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Moving beyond an "instrumental" role for the first languages of English Language Learners

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This article is derived from a small study conducted within a larger qualitative study into the nature of the responses of mainstream primary teachers in a non-metropolitan area in Australia to the Sudanese refugee English Language Learners (ELLs) in their classes. It reports on findings in relation to teachers' attitudes toward the use of their ELLs' first language (L1) in their classrooms. The study found that teachers saw either no role, or an "instrumental" role (Creese & Leung, 2003; Leung, 2005) only, for the L1 in their classrooms. None of the teachers articulated conceptualisations of the L1 as an academic resource which can be harnessed to open up curricular access for ELLs. These findings are considered through the lens of the Bourdieusian framework in which the study was carried out, utilising the concept of monolingual monocultural habitus developed by Gogolin (2002). Suggestions are then made for teacher professional learning.

Keywords: *ELLs; mainstream teachers; monolingualism; teacher cognition*

Introduction

The theory of transfer of knowledge and skills from a first language (L1) to an additional language (L2) is of great relevance to attempts to educate English Language Learners (ELLs) within mainstream primary classes. It has a strong empirical evidence base (Collier & Thomas, 1989; Cummins, 1981, 2000) which supports the employment of ELLs' L1s in mainstream classrooms as a means of realising their engagement with cognitively challenging material across the curriculum which may be beyond their present level of English proficiency. Despite this strong empirical base, some mainstream teachers internationally have been found to support only an "instrumental" use of ELLs' L1s (Creese & Leung, 2003). That is, they viewed classroom L1 use only as a transitional phase toward "English only" instruction. For example, Ellis (2003) reported a study of Adult ESL teachers in Australia, many of whom characterised student L1 use in the classroom as "a crutch and a bad habit" (p. 304) and those students who employed it in their learning as "passive,

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needy people" (p. 306). A tendency among teachers of ELLs to regard English as the only legitimate linguistic capital for school success has also been reported by a number of scholars internationally (Ellis, 2003; Gee, 1996; Wallace, 2005).

In the light of the theory of L1 to L2 transfer of knowledge and skills, and of teacher "instrumental" views of L1 use found in the literature, this study sought to explore the attitudes of teachers in non-metropolitan Australia to the classroom use of their ELLs' L1. It employed the following question: How do mainstream primary teachers in two non-metropolitan schools view the role of their Sudanese ELLs' L1 in the classroom?

The Bourdieusian theoretical framing of the study is discussed in the following section. The literature is then reviewed to establish the broad context of the study.

Theoretical framing and literature review

Monolingual and monocultural habitus

In explicating the dynamic relationships between linguistic codes, such as the L1s of ELLs, and the education system, Gogolin (2002) builds upon Bourdieu's (1983) notion of habitus, that is, strategic practice which is the product of socialisation in a particular sociocultural environment. Describing habitus as a phenomenon which "functions as an awareness matrix, action matrix and thought matrix" (p. 132), acquired under particular social conditions, which "defines and generates the activities of its constituents" (p. 132), Gogolin (2002) hypothesises that monolingual teachers operate within a 'monolingual monocultural habitus' constructed and maintained by the education system itself. She argues that a monolingual and monocultural orientation amongst teachers is "an intrinsic element of their professional habitus as members of a nation state school system" (p. 133). As a result of this, part of the professional role of a teacher is "to traditionalise monolingualism in the official national language and a self-conception of linguistic and cultural homogeneity" (p. 133).

Within the framework of the monolingual monocultural habitus, the school can be viewed as "a critical site for the defence of linguistic capital" (Olneck, 2000, p. 328) where monolingual teachers, as mediators of "linguistic correctness" (Bourdieu & Passerson, 1990, p. 116) have a personal investment in maintaining the status of English monolingualism (Olneck, 2000). Gogolin (2002) further posits that one of the elements of monolingual monocultural habitus is the assumption that linguistic homogeneity is "the 'normal' and 'usual' point of departure in teaching" (p. 135). This assumption leads to non-recognition and invalidation of the cultural and linguistic resources which ELLs bring to the classroom as tools for the acquisition of the dominant language (Cummins, 1997; Furstenau, 2002; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1979, 2000).

Monolingual monocultural habitus in Australia

With reference to the Australian educational context Clyne (2005) employs the term "persistent monolingual mindset" (p. XI). He contends that all education in Australian classrooms is influenced by this mindset which "sees everything in terms of monolingualism [in English] being the norm" (Clyne, 2005, p.XI). Liddicoat and Crichton (2008) claim that this normalisation of English monolingualism in Australian education is characterised by "[n]eglect of the "non-English" competence and capacities of learners ... construction of learners' second language as a deficit and of English language learning as remediation ...[and] the "invisibility" of the linguistic and cultural context of English" (p. 367). The composition of the Australian teaching force contributes to the maintenance of this situation. According to Allard (2006), the teaching profession in Australia "remains overwhelmingly Anglo-Australian, monolingual and of middle class status" (p. 321). In public and private Australian primary schools in 2007, 86% of the teaching staff was born in Australia. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) claims that the composition of the teaching force is a central contributing factor to loss of minority languages engendered by ELLs' experiences in the education system in pluralist nations like Australia, which are effectively monolingual in practice.

Liu (2010) provides an example of the "[n]eglect of the "non-English" competence and capacities" (Liddicoat & Crichton, 2008, p. 367) of a Dinka speaking ELL who was underachieving in the mainstream in a New South Wales primary school. When encouraged by Liu (a primary ESL teacher) to use her L1 in storytelling activities during ESL withdrawal, the student stated that it was "silly" (Liu, 2010, p. 33) to speak her language in the classroom, arguably reflecting internalisation of the mainstream's devaluing of her language and lived experiences (Sharkey & Layzer, 2000). Over time, however, "[t]he use of storytelling and her native language Dinka, empowered [the student's] learning because her intrinsic value had been recognised and promoted in the classroom setting through oral language" (Liu, 2010, p. 37).

The student's use of her L1 in the ESL withdrawal class also promoted increased proficiency in her use of English (her L2) in the mainstream class. This is consistent with Cummins' (1981, 2000) Common Underlying Proficiency Hypothesis (CUP) which contends that literacy and cognitive skills such as concept formation, analysis, synthesis, language learning strategies and subject knowledge developed in the L1 are transferable to the L2. The increased English proficiency of Liu's student was noted and commented upon by her mainstream class teacher. Initially the student was characterised by the same teacher as "not able to do anything in class" (Liu, 2010, p. 31). However, after three months of Dinka storytelling as a way into English vocabulary development in the ESL withdrawal class, the

mainstream teacher commented that she was "actually surprised how much her [the ELL's] English had developed in just a period of three months" (Liu, 2010, p. 35).

Durability of habitus and teacher cognition

The teacher's role within the monolingual monocultural habitus (Gogolin, 2002) and its normalisation of English monolingualism and neglect of other linguistic competencies as indicated in the case cited by Liu (2010) is usually played out unconsciously (Fairclough, 1992; Nieto, 2000; Vollmer, 2000). Gogolin (2002) contends that "the less conscious the individual teacher is about its [habitus'] existence, the more effectively it operates" (p. 134). It is this unconsciousness that contributes to the durability of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). Nonetheless, Bourdieu (2002) argues that while durable, as "a product of history, that is, of social experience and education, it [habitus] may be changed by history, that is, by new experiences, education or training" (p. 29). Similarly, Gogolin (2002) contends in regard to the monolingual monocultural habitus, "only consciousness helps to conquer habitual practice" (p. 136). This consciousness, and potential for change to habitus, may be stimulated through appropriate opportunities for reflection on practice.

Such reflective experiences have potential to disrupt habitus through the impact they may have on teacher cognition which Borg (2003) defines as "what teachers think, know, and believe and the relationships of these mental constructs to what teachers do" (p. 81) in classrooms. These complex knowledge, beliefs and actions are formed through formal training, socialisation and experience (Borg, 2006). Within this complex of relationships, teachers' lived experiences as learners appear to have an important impact on teacher cognition (Freeman, 2002). As such, the fact that monolingual teachers have not had the experience of learning an additional language in a mainstream school setting is of significance in terms of their conceptualisations of the additional language learning process, and of their actions towards their ELLs (Ellis, 2003, 2006). That is, they do not have experiential knowledge to draw upon. Opportunities for reflection on this aspect of their lived experience have the potential to affect teacher cognition and encourage changes in monolingual monocultural habitus. Access to particular types of knowledge may also play a part in changes in teacher cognition and habitus. The issue of knowledge within teacher education systems is considered next.

Teacher education systems in Australia

Nieto (2000) suggests that the monolingual monocultural habitus of educational endeavour extends far beyond the practice of individual teachers. She claims that the monolingualism of those involved in teacher education programmes contributes directly to the education

system's neglect of the linguistic resources of ELLs. Their monolingualism, she argues, impacts through the inclusion or exclusion of different types of knowledge within the content of teacher education programmes. For example, many scholars contend that teachers of ELLs in all settings, especially mainstream ones, need the support of strong theoretical knowledge derived from SLA research if they are to maximize the cross-curricular learning opportunities of ELLs (Cummins, 2000; Ellis, 2003; Freeman & Freeman, 2009a, 2009b; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Hite & Evans, 2006). Nonetheless, researchers also report a lack of knowledge of many of the key findings of SLA research, such as CUP (Cummins, 1981, 2000) among mainstream teachers both internationally (Cummins, 1997; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Hite & Evans, 2006; Layzer, 2000) and in Australia (Oliver, Haig & Grote, 2009).

In the UK, Leung (2005) describes "a lack of systematic initial teacher preparation and rigorous continuous professional development" (p. 46) including SLA research outcomes, for teachers working with ELLs. This knowledge may be particularly important for teachers whose lived experiences do not include having been an additional language learner. A survey of the international literature reporting perspectives of teacher educators and teacher practitioners indicates that the content of preparation and professional learning opportunities provided to mainstream teachers of ELLs is inadequate (Cummins, 1997, 2000; Leung, 2001, 2007; Milner, 2005; Nieto, 2000; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006) in regard to the "specialist pedagogic concerns of ESL teaching" (Leung, 2005, p. 98) in mainstream classes. In Australia, in a study conducted amongst high school teachers of refugee ELLs, teachers reported feeling inadequately prepared to have these children in their subject classes (Miller, Mitchell & Brown, 2005). In a survey of Sydney mainstream primary teachers with ELLs in their classes 88% said that they "required professional learning to be more effective in teaching their ESL students" (Googan, Reid & Sandal, 2010, p. 1). In addition, Premier and Miller (2010) report in a study of secondary teachers that "the vast majority [of the participating teachers] feel that their teacher education courses lack a focus on cultural and linguistic diversity in schools" (p. 35).

The monolingual monocultural habitus of those involved in high levels of educational endeavour in Australia is also arguably reflected in the positioning of ESL in Literacy policies and the use of Standardised testing regimes in this country. These issues are considered next.

Positioning of ESL in Literacy policies and Standardised testing

Meacham (2000) claims that internationally, linguistic diversity is viewed as detrimental to effective literacy conception and practice. For this reason, literacy policies in linguistically plural countries

marginalise linguistic minorities and aim to assimilate them into the dominant culture (Cummins, 1997, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1979). In Australia, ESL has been subsumed under the *Literacy for All Plan* since the late 1990's (Ministerial Commission for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2000). By not giving ESL a distinct curricular status it comes to be seen as a subset of English literacy (Hammond, 1999; Hammond & Derewianka, 1999; Lo Bianco, 2002). This makes ELLs and their distinct learning needs less visible to mainstream teachers (Rohl, 1999). Cross (2011) notes that while the development of the new National Curriculum in Australia offered a "new platform for thinking about literacy" (p. 168) the framework which has emerged is "firmly grounded in a monolingual assumption about what it means to be a literacy learner" (p.168).

Literacy policies based on conceptions of literacy which "equate diversity with deficit" (Meacham, 2000, p. 184) intersect with the internationally prevailing discourse of standards and accountability. Many scholars (Black, 2006; Shohamy, 2007; Wright & Choi, 2006) argue that standardised tests derived from "singular conceptions of literacy" (Meacham, 2000, p. 184) strengthen the position of the dominant language and culture in a society. By presenting themselves as "universal and neutral" (Olneck, 2000, p. 325) schools which employ these tests "serve as gate keepers" (Mathison & Freeman, 2003, p. 7) of cultural capital. The tests thereby place the responsibility for ELLs' low levels of "school-sanctioned achievement" (Olneck, 2000, p. 325) on their lack of appropriate linguistic capital.

High stakes standardised tests, such as the Australian National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), would appear to reinforce the notion that ELLs lack the right capital for academic success, consistent with the monolingual monocultural habitus of monolingual teachers (Gogolin, 2002). This reinforcement is achieved by positioning other languages in the society as illegitimate (Shohamy, 2007) and by producing evidence of this via simplistic interpretations of the persistent achievement gap between ELLs and mainstream children on tests designed for mother-tongue speakers, which been reported internationally (Blair & Bourne, 1998; Jackson, 2010; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

The broad context established in the preceding review of the literature, then, renders very problematic for monolingual teachers, conceptualisation of an academic role for ELLs' L1s in classrooms.

Introducing the study

The region

This study took place in a non-metropolitan area of New South Wales in Australia. Historically, this area has had a much lower level of linguistic and cultural diversity than other areas of the

state, such as Sydney. For example, in the 2006 Australian National Census, only 9.7% of the population in this region was born overseas (the majority of these in English-speaking countries such as England, New Zealand and Scotland). In comparison, state wide in New South Wales according to the 2006 National Census, 22.2% of the population was born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Recent changes to immigration patterns, however, have begun to alter the cultural and linguistic diversity of this area (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). New arrivals are increasingly settling outside the greater Sydney area and children are attending mainstream primary schools with previously very low enrolments of ELLs. In the non-government systemic schools in the region, for example, the enrolment of ELLs increased by approximately 42% between 2004 and 2005 (New South Wales Catholic Education Commission, 2008). Consequently, in this area mainstream teachers accustomed to teaching relatively culturally and linguistically homogenous classes now must address the learning needs of a rapidly changing student demographic profile.

Research design

The data reported in this article are derived from a larger qualitative study into the nature of the responses of mainstream primary teachers in a non-metropolitan area in Australia with Sudanese refugee ELLs in their classes. The research question for the small study was: How do mainstream primary teachers in two non-metropolitan schools view the role of their Sudanese ELLs' L1 in the classroom?

The study was originally designed as an in-depth case study of two observed mainstream teachers, with an 'ethnographic perspective' (Pahl & Rosswell, 2010). Fieldwork involved the researcher being present in classrooms for four full days per week during a ten-week school term. During the fieldwork, opportunities arose to interview eight non-observed teachers and these were taken up as a means of gathering background data to enrich understanding of the contexts in which the two principal participants worked.

Participants and school sites

The principal participants, Julie and Clare (pseudonyms), volunteered to participate in the study after the researcher had met with the staff at several primary schools in the area to discuss her project and invite participation. Due to the fact that the participants were volunteers, the case study can be described as instrumental, rather than intrinsic. Both the teachers had more than 25 years teaching experience, were monolingual in English and had three Sudanese refugee ELLs in their classes. Neither received in-class ESL support for their ELLs. All of the non-observed teachers had previously, or currently had, at least one Sudanese ELL in their classes. These teachers were also women and all but one, Lucy, were monolingual in English.

The ELLs

The ELLs in this study were children who arrived from Sudan as infants and have had all their formal schooling in Australia. There were five girls and one boy, all in Year Three, and all of whom have Dinka as their L1. They all attended ESL withdrawal classes at least once a week and fit within the New South Wales categorisation of Second Phase English learners:

> Second Phase students range from students who have acquired a basic communicative repertoire in English which enables them to participate in some class activities to students who can communicate with some degree of confidence and coherence about subject matter appropriate to their age group but removed from their immediate personal experience (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, Multicultural Programs Unit, 2004, p. 6).

Data gathering

Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were the principal data gathering strategies employed. All interviews were conducted during the school day at a time nominated by the teachers. They were conducted on two occasions to explore the foundations of teachers' responses to their ELLs. The interviews followed some classroom observations which involved taking field notes in accordance with (but not restricted to) themes from the Literature Review that supported the study. One of these was Evidence of Classroom Use of the L1. No occasions of use were observed in either class. Interview questions were derived in part from these observations and from themes emerging from the study's Literature Review. The interviews were 'open-ended' (Yin, 2009) with no set question order or wording. They were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

Analysis involved reflexive coding of phrases in the context of the whole of the data. Although theoretically-based (O'Leary, 2004), the various codes changed, coalesced, or were abandoned in the course of the reflexive analysis process. Those parts of the data which indicated that teachers viewed the employment of L1 in the classroom as of use only until children could achieve basic levels of communication in English were coded as 'instrumental.' The researcher engaged the support of an appropriately qualified and experienced 'Critical Friend' (Bambino, 2002; Foulger, 2010) in the coding process. This colleague reviewed the data gathered and the unfolding analysis and interpretations with the aim of providing effective 'collaborative' (Bambino, 2002) and 'recursive' (Koo,

2002) feedback on these to the researcher. The 'Critical Friend' and researcher met repeatedly for this dialogue to occur during the phase of data analysis.

In this article only data obtained from interviews is drawn on. During the interviews all interviewees were asked the following question:

> *What is your opinion of the use of the* [ELLs'] *L1 in the classroom?*

The findings of the analysis of teachers' responses are reported in the following sections.

Findings

The findings which emerged centre around two themes:

1. An 'instrumental' role for ELLs' L1s in the mainstream class
2. L1 use and teacher authority

1. An 'instrumental' role for ELLs' L1s in the mainstream class

Teachers articulated a range of responses which are indicative of an 'instrumental' (Creese & Leung, 2003; Leung, 2005) orientation toward the classroom use of ELLs' L1. None of their answers indicated an understanding of CUP (Cummins, 1981).

Responses included the following from Clare.

> "I think they're [the Sudanese ELLs] speaking their own language at home ... but I think if they're going to cope educationally and get through and do whatever they want to do they need to speak English conversationally as well ... so I don't think it's a bad thing for them to be speaking English and it probably makes them feel more included."

This response shows that Clare sees no role for the L1 in the classroom. She links the use of 'English only' at school, even if only of a conversational, rather than academic nature, to ELLs' academic success and social assimilation. Later in the interview the researcher mentioned her [the researcher's] observation that the three ELLs seemed to speak English amongst themselves, and Clare responded approvingly, saying:

> "And they used to not do that, they used to speak in their own language."

In this comment Clare indicates that a decrease in, or loss of, use of the L1 by ELLs at school is a sign of progress. That is, that English proficiency is to be achieved by these ELLs at the expense of their L1.

In her interview, Julie commented that as her current Second Phase ELLs were not New Arrivals, she did not view L1 use in the classroom as an issue of relevance. However, interestingly, she went on to differentiate between L1 use at different points in the learning process with her current ELLs. She appeared to condone L1 use during the phase of knowledge acquisition/construction, but not as a school-sanctioned means of expressing and using that knowledge. Thus, the L1 was seen as serving mostly as an 'instrumental' bridge (Leung, 2005) to the development of fluency in English. Of classroom L1 use Julie made the following comment.

> "In some parts it's [L1 use in class] fine, them [the ELLs] helping each other because it's that learning process, other times it's a kind of pretest where you want to see what they know, without copying ... and at end, but in between you don't mind ... to me that's the best kind of learning when they're chatting about it with each other."

Thus, in contrast to Clare, who saw no classroom role for the L1, Julie recognised, though did not actively encourage, some spaces for its use by her current ELLs. (However, no occasions of use were observed.) Neither teacher expressed a conceptualisation of the L1 as an academic resource for constructing L1/English biliteracy.

In general terms, the responses of most non-observed teachers to the question *What is your opinion of the use of the* [ELLs'] *L1 in the classroom?* recognised some role for L1 use within the classroom where it served as a temporary bridge to English acquisition. The following comments from non-observed teachers demonstrate gradations within this orientation to the classroom role of the L1.

> "If it [L1 use] is helping a child, that's fine. It also makes them feel comfortable, especially if they are trying to acquire English, and they are comfortable in their own language." Lucy

> "I guess there would be a time and place. If there is a real lack of comprehension and if it is causing stress to the child." Angela

> "It's a great assistance to us if we have a little child in kinder[garten]. We can grab one of the bigger children, so that is a great help ... I don't have an objection to it, sometimes it's the only way that they can express themselves." Lynette

In their comments Lucy, Angela and Lynette appear to link the use of the L1 to the creation of a comfortable learning environment for ELLs. While this is certainly a sound base upon which to develop the English and academic proficiency of ELLs, these teachers did

not indicate that simultaneously with the creation of an appropriate environment, L1 use could also promote curricular access.

In contrast, the following comment made by Jill indicates some understanding of the academic potential of L1 use.

> "It [L1 use in the classroom] didn't worry me at all. Actually that sometimes helped, because I was trying to explain, one that would get it, another one wouldn't, so they would explain which made it easier all round."

The most extreme view in relation to classroom L1 use came from Zoe. She made the following comment.

> "I believe that it is the policy of, the philosophy of most, that the language would be left to their own private families, but at school they [ELLs] would, or should speak English. As a teacher, I would prefer them not speak their own language in the classroom, because I think I would say the same thing not just to the Sudanese but of any other ethnic group."

In Zoe's view there is no school space for the use of ELLs' L1. From her perspective it is of no value as a resource for learning in an English speaking environment.

Though varying in degree, all the preceding remarks express a somewhat subtractive view of the ELLs' emerging bilingualism. They range from the clearly 'instrumental' view that sees employment of the L1 at school as occasionally necessary to help ELLs to "get it" to the more obviously subtractive view expressed by Zoe that L1 use should *"be left to their own private families, but at school they [ELLS] would, or should speak English."* The teachers' comments are also suggestive of a lack of knowledge of SLA theory, such as CUP (Cummins, 1981) and, consistent with a monolingual monocultural habitus, of the normalisation of English and neglect of ELLs' non-English competencies (Liddicoat & Crichton, 2008).

2. *L1 use and teacher authority*

While most teachers acknowledged, at best, some 'instrumental' role for the L1 in the school space, permitting even this limited role appeared to present them with challenges in regard to their perceptions of their own authority. When asked the question *What is your opinion of the use of the* [ELLs'] *L1 in the classroom?* some non-observed teachers expressed concern about the use of the L1 in relation to classroom and playground management, citing instances, such as those below, where it was perceived to have posed a challenge to their authority.

> "If I discipline them, and I get a mouthful of Sudanese back, then I might be apprehensive about using your own language." *Lynette*

> "I object to it when they are on the playground and say they are having a disagreement with someone else because they use it as a defence mechanism." Lynette

Lynette's comments assume that the Dinka spoken in response to teacher discipline or a playground disagreement is of a disrespectful nature. This is suggestive of the monolingual monocultural habitus in that, as the preceding comments in Theme 1 demonstrated, Dinka had little academic role to play in the school environment. It was thus seen as inferior linguistic capital and delegitimised. Consequently, use of Dinka may be unconsciously framed by Lynette as indicative of inappropriate behaviour, which occurring outside English, teachers are unable to control. It is consequently perceived as a threat to teacher authority.

The idea of Dinka as representative of behaviours which teachers cannot control is also implied in the following comment from Jill.

> While it [L1 use] was to do with work that was fine, but if they then went off on a tangent or something completely different you would have to bring them back." *Jill*

Jill's opinion about ELLs going off *"on a tangent"* in their L1 implies that even though she doesn't speak Dinka she is able to discern what students are talking about and make judgements as to its suitability of otherwise.

These preceding remarks suggest that when ELLs' L1 is not regarded as appropriate linguistic capital for school success, as within a monolingual monocultural habitus, (and thus is conceded only an 'instrumental' role), its use in the school space may be associated with a perceived threat to the authority of teachers who do not speak it.

Discussion

Although no causal relationships in regard to teachers' attitudes were determined in this study, given the demographic and sociocultural composition of the study area, the concept of the monolingual monocultural habitus is of salience in attempting to elucidate these attitudes. The researcher concurs with Gibbons' (2009) claim that "the way in which teachers talk about students grows out of how they construct their students as learners and how they see their own identities as teachers" (p. 2). On this basis, it can be argued that the reported comments indicate that these teachers operate within a monolingual monocultural habitus, within which, at least at a subconscious level, they construct their current Sudanese ELLs' L1 as a deficit, and even its limited 'instrumental' use, as somewhat suspect and a potential challenge to their authority.

The fact that these ELLs speak Dinka, a language without a tradition of print literacy possibly contributes to this deficit thinking (de Jong & Harper, 2005). de Jong and Harper (2005) contend that many teachers "assume a direct association between literacy, education and success" (p. 114) and that this can impact on their attitudes toward, and interactions with, speakers of particular languages who may not have traditionally shared these assumptions. Although they have the best of will toward their ELLs, teachers in this study consider that these students have particularly limited capital due to the language they speak and its distance from the language sanctioned by the education system. Their role as teachers then, is to help those students to overcome this deficit of linguistic capital for school success. This view has "erroneous theoretical foundations" (Ellis, 2003, p. 303) when considered in the light of SLA research outcomes. This lack of SLA knowledge may itself be reflective of teacher education programmes in Australia being conceived and implemented within a monolingual monocultural habitus or a "persistent monolingual mindset" (Clyne, 2005, p. XI) which normalises English monolingualism and implies that as other languages have no role to play in formal education, their use in the school space is potentially suspect. The presence of attitudes amongst educators toward L1 use based on non-theoretically sound foundations is of serious concern, because as attitudes form part of teacher cognition (Borg, 2003, 2006), they may act to limit ELLs' chances of achieving academic success through teachers' failure to employ ELLs' existing linguistic ability in their learning.

Figure 1 overleaf represents the suggested interplay between the monolingual monocultural habitus (Gogolin, 2002) and a lack of SLA knowledge in influencing these teachers' attitudes toward their ELLs' L1, and thus the possibilities for its use in their mainstream classrooms. It indicates that this interplay occurs in intersection with other factors.

The top left circle represents the "persistent monolingual mindset" (Clyne, 2005) and the monolingual monocultural habitus (Gogolin, 2002) of the teachers. These directly, and indirectly, through their intersections with teacher lack of SLA knowledge (as expressed in teachers' comments)-top right circle, influence the participating teachers' attitudes to their ELLs' linguistic resources. Other factors such as standardised testing and the position of ESL in Literacy policy, also potentially play a role in attitude formation, and are represented in the circle on the far right. The resultant teacher attitudes to ELLs' L1, represented in the centre circle, then influence the possibilities for classroom L1 use, represented in the bottom circle. Relationships of influence are represented by directional arrows.

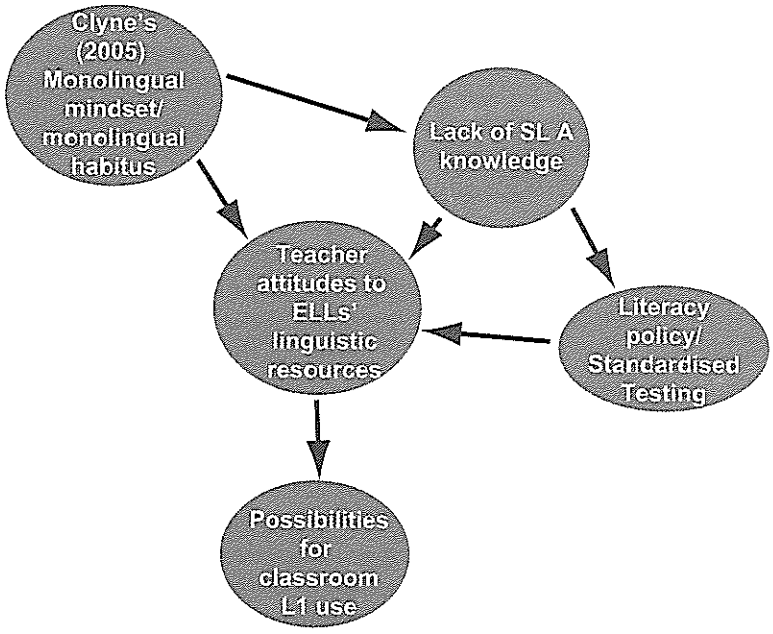

Figure 1: *Interplay of factors influencing classroom L1 use*

A possible first step forward for these teachers

Teachers' comments indicate that they need professional learning opportunities if they are to effectively open up curricular access for their ELLs. Such professional learning has the potential to bring about change in teacher practice given that teacher cognition or the "mental constructs" (Borg, 2003, p. 81) expressed in what teachers do in classrooms, are formed through socialisation, formal training and experience (Borg, 2006). Similarly, Bourdieu (2002) notes that habitus, while durable, may be altered through "education or training" (p. 29) and Gogolin (2002), the monolingual monocultural habitus, through the encouragement of 'consciousness' through reflection. Designing adequate professional learning to address the knowledge and beliefs of teachers of ELLs is obviously an extremely complex task which must be embedded within dialogue with particular teachers and contexts.

The TESOL in the Mainstream Professional Standards of the Association for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (ATESOL) provide an exemplary framework within which professional learning opportunities could be developed for the study's participants. Within the Standards' categories of Dispositions toward language and culture, Understandings about language and culture and Skills in language and culture, teachers could be furnished with non-confrontational opportunities to reflect on their lived experience and interrogate their attitudes to ELLs' L1s and to consider the notions of 'monolingual mindset' (Clyne, 2005) and monolingual monocultural habitus (Gogolin, 2002). Through such

professional learning opportunities there exists the possibility to develop the "consciousness [which] helps to conquer habitual practice" (Gogolin, p.136), or to disrupt the 'durability' of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). According to Nieto (2000) any professional learning for monolingual mainstream teachers of ELLs that does not include such components "will result in repeating the pattern of failure that currently exists" (p. 196) in the education of ELLs internationally.

Reflective processes could be accompanied by, and optimally open up receptivity to, learning about SLA theory. Education about SLA theory could provide teachers with "support in learning how to understand what students bring to the classroom" (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 7). SLA knowledge presented in tandem with opportunities for reflection may result in changes in teacher cognition and potentially classroom practice, although it should be acknowledged that a change in teacher cognition does not inevitably result in a change in teacher practice (Freeman, 1993).

An essential element of professional learning would be interactions with successful, SLA–informed mainstream teachers of ELLs from sites outside their non-metropolitan context. In the US, Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll (2005) surveyed 4000 mainstream teachers of ELLs in regard to professional learning opportunities for working with these students. Respondents "expressed a desire and need" (2005, p. 15) for repeated opportunities to observe and interact with other teachers with experience of achieving successful outcomes for ELLs in mainstream settings. Similarly, in Australia, Kirk and Cassity (2007) contend that teachers of ELLs "need to participate in networks both to share experience and build a knowledge base" (p. 55). These networks could provide teachers with exposure to, and opportunities to deconstruct, examples of employment of L1s which have resulted in improved outcomes for ELLs in mainstream classes, such as that reported by Liu (2010) and discussed earlier.

Conclusion

The data from this small qualitative study indicate that the participating teachers did not conceptualise the L1 of their ELLs as an academic resource for opening up curricular access in the mainstream classroom. The comments made by teachers expressed the problematic nature of student L1 use in academic activities in a context in which teachers do not have access to received SLA knowledge, experience of being an additional language learner or opportunities for reflection on habitual practice. While the study did not attempt to establish causal relationships in regard to these attitudes, the article considered how they may be reflective of a monolingual monocultural habitus promoted and maintained by the educational system (Gogolin, 2002) which problematises for these teachers L1 use as an academic tool. It then made suggestions for the development of professional learning opportunities to support the teachers

to utilise all the resources available to ELLs to open up curricular access in mainstream contexts.

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