

Report for Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS)

Project title: Minority language pupils and the curriculum – closing the achievement gap

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Project summary

The aim of this project was to hold two seminars on teaching English as an Additional Language (EAL), one at Ulster University in Coleraine and the other at Marino Institute of Education in Dublin, and to produce a digital resource based on these events. The seminars were entitled **Minority language pupils and the curriculum – closing the achievement gap** and were offered in February 2017 (Ulster University) and April 2017 (Marino Institute of Education). The digital resource was based on edited highlights from the content of the seminars and is now being used to disseminate outcomes from the two events. It is hosted on the websites of SCoTENS, Ulster University, and Marino Institute of Education (insert URL links here).

The idea for the project arose from the success of two seminars offered by the coordinators in 2015. The first of these was at the SCoTENS Conference in Limerick in October 2015, in the form of a presentation entitled 'Teaching English as an Additional Language: perspectives from North and South', which was attended by participants from both jurisdictions. The coordinators were subsequently invited to offer a similar session to student teachers as part of Maynooth University's 'Zoom' Literacy event in November 2015. These sessions highlighted the need for ongoing opportunities for educators to come together to examine and discuss best pedagogical practice in EAL in the context of the most up-to-date theoretical perspectives in the field.

To this end, the coordinators initiated the project with a successful funding application to SCoTENS in 2016, and with added assistance from Ulster University's Institute of Research in Social Sciences and Marino Institute of Education. The project was entitled: 'Minority language pupils and the curriculum – closing the achievement gap'. The coordinators invited leading academics and educators to speak at the seminars in Coleraine and Dublin (full biographies in Appendix 1):

Dr Andrew Hancock, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

Dr Piet Van Avermaet, Ghent University, Belgium

Dr Déirdre Kirwan, former principal of Scoil Bhríde, Dublin

Dr Jean Conteh, Leeds University, England

The stated purpose of the two seminars was to provide relevant practical strategies and theory to support minority language pupils in school. The aims were as follows:

- To develop best practice in intercultural education
- To work towards the integration and quality attainment of minority language pupils
- To provide teaching professionals with opportunities to examine practice, share ideas and develop insights into intercultural education and EAL pedagogy

Both seminars attracted strong numbers of participants (c.140 in Coleraine and c.90 in Dublin) and comprised teacher educators, practising teachers (primary and secondary), policy makers, student teachers, research students and academics. The seminars were filmed by BA Media Production Studies students from Ulster University and the contents edited so that the highlights could be made available to seminar participants and other educators afterwards.

This report begins with exploring the background to the project, moves into discussing challenges EAL learners and educators face, goes on to examine theories underpinning minority language pupils and the curriculum, before providing some concluding remarks.

The national contexts

At a time of increased global migration, this project has been timely. Borders across the world have become more fluid in recent decades (Bauman, 2007); according to data from the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) (2015), international migration has almost tripled in size since 1960, rising from 77 million at that time to almost 244 million in 2015. It is likely that the island of Ireland, North and South, will remain a destination of choice for people from parts of the world that have been 'stripped' by global capitalism (Bauman, 2007, p. 34): "protracted misery makes millions desperate", or who have been forced to move because of wars and conflict. Parekh (2009, p. 81) speaks of the range of human movement across the planet, from economic migration to returning diaspora, to asylum seekers and refugees, saying:

Since none of these and other sources of cultural diversity are likely to disappear in the foreseeable future, and since new forms of diversity appear as the old die out, it is a more or less permanent feature of modern life.

This cultural and linguistic diversity is reflected in classrooms across the island. Statistics show that numbers of minority language pupils in the North of Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are on the increase. In Northern Ireland, at the time of writing, there are 11,900

minority language pupils, that is 3.5% of total school enrolment, compared with 7,899 in 2009/10 and 1,244 pupils in 2002 (NISRA, 2015).

According to the 2016 Census in the Irish Republic, the migrant population stands at 11.6%; there are currently 200 nationalities in the country with approximately 182 different languages (Central Statistics Office, 2017). Numerically, there are 612,000 people who speak a language other than English at home, with Polish, Romanian and Lithuanian being the most represented (CSO, 2017).

Teachers are being called upon to provide differentiated instruction for pupils whose first language is not English, ensuring that these students are fully included in teaching and learning, and that their achievement is on a par with their English-speaking peers. The underachievement of migrant pupils is a long-standing concern in Europe and the US (Cummins, 2014; Faas, 2014). Data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) has highlighted the achievement gap in many countries, in both first and second-generation migrant students (Cummins, 2014). PISA data in the Republic of Ireland is perhaps more encouraging. According to Shiel, Kelleher, McKeown and Denner (2016a, p. 100), no significant differences are observed on overall Science scores among students in Ireland based on immigrant and language background. The authors qualify this statement however by noting that “this may arise from the large standard errors around the mean scores for the two immigrant groups” (Shiel et al, 2016a, p. 100). In the 2015 PISA statistics, Sheil et al state that ‘native students’ have a mean score on Science that is “some 12.2 points higher than immigrant students who speak a language other than English or Irish at home” (Shiel et al, 2016a, p. 100). They also point out:

The only significant difference in achievement observed between the groups is on reading literacy, with native students scoring some *25 points higher* than immigrant students who speak a language other than English or Irish (Shiel et al, 2016, p. 100, italics added).¹

The Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency (NISRA) provide figures which are food for thought on the achievement of newcomer pupils in Northern Ireland. In post primary education in 2015-2016, 38.6% of home pupils achieved 3 or more A levels at grade A* - C compared with 8.4% of newcomer pupils; whilst 66.5% of home pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* - C compared with 21.3% of newcomer pupils.

These latest ROI and NI figures may point to a developing trend of underachievement and thus need to be monitored; they also underline the necessity for an on-going focus in pre-service education (Ryan, O’Toole, Quinn, Hagan & Bracken, 2010) and in-service teacher education on teaching English as an additional language (see Skinner, 2010): creating inclusive curricula, developing sound pedagogical practice, and establishing strong links

¹ According to the PISA data in the Republic of Ireland, the mean score for ‘native’ students in reading literacy is 524.7, while the score for immigrant students with a language other than English or Irish is 499.7 (Shiel, Kelleher, McKeown and Denner, 2016b, p. 6)

between communities and schools. The next section explores the challenges learners and educators face in closing this achievement gap.

Vignette: Natalia's Story

"My name is Natalia. I am 12 and from Lithuania. I have been in Northern Ireland for nearly two years. I enjoy Maths and I'm good at it but sometimes I can't explain what I do or ask and answer questions because I don't have enough English"

Natalia has learnt her mother tongue, Lithuanian, and can use it fluently. However, she also needs to learn to speak, read, write and listen in English at the same time as maintaining her curriculum learning, which is also through the medium of English. Natalia needs subject-specific academic language such as:

If you divide it by 100 and multiply by then you get

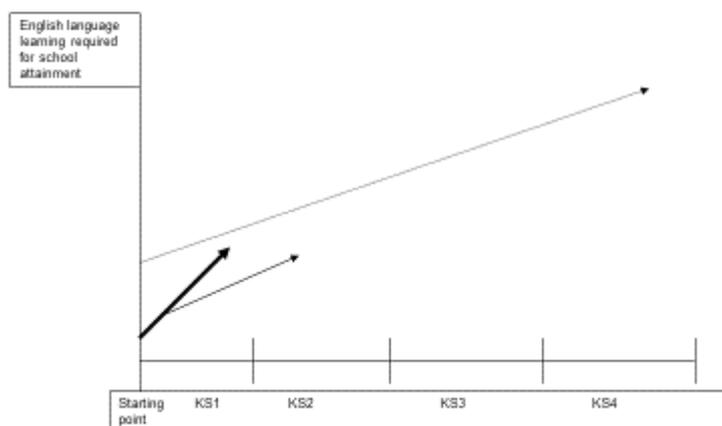
First you subtract (X) from (Y), then you estimate how many

The difference between ... ?

There are four sets of X, so this means....

Natalia also needs to socialise with children in a language she has yet to learn – daunting - and learn the social practices of the classroom and the school. These practices are culturally embedded and may be less consistent with her home background than for the majority language children in her class and in her school. Natalia is facing a moving target:

Starting school – the EAL learner's task



The graph shows the English language learning required for school attainment and starting point

- dotted line = average pupil progression
- dark line = required EAL progression
- thin line = lower EAL progression

The EAL learner has to 'catch up' from a different starting point. If Natalia can 'catch up' or near enough by the end of her first year, she may do well in the education system, although it is still important to remember that her development in English will not be complete at this stage and Natalia will require continuing support. If she cannot close the gap by the end of the first year it will get more difficult because the demands of the curriculum depend on increasing literacy skills in English.

Catching up is basically Natalia's problem. No one waits. The curriculum moves on. Natalia is faced with a moving target (Cummins, 2000, p. 36) as native speakers of English are making accelerated progress through school.

Natalia is moving into the intermediate stage of learning English: intermediate EAL learners would typically be able to communicate successfully and fluently in English ('conversational fluency' Cummins, 2001) and develop more control of functional language, i.e. academic language proficiency (Cummins, 2001). Natalia's spoken English, however, may not be fully accurate, with surface errors sometimes continuing for a number of years. The challenges for intermediate EAL learners remain. They may, for example, be able to use more extended sentences with greater accuracy and control than they could when they were beginners, but often containing errors in plurals, tenses, pronouns and prepositions. For example:

- over-generalisation of rules, e.g. *He sitted on the floor; I saw some mouses*
- omitting articles or putting them in the wrong place
- omitting 's' on the end of 3rd person singular
- errors with tenses, e.g. *She come to school late this morning; We watching a film on Saturday.*

At this stage the focus for teaching and support should be about increasing accuracy; intermediate learners need to be encouraged to notice key features of English and apply them in their own speech and writing.

Academic language proficiency

This vignette has highlighted the complexity of tasks facing the EAL learner. Whatever the age of the pupil he or she must catch up with their English-speaking peers and do so in a relatively short amount of time. While rates of progress will depend on a range of variables, the learning and social context within the school will play a part in making the task easier or harder. Furthermore, Cummins (2001) has highlighted the distinction between social / conversational language and academic language proficiency. Conversational language is typically context-embedded and supported by paralinguistic cues (Cummins, 1979, 2001; Little, 2010) and is generally acquired within one-two years of a pupil arriving in school.

Gibbons (1991) has referred to this as ‘playground language’, indicating its informal nature and informal origins. Academic language is context-reduced and more abstract; it comprises the more formal register of schooling, involving complex features and vocabulary such as hypothesising, persuading, classifying, arguing, speculating, and so on. As Cummins (2001, p. 68) points out: “mastery of the academic functions of language is a... formidable task”. Although Little (2010, p. 19) cautions against clear-cut distinctions between these two facets of language proficiency, noting that “the distinctions are not absolute and boundaries are often blurred”, writers seem to agree on the central role of school personnel in teaching academic language (Little, 2010, 2012; Cummins, 2001, 2014; Creese & Leung, 2010; Gibbons, 2002), along with the importance of this for educational success. As Grommes (2014) states, a student’s ‘educational success will in part be determined by the degree to which he or she masters *Bildungssprache*² (Grommes, 2014, p. 137).

Gibbons (2002, p. 6) points to the proactive nature of teaching for academic proficiency, stating that merely placing students in classrooms is not sufficient, but that teachers must aim to integrate language and content, “so that a second language is developed hand in hand with new curriculum knowledge”. This highlights the importance of teachers having a knowledge of EAL pedagogy. It underlines the need for education about EAL pedagogy to form part of pre-service provision and continuing professional development for teachers. How should this pedagogy be approached?

Questions for educators

Taking note of the vignette featuring Natalia, along with the necessity for the development of academic language proficiency in school, there are certain dilemmas and challenges facing teachers who work with students whose first language is not English:

How do teachers in diverse settings support the development of academic language proficiency while also recognising the languages and cultures of their students?

How do teachers avoid holding a deficit perspective on language learners in their classrooms, when they are aware of the potential gaps in their academic language proficiency compared to that of their peers who speak the dominant language?

In summary: students must learn the dominant language in order to succeed academically. *How do teachers approach this work within a social justice framework, i.e. without a) working from a deficit perspective or b) marginalising students’ first languages and home cultures?*

As Little, Leung and Van Avermaet (2014, p. xxii) point out, while a primary focus on the development of academic language proficiency is understandable in educational policy and

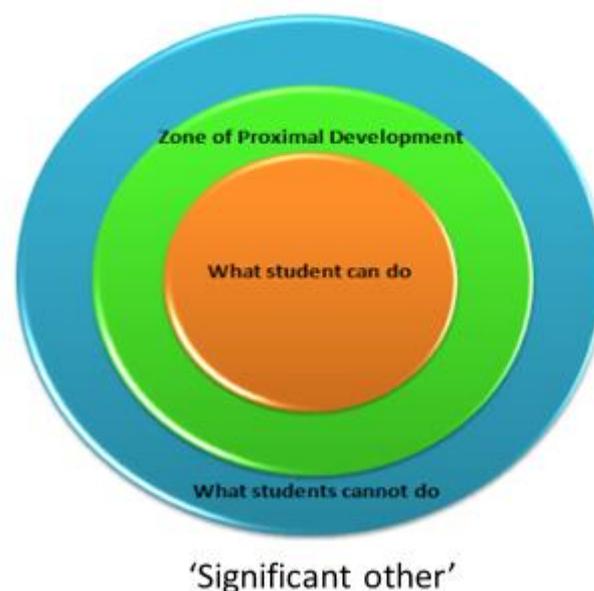
² *Bildungssprache*: a concept introduced by Ingrid Gogolin to denote academic language (cited in Grommes, 2014)

practice, “effective diversity management must address a number of issues in addition to the language of schooling”. Such issues include a recognition of students’ home languages and cultures. Cummins (2014, p. 9) states that effective education for minority language students must incorporate language support and an inclusive curriculum, and that it must also “view diversity as a resource and...establish respectful collaborative partnerships with parents and the community.” In an earlier publication Cummins (2001, p. 71) notes that “school improvement efforts are likely to be futile if they continue to exclude issues of identity and power from their analyses of the causes of students’ academic difficulties and from recommendations for change”. Little (2010, p. 16) states that “use of the home language at school affirms the migrant pupil’s identity and helps to counteract any tendency to stigmatise him or her for membership of a group that is perceived as linguistically inferior”.

These issues exercised the project coordinators when planning for the two SCoTENS-funded seminars. The coordinators aimed to provide opportunities for teachers to enhance their classroom practice with minority language students, to reduce the possibility of an achievement gap, and to approach this work in such a way that students’ first languages and cultures would be included as an integral part of teaching and learning. To this end, situating the seminars within a sociocultural theoretical framework was the starting point.

A sociocultural framework

Socio-cultural perspective



The theoretical perspective underpinning EAL pedagogy, as understood by the project coordinators, is informed by Vygotsky’s sociocultural perspective on education. Vygotsky (cited in Walsh, 2006, p.33) believed learning is a ‘situated practice’ which occurs in social

contexts, through talking to others, before being internalized for cognitive development. Learning occurs best when practical activity and language come together. Vygotsky believed that this learning occurs most successfully through interaction with others who are more experienced than ourselves, the 'expert knower' (ibid.), often the teacher, but sometimes a peer.

An important feature of Vygotsky's theory (ibid.) is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This can be thought of as a metaphorical location where learners interact to construct knowledge. The term relates to the difference between what a learner can achieve on his or her own compared with when s/he is supported by a teacher or more able other. In an EAL context, learning occurs best if a learner interacts with someone who is within their ZPD as the student is able to co-construct knowledge and perform at a higher level with the support of the other. Vygotsky proposes that to learn effectively we need a 'significant other' – for a pupil for whom English is an additional language this might be a good native speaker who can model and help *scaffold* their learning in interactive learning activities. A large part of a teacher's role is to scaffold the language of learners for whom EAL by, exploring the actual language demands of the task and relating this to the pupil's ability. For example, what key vocabulary needs to be identified so that the pupils can access the content? What is the syntactic complexity of the text, is it full of lots of conditional clauses, if so, does the pupil know the conditional in English and if not, will he or she realise that this is talking about something hypothetical, not real? Do the pupils know that the structure of some advertisements follows a problem-solution type pattern? And what about subject specific terminology inherent in this task?

In their research Cameron and Besser lay particular stress on the problems advanced EAL learners have with what they terms formulaic phrases, which they defines as 'a group of words that are "bound" together, in that certain words must, or tend to be, accompanied by other words' (2004, p. 8). For example 'a black-and-white cat' is a formulaic phrase; an EAL learner might write 'a white-and-black cat'. Other examples would be 'he waited for long', instead of 'he waited for a long time', or 'her best of all friend' for 'her best friend'. The basic premise is that skills need to be developed so that teacher and learners look *at* language rather than through it – that is, develop a linguistically responsive pedagogy.

Culturally responsive pedagogy

The theoretical perspective underpinning the project was informed by a sociocultural perspective on education, situating language use in its cultural and social contexts (Hawkins, 2010) and drawing from 'culturally relevant pedagogy' (CRP) (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The project was concerned with prioritising the achievement of students from linguistic minorities but not from an assimilationist perspective; in other words, academic attainment cannot be prioritised at the expense of students' languages and cultures. Arnesen et al. (2008), argue that the sociocultural perspective even by definition alone implies the notion

of human differences that are socially or culturally constructed. Consequently they maintain that from a sociocultural point of view, diversity is not neutral “but implies problems of discrimination and inequality”, (p. 17). By its very term, they argue, there is an implication of different status and recognition, and underpinning these differences, the question of societal power. Fitts (2006) argues that any programmes that attempt to address linguistic matters alone, without also looking at issues of status and power, will not succeed.

Consequently, the work of Gloria Ladson-Billings, who is credited with being the founder of CRP was central to informing this EAL project. In her seminal 1995 paper Ladson-Billings stated: “only the term *culturally responsive* appears to refer to a more dynamic or synergistic relationship between home/community culture and school culture” (Ladson Billings, 1995, p. 467). She carried out a study in the US to challenge deficit perspectives on the education of African American students by identifying ‘teaching excellence’ in the practice of eight successful teachers. Her aim was to establish how academic success and cultural success can complement each other. ‘Three broad propositions’ emerged from the research: “conceptions of self and others held by culturally relevant teachers”; the “manner in which social relations are constructed” by such teachers, and the “conceptions of knowledge they hold” (p. 478). For example, regarding ‘conceptions of self and others’, the successful teachers in her study demanded a high level of academic success from their students and believed their students were capable of reaching this level: “students were not permitted to choose failure in their classrooms” (p. 479). Furthermore, in the process of working towards academic achievement, the teachers included student culture in the classroom as “authorised or official knowledge” (p. 483).

Subsequent work has built upon, developed and critiqued Ladson-Billings’ theory of CRP. For example, Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) introduced the idea of ‘funds of knowledge’ which they describe as the culturally developed knowledge, including language knowledge, which students bring to school. They propose that funds of knowledge refer to the “historically developed and accumulated strategies (skills, abilities, ideas, practices) or bodies of knowledge that are essential to a household’s functioning and well-being” and that these are “abundant and diverse” (Gonzalez et al. 2005, p. 91-92). When students bring their own rich cultural and cognitive resources into the classroom this can tap students’ prior knowledge and can “bridge the chasm between home and school” (p. 40) through the creation of culturally responsive and meaningful lessons. Moll (2005, p. 276) states that when first languages are not recognized by schools, this not only curtails the “ability of teachers to build on the language and cultural experience of students” but it can also lead to a ‘fracture’ between families and school. This is not a unique argument. Cummins (1979, 1980, 2000, 2001) claims that the extent to which students’ language and cultural background are valued and promoted within the school actively supports or disables the learning and achievement of minority ethnic students. Cummins (2000, p. 48) states that interactions between educators and culturally diverse students are “never neutral with respect to societal power relations”, and that “in varying degrees they either reinforce or

challenge coercive relations of power in the wider society". This argument has been taken up and developed by a range of writers in this field, for example, Phillipson (2003), Flynn (2007), Garcia (2009), Mc Daid (2011), Conteh (2012) and Conteh and Brock (2011). Delpit and Dowdy (2002) have emphasised the link between language and identity ("the skin that we speak"); while Mc Daid (2011) frames first language recognition as an issue of equality, going on to state that teachers have 'pedagogic authority' based on their institutional legitimacy as school authority and can thus impose the selection of meanings by virtue of this authority.

Situating EAL teaching and learning in a sociocultural theoretical framework and within the broader context of acknowledging power differentials in society, exercised the project coordinators in their selection of speakers for the two SCoTENS-funded seminars. All four speakers had made a contribution to the field of EAL. In their writings they had foregrounded the connection between language and identity, highlighted the importance of first language recognition and inclusion of students' cultures in school, and had emphasised the necessity of academic achievement.

Hancock (2012, p. 105) for example, challenges the "dominant educational discourse that claims that developing a child's first language hinders the learning of English" and calls on teachers to enable EAL learners to "draw on all their linguistic resources" (p. 104) to support their learning in school. Kirwan (2014, p. 190), the former principal of a multi-ethnic primary school in Dublin, had undertaken a research study to lead to a "deeper knowledge of second language learning", believing this would be essential if "all the children of the school were to be enabled to interact socially, gain access to the curriculum and reach their full potential as individuals". Her study focused on the development of plurilingual awareness at a whole-school level, whereby children were encouraged to bring their language repertoires into classrooms. She describes the development of metalinguistic awareness across the school, among majority language teachers and students as well as among minority language students who were empowered to use their first languages as a resource for learning. Similarly, Conteh and Brock (2011, p. 351) emphasise the importance of creating 'safe spaces' for bilingual learners, stating that such spaces "need to be places where all their language experiences, in home, community and school, are recognised and valued". Meanwhile, Sierens and Van Avermaet (2014) propose three strategies for responding to linguistic diversity in schools: a constructive language policy that "includes all the languages that students and parents speak" (p. 214); language awareness raising to create a positive attitude towards all languages; and facilitating "functional multilingual learning" (p. 205) which urges schools to see first languages and language varieties as "didactic capital" that can "foster personal development and increase... chances of educational success" (p. 217).

The four main speakers at the seminars therefore had a track record in promoting bilingualism as a positive resource for learning, as well as recognising language as central to the identity of students from minority communities. A whole-school perspective involving

links with parents / guardians and the community was also a feature of their previous publications, along with a focus on the importance of ‘constructive’ language policy, at national level and in schools.

The seminars

Ethical consent

Ethical consent for the filming component of the seminars was granted through an application to the Research Ethics Committee at the Ulster University in September 2016. As this application was approved, the Ethics in Research Committee (MERC) in MIE were informed; while they noted the project details they confirmed that MERC consent was not necessary as it had been granted approval by Ulster.

Participants were asked to complete a consent form, and to either email this with their application form or to bring it along on the day of the seminar (See Appendix 2). All participants returned the consent form.

Seminars

The first seminar took place on February 9th 2017 at Ulster University in Coleraine and was attended by c.140 participants, most of whom were student teachers and teacher educators. The second seminar, at MIE in Dublin, took place on April 25th 2017 and was attended by c.90 participants, the majority of whom were practising teachers, both primary and secondary. Other attendees included teacher educators, student teachers, research students, policy makers, and academics. The schedule for both seminars is included as Appendix 3.

Each seminar had a rapporteur who attended all of the talks, circulated during the group discussions, and then wove together the themes that arose during the day in a ten-minute presentation to close the event. The rapporteur in Coleraine was Professor of Education Terri Epstein, from Hunter College, New York who has an interest in teaching diverse learners and in Dublin it was Dr Rory Mc Daid, a lecturer in education at MIE, who has also published in the field.

Feedback

While a formal evaluation was not carried out in MIE due to time restrictions on the day, a number of participants wrote to the organisers with feedback after the event, and this was overwhelmingly positive in tone. Seminar participants used terms such as “informative”, “challenging” and “insightful”. Feedback from participants who attended the session in Coleraine was also positive. Student teachers and teacher educators appreciated the video clips of primary children and strategies for a whole school approach to supporting children

for whom EAL. They also mentioned there is a great need for more workshops and training for those who support young newcomer people in in post primary education, especially in terms of subject specific strategies and materials.

Concluding comments

Project limitations: Beyond culturally responsive pedagogy

As indicated, the organisation of the seminars was informed by a sociocultural theoretical perspective, in which the first languages and home cultures of minority students were recognised and valued as integral components of the teaching and learning process in schools. The concept of ‘culturally relevant pedagogy’ (Ladson-Billings, 1995) was central to the thinking underpinning the events, including the selection of speakers and rapporteurs. However, Pirbhai-Illich, Pete and Martin (2017) offer an important critique of culturally relevant pedagogy which is relevant when reflecting upon and evaluating the current project. These authors argue that CRP “has been and continues to be insufficient to address the global colonial power matrix” (p. 4). The problems they identify are rooted in the typical interpretation of CRP by white educators, meaning that much of what was originally intended by Ladson-Billings has become ‘lost in translation’. These problems concern, firstly, a “focus on the Other, albeit from a positive rather than deficit position”, (Martin, Pirbhai-Illich and Pete, 2017, p. 236), which they say, enables white teachers to side-step white privilege because they can avoid looking at themselves and their own complicity in what Andreotti, (2016, p. 104) terms “epistemic blindness to ways of thinking”. Second, this preoccupation with ‘Other’ also allows educators to ignore the Eurocentric nature of education systems, a phenomenon which Andreotti (2015, p. 196) has referred to as “Worlding the world as West”. Finally, Martin et al (2017, p. 236) state that CRP is generally interpreted at individual teacher level rather than systemically, and typically does not contain an examination of the “systemic and structural inequalities inherent in education systems” which these authors state have their roots in colonialism.

Martin et al (2017, p. 239) call for ‘critical interculturality’ which “requires centring the knowledges of southern, Indigenous, and other marginalised peoples”, along with the creation of spaces for dialogue that address structural and systemic injustice and inequality. They argue for radical, decolonising pedagogy in teacher education. The authors’ critique of CRP is a useful lens with which to examine the limitations of the seminars and to identify lessons learned that can inform future such events. For example, the seminar focus was on the achievement of students from linguistic minorities within a sociocultural theoretical framework in which first languages and cultures are recognised and included. The policy context in Europe was also examined, particularly in the Dublin seminar by Piet Van Avermaet, thereby providing a focus on structural and systemic issues that impact on

schools and classroom practice. However, the ‘voice’ of the minority language speaker was largely absent from the seminars apart from video excerpts from classrooms which were shown by some of the presenters. So, while the event was deemed successful by coordinators, speakers and many participants, a charge of “epistemic blindness” (Andreotti, 2016, p. 104) could well be levelled at organisers; while the perspective was “from a positive rather than a deficit position” (Martin et al, 2017, p. 236), the absence of the minority viewpoint in the selection of speakers can be seen to perpetuate white European privilege. Interestingly, some of the speakers described their own work which had centrally involved family and community learning (Conteh, 2011, 2012); however, the fact that the coordinators had omitted any linguistic minority speakers from the panel is a clear limitation of the project. Future organisers of events of this kind therefore need to hold these issues in mind and centrally involve minority linguistic students, teachers and community leaders in the debate.

Conclusion

In summary, the seminars introduced participants to a new ways of thinking about minority language pupils in schools in both jurisdictions. This was carried out by exploring the national context of ROI and NI in terms of minority language pupils, by examining the challenges faced by learners and educators in these contexts, by highlighting the relevance of sociocultural theory which underpins EAL pedagogy, by emphasising the value of home languages and home cultures and underlining the importance of developing both culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies. It would appear that participants in both jurisdictions engaged wholeheartedly in the seminars and the general feeling was that there is a great need for more discussion around developing inclusive schools and pedagogic competencies which effectively address the learning needs of pupils from diverse learning backgrounds.

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Appendix 1

Biographies

Piet Van Avermaet is Head of the Centre for Diversity and Learning, at the Linguistics Department of Ghent University. He teaches 'multicultural studies', 'multilingualism in education' and 'language policy'. His expertise and research interests cover topics related to multilingualism in education, social inequality in education, language policy and practice in education, language policy and practice in contexts of (social) inclusion, language assessment, diversity and inclusion, integration and participation, discrimination in education, migration. He will be speaking at the Dublin seminar only.

Andrew Hancock is from Edinburgh University and has a background in teaching in multilingual primary schools in London, working in a secondary school in Zimbabwe, as a peripatetic support teacher to bilingual and Traveller pupils in primary and secondary schools across Scotland. Prior to becoming a Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Edinburgh he worked as Manager of the Bilingual Support Service in North Lanarkshire. Andy's research interests include English as an additional language (EAL), multilingual literacy practices, Chinese children's experiences of biliteracy learning, bilingualism and social justice and student teachers' understandings of linguistically diverse primary school classrooms.

Déirdre Kirwan is the former principal of Scoil Bhríde in Blanchardstown in Dublin, where 80% of the school's enrolment consists of pupils from more than 50 cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In 2008 Déirdre received the *European Ambassador for Languages* award for promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity in the school. Déirdre has presented papers on the topic of multilingual education at national and international conferences, and she has delivered courses to teachers at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Déirdre is strongly committed to promoting plurilingualism in schools. She is currently working with the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) on a think tank exploring issues with regard to early language learning.

Jean Conteh, a Senior Lecturer in Primary Education, has worked in multilingual contexts her whole career, first as a primary teacher and teacher educator in different countries and then as an academic at the University of York and Leeds University. Through this she has gained

considerable experience in the growing field of English as an Additional Language (EAL). This experience continues to fuel her interest in the roles of language and culture in the processes of learning, particularly in multilingual settings. She has carried out research with successful bilingual learners at KS2 in Bradford and since 2003, has worked with a group of qualified primary teachers who run bilingual complementary classes where they support children's bilingual learning in order to enhance their achievements in mainstream school. She has also developed an MA in EAL and Education, designed for teachers and other professionals working in multilingual contexts.

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Digital resource

A digital resource will be created based on edited highlights of the content of the two workshops and will be used to disseminate outcomes from the workshops. This resource will be hosted on the SCoTENS (Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South) website. Filming is therefore an integral component of the workshop. There is a possibility that you may be included, as a workshop speaker, in the final edited version of the digital resource. Please indicate, below, your consent to being filmed. No identifying details of any workshop participants will be made available in the digital resource: names, workplaces, schools.

In ticking this box,

I agree to be part of the final digital resource []

Signed: _____

Name: (Block capitals) _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3: Seminar Schedules

Ulster University Seminar: Thursday 9th February 2017

Marino Institute of Education (MIE) Seminar: Tuesday 25th April 2017

Minority language pupils and the curriculum: closing the achievement gap

8.30 to 9.00	Registration and coffee
9.00 to 9.05	Opening address (Prof Anne O’Gara, MIE/Dr David Barr, Head of School of Education, Ulster University)
9.05 to 9.15	<p>Setting the context for the day: Barbara Skinner & Barbara O’Toole</p> <p>Acknowledge SCoTENS funding and the support of the individual institutions.</p> <p>Why this seminar? A very brief overview of the context, range of languages in each jurisdiction, and level of support available in schools. What are the central principles underpinning this event? What ‘threads’ (key ideas, main concepts) will run through the presentations and the event as a whole? Who are the speakers? National and international perspectives on EAL – drawing from Ireland, Northern Ireland, Belgium, Scotland and England</p> <p>Explanation about digital resource as an outcome of the day; format of sessions: guest speaker presentation followed by ‘workshop’ activities</p> <p>Introduce rapporteur and explain role</p>
9.15 to 10.20	<p><u>Piet Van Avermaet</u>: presentation (40 minutes)</p> <p>Three strategies for responding to linguistic diversity at school: constructive language policy; raising language awareness; facilitating</p>

multilingual learning - plurilingual repertoires as didactic capital for learning.

Activity at tables (15 minutes): implications of these strategies for your schools and classrooms – feed back to main group with open mic format (10 minutes)

10.20 to 10.50

Coffee

10.50 to 11.55

Andrew Hancock: presentation (40 minutes) Inclusive practices for pupils with English as an additional language; incorporating a brief overview of stages (silent phase, social / conversational language, academic language proficiency) and looking at models of support (specialist EAL support / subject teachers in secondary and classroom teachers in primary). Case studies to be worked on at round tables (15 minutes). Case studies involve working with a student experiencing particular challenges or working with a parent from a minority ethnic community – each group receives the same two case studies.

Feedback session: feeding back from each table on outcome of case studies activity (10 minutes)

11.55 to 1.00

Déirdre Kirwan: presentation (40 minutes) on the Common European Framework (CEFR) and how it can be used to monitor and record the progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language and on whole-school initiatives to support language learning. Group activity (15 minutes): outcome of group activity to be posted on stands around room.

Plenary session: participants circulate and read the responses from all (10 minutes)

1.00 to 1.50 pm

Lunch

1.55 to 3.00

Jean Conteh: presentation (40 minutes). 'Underachieving' / 'hard to reach' vs. 'bilingual pedagogies' / 'funds of knowledge' / 'translanguaging'. How schools can positively engage with parents and communities to support pupils' learning by reducing dissonance between home and school. Set of 'good practice scenarios' to be discussed at round tables (15 minutes). Good practice scenarios will be based on the above material.

Feedback: Open mic session on main issues arising from discussion (10 minutes)

3.00 to 3.40

Panel discussion with all speakers: Q&A addressing issues arising during the day

3.40 to 3.50

Feedback from **rapporteur**

3.50 to 4.00 pm Close

Speakers, please note that unfortunately Piet Van Avermaet is not available for the Ulster University seminar on Thursday February 9th will finish an hour earlier with the running order as follows:

9.00 to 9.30	Registration and coffee
9.30 to 9.35	Opening address (Dr David Barr, Head of School of Education, Ulster University)
9.35 to 9.45	Setting the context for the day: Barbara Skinner & Barbara O'Toole
9.45 to 10.50	Andrew Hancock
10.50 -11.10	Coffee
11.10 to 12.15	<u>Déirdre Kirwan:</u>
12.15 to 1.15	Lunch
1.15 to 2.20	<u>Jean Conteh</u>
2.20 to 3.00	Panel discussion with all speakers:
3.00- 3.15	Feedback from rapporteur
3.15 to 3.30	Close

