri Lankan BE

classrooms for students of diverse ethnicities with diverse linguistic abilities. Four main features of inclusive practice were identified: the teachers' deliberate efforts to promote interethnic interaction through regular change of seating arrangements; the delegation of responsibilities and absence of favouritism; the organisation of cooperative group work in ethnically heterogeneous groups; and, heteroglossic language practices or translanguaging. As shown in the analysis, teachers can generate inclusivity through creating feelings of solidarity and interdependence, where students of diverse ethnicities begin to respect each other's diverse languages. Such inclusive practice is commendable in the Sri Lankan context historically fraught with hatred and fear among different ethnic groups, and currently plagued by lack of BE policy guidelines and teacher professional development. This article shows how BE teachers in multiethnic BE classrooms can draw on their personal experiences and contextual resources such as the linguistic resources that the students bring to classrooms to create inclusivity among the ethnolinguistically diverse students. The contribution of this kind of practice cannot be underestimated in post-conflict contexts as ethnic groups seek ways to interrelate positively for social cohesion.

The research agenda urgently needs to gather more instances of this kind of inclusive teaching in multiethnic contexts to explore other 'logics of practice' that can be instructive for teachers and policy makers. Teachers are significant adults for students because they enter students' life early, and spend prolonged time working with students both within and beyond the school context. Therefore, teachers have strong potential to shape students' dispositions and capacities required for success in the increasingly diverse and dynamic contemporary world. Indeed, both habitus reshaping and capital accrual require inculcation and accumulation – a temporal project of pedagogic work. Nevertheless, waves of neoliberal education reforms globally have

placed growing emphasis on teacher accountability for student performance, not allowing time required for pedagogic work, and hence de-professionalising teachers. The BE programme in Sri Lanka, however, seems to allow BE teachers to be professional, enabling their significant role in changing the socially situated conditions in classrooms – shifting the implicit rules encoded in the pedagogy, and realigning exclusionary, ethnocentric identity positioning towards more inclusive, supraethnic identities. Such changes do not emerge from revolutionary conducts. Rather, they unfold through teachers' routine pedagogic practices. The two BE teachers in this study have shown us how to realise the magic of the everydayness. Their extraordinary power within ordinary context is exemplary, and has important implications for BE policy and curriculum development in Sri Lanka and beyond.

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