Language, Class, and Education: Deconstructing the Centre to Rethink Inclusivity in Education in Pakistan

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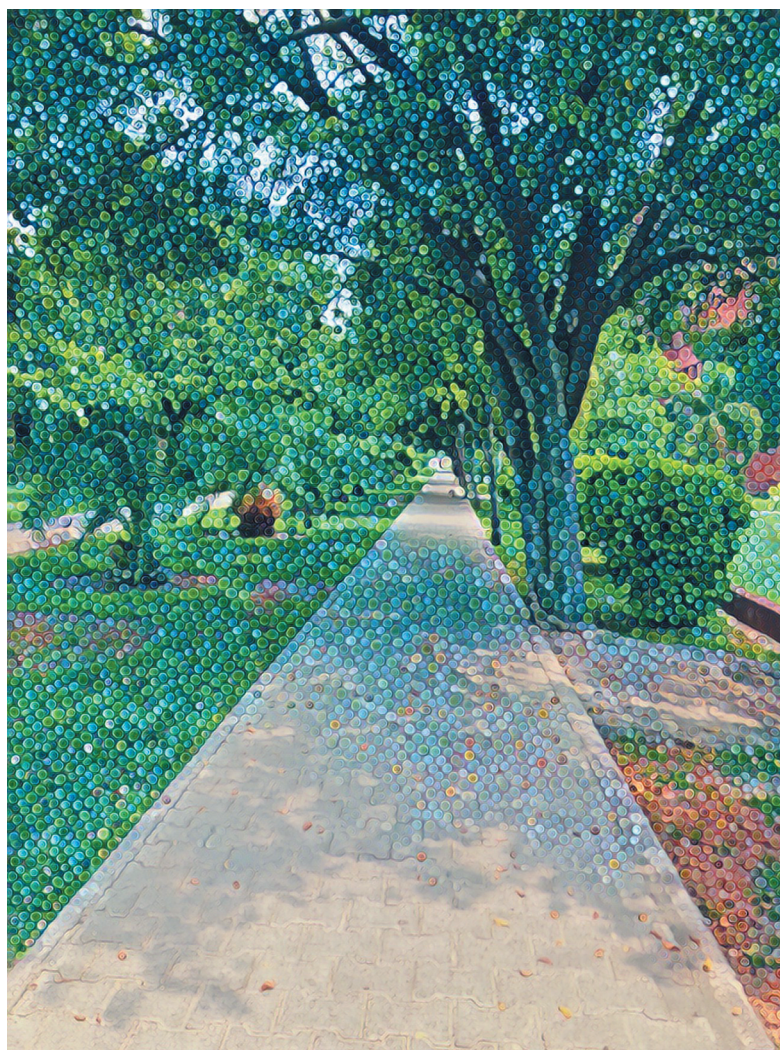Published online: 25 Mar 2021.

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Language, Class, and Education: Deconstructing the Centre to Rethink Inclusivity in Education in Pakistan

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Abstract: In COVID-19 times, as learning gaps widen and socioeconomic inequalities exacerbate, inclusivity in education becomes even more important. This paper evaluates inclusivity of educational institutions in the multilingual context of Pakistan at the interstices of class and language, based on some key findings of a 3-year qualitative research that captured the lived in experiences of 36 participants in schools, tertiary education, and beyond. A multiple case study design was used. The instruments were: a) in-depth ethnographic interviews; b) participant observation and c) documentary analysis. Use of Amartya Sen's capability approach revealed that: a) class-based spatial exclusion persisted not only across but also at times within schools, always intersecting with differential access to dominant languages, nullifying the benefit of instruction in mother tongue. Once class-based differences had translated into acquisition of differently valued languages, spatial inclusion in higher education meant little; b) Emergent exclusionary processes were not only cognitive but also social and psychological in nature, affecting individual in different degrees based on class positioning and at times existed along with processes of

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Dr. Tayyaba Tamim is currently Associate Professor and Director Academics at the School of Education, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan. She has her PhD and from the University of Cambridge as a fully funded RECOUP scholar and MPhil RSLE (Research in Second Language Education Across Cultures) from Cambridge, UK as a British Council Chevenning scholar. In addition, she also has an MA ELT from Kinnaird College for Women University and MA English from the University of Punjab, Pakistan. Her work covers issues of social justice, equity and inclusivity in education with specific reference to languages in education, language policy, gender and caste.

The current paper draws attention to the much ignored implication of the choices for languages in education for inclusivity in education in a multilingual developing country context. Inclusive education is not only an explicit commitment in the Goal 4 of the sustainable development agenda but it is also key to the achievement of all the other goals.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

In Post-covid educational planning concerns of inclusivity in education gain a new urgency. This paper explores the implications of the choice of languages in education for inclusivity in education. Though discussed with reference to the multilingual developing country context of Pakistan, the arguments are pertinent to similar country contexts. Similar themes from two different qualitative studies capture the lived in language-based experiences of participants, across different social classes, in schools, universities and beyond. The findings reveal complex contradictory processes of inclusion and exclusion running simultaneously. A significant finding is that the spatial segregation or integration of social classes in the same educational spaces, marked by their differential access to linguistic capital, do little to address exclusionary processes for the low socioeconomic groups, once an imagined centre has been constructed sealing the monolingual privilege of a dominant language. This centre, however, is an illusion as education in a multilingual context can only be inclusive if it reflects this multilingualism.

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inclusion; c) Educational institutions played an active role in constructing an imagined privileged monolingual centre (with English only as the norm), perpetuating discourses of Othering; d) Deconstruction of the monolingual centre revealed it to be illusory, neither inclusive or legitimate in the multilingual context. The paper argues that inclusivity in education at the nexus of class and language needs to be de-segregative and responsive to the multilingual context.

1. Introduction

In any Post-COVID-19 educational planning concerns of inclusivity in education must be kept primary, as widening learning gaps can only exacerbate other existing inequalities. It is time to take into account the exclusionary processes that may stem not only from disability but also from other group-based vulnerabilities (Norwich & Koutsouris, 2017; De-Beco, 2018; Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006; Ainscow, 2015; Shakespeare, 2013; Allan & Slee, 2011; Young, 2007; Hilt, 2015; Thomas, 2013; Genova, 2015). Despite the fear that this broader focus of inclusive education may elide the cause of children with disabilities (Miles & Singal, 2010), one can argue that bringing together competing discourses of what inclusivity in education means, its form and possibilities in unique contexts as multiple factors intersect, enables complex insights into multiple exclusionary processes (Ainscow, 2015; Florian, 2014; Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018; Terzi, 2014; Young, 2007). This rich understanding may be the stepping stone for the achievement of Goal 4 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2030, which pledges inclusive, equitable and quality education for all (UNESCO, 2017).

The choice of languages in education can be a subtle but powerful source of discrimination in education (Bourdieu, 1991), especially in postcolonial multilingual contexts. The privileging of a postcolonial language in the country, against its limited access through elite schooling can perpetuate multiple issues of marginalization and inequality (Kamwangamalu, 2001; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2004; Pennycook, 2000; Phillipson, 1992). Processes of inclusion and exclusion may be perpetuated as languages become what Graham and Slee (2008) term as "signifiers of centered-ness" defining "centricity and ex-centricity" (p. 284). Despite their significance, languages have drawn little attention in discourses of social justice and equity (Tickly, 2016) and have ever so rarely appeared in concerns of inclusive education. Hilt's (2015) study is a rare case in this regard. In immigrant schooling context, it reveals simultaneous and contradictory patterns of exclusion and inclusion unfolding over time as immigrant children are "excluded to be included" in mainstream classes.

Pakistan is an interesting case of a postcolonial multilingual developing country context, where the question of languages in education has been the subject of much debate and led to several policy shifts (Rahman, 2005; Mansoor, 2010; Tamim, 2014a; Tamim, 2014b). The country ranks 152 out of 189 countries in Human Development Index and in educational indicators, only ahead of Afghanistan (Human Development Report 2020). The literacy rate is 62% (Government of Pakistan Economic Survey Report, 2018–2019). With rampant poverty,[1] 2.5 million out of school children, 48% drop out rate and inequitable learning outcomes for the 50 million in school (ASER, 2019; ASER, 2018), Pakistan faces major challenges as it struggles to keep its commitment to offer inclusive and quality education for all, pledged as a signatory to Sustainable Development Goals 2030.[2] These challenges are now

even more exaggerated with closure of schools during the COVID-19 and anticipation of large-scale learning losses and dropouts, of which the economically poor comprise a major proportion (UNESCO, 2020; World Bank, 2020). This makes the question of languages in education (both as a medium of instruction and as a subject) even more pertinent because languages demarcate the boundaries of knowledge and access to resources and informed decision making may enable the socioeconomically disadvantaged to continue their education and navigate their pathway to economic stability.

Multilingualism is the hallmark of the country, as it has more than 25 major and several minor local languages (Rahman, 2005). With the exception of Urdu, which is the mother tongue of around 7.5% of the population in the country (Rahman, 2005), none of the local languages has much role in the functioning of the state. Urdu is the national language and the local lingua franca, especially in urban areas. It has been used as a medium of instruction in government sector schools, which offer highly subsidized education. The official language of the state is English. Being the language of almost all large-scale businesses, organizations, higher judiciary, higher education, and government functions, it is considered the key to socioeconomic mobility and success. In contrast to the significance of English in the given context, its access remains exclusively through elite private schooling, which also use English as a medium of instruction. Although English, along with Urdu and Sindhi (the latter in Sindh only), is also taught in government sector schools as a compulsory subject, the well-documented poor teaching/learning in these schools means that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who populate these schools, hardly learn the valued language (Mansoor, 2010; Tamim, 2014 a; Tamim, 2014 b; Rahman, 2002, 2005). Hence, English becomes a distinctive mark of high socioeconomic class. This legitimizes and reinforces economic and political power or the centeredness of privileged groups who have access to the English language (Bourdieu, 1991; Kamwangamalu, 2001; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2004; Pennycook, 2000; Rahman, 2005, 2002).

On the periphery remain the large majority of lower middle and working-class groups, who more often than not have Urdu as a medium of instruction in schools,[3] which is also the main language they learn. Urdu then comes to bear the stigma of a low socioeconomic class. Considering that poor access to English may circumvent job opportunities for low socioeconomic classes, the National Education Policy of 2009 pledged to adopt English as a medium instruction in government schools (Channa, 2017). The implementation of the policy in Punjab during 2009–2013, failed miserably as "students" understanding of subjects dropped, forcing them to rote learn,' since they did not have any exposure to the language in their environment (Bashir & Batool, 2017). Punjab retracted its decision, while other provinces continue with little ongoing research to evaluate the success of the intervention.

Studies in languages in education in Pakistan have highlighted the issue of low literacy in local languages and a dismissive attitude towards them (Manan &David, 2017; Mansoor, 2010). Research has also pointed out discrimination arising from limited access to English and the marginalization of local languages (Tamim, 2014a; Tamim, 2014 b; Rahman, 2004), the diminished role and status of indigenous languages (Manan et al., 2016) and the façade as low fee private schools attempt to offer education through the medium of English (Manan., 2019). Studies also reveal language and class-based disadvantages in higher education (Mahboob, 2017; Mansoor, 2010; Tamim, 2014 b). These discourses, however, run parallel to but do not intersect with concerns of inclusive education, systematically. Inclusive education policies and discourses in Pakistan remain focused on issues of disabilities rather than anything else (Ghouri et al., 2010; Hammad & Singal, 2015; I. K. Khan & Behlol, 2014; Thakur & Abbas, 2017). There remains an urgent need to take an informed stance towards the conceptualization of inclusive education with reference to class and languages in education, as we plan ahead braving consecutive waves of COVID-19.

This paper explores the question: What understandings of inclusion and exclusion in education emerge at the interstices of language and class in the multilingual context of Pakistan? In addition,

building on the work of Graham and Slee (2008), the paper also addresses the: What is the legitimacy and nature of this imagined centre (in terms of language-based privilege) into which everyone has to be included? The paper contributes to the current literature by situating the question of languages in education within discourses of inclusive education and exploring its intersection with class, from the perspective of those involved. Although generalization of findings is limited because of its qualitative design, they provide relevant analytical insights to education-alists, policy makers and researchers in similar contexts.

2. Theoretical Framework

The concept of inclusive education, though grounded in competing understandings, has its roots in the rejection of "segregative systems," of special education and the premise of "separate but equal," (Thomas, 2013 p. 475). Hence, it mainly argues for an educational system that is ready and responsive to diversity and difference (ibid.). The emphasis has been that exclusion from the mainstream schools escalates stigmatization, and has led to offering of poor quality education, negatively affecting life chances of the children with disabilities (De-Beco, 2018). These concerns have now been extended to all others who may be facing any group-based discrimination (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006; Ainscow, 2015; Genova, 2015; Hilt, 2015; Shakespeare, 2013; Slee & Allan, 2011; Thomas, 2013; Young, 2007) and to ensure their access to "inclusive schools and inclusive learning environments" (Qvortrop & Qvortrop, 2018 p 1). Nevertheless, there is a lack of consensus on how difference or disability should be recognized, the form inclusive education may take and its purpose (Hilt, 2015; Reindal, 2010; Graham & Slee, 2008; Allan & Slee, 2011; Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018).

Capability approach is an evaluative framework for assessing relative equality in social policies and arrangements (Sen, 1992; Robeyns, 2006; Terzi, 2014). Conceptualizing inclusion from Amartya Sen's capability approach means that inclusion entails much more than structural changes in schools, curriculum and classrooms or sharing the "same physical space" rather it is also an "ethical concept" that entails equal opportunity to participate in something "valuable" (Reindal, 2010, p. 8). In addition, the purpose of inclusive education becomes to enable individuals to achieve what they value in wider social context, leading to an inclusive society (ibid.). Four premises of capability offer a rich multidimensional understanding of inclusion or exclusion in education and directly inform the arguments in the paper.

First, capability approach presents and highlights the difference between the concepts of "functionings," that is achievements or achieved beings and doings and "capabilities," which are real opportunities or freedoms to achieve what one values (Reindal, 2010; Terzi, 2014). The issues of inequality or inclusion in capability approach are captured in the idea of "capabilities," although "functionings" or achievements also form a part of the evaluation (Dalkilic & Vadeboncoeur, 2016; Terzi, 2014). This is because similar functionings can mask inequality in capabilities (Unterhalter, 2003 in l, 2010). For example the similar functioning of completion of secondary school may offer different capabilities or opportunities to individuals.

Second, capability approach differentiates between means and ends. As such it argues that resources are a means to an end and not an end in themselves (Robeyns, 2007; Dalkilic & Vadeboncoeur, 2016; Terzi, 2014). This reveals a "different set of inequalities," without foregoing the significance of resources in estimations (Reindal, 2010, p. 7). This makes the location of inclusion subsidiary to the achievement of inclusivity (Slee, 2011; Norwich & Koutsouris, 2017; Dalkilic & Vadeboncoeur, 2016; Qvortrop & Qvortrop, 2018). In addition, languages in education and inclusive education itself may not be seen as an end in itself (Slee & Allan, 2011; l. 2010) but a means to enhance the freedoms or capabilities of individuals to achieve what they value (l, 2010). Hence, relative exclusionary disadvantage appears as "capability deprivation," that is lack of freedom to achieve what one values (ibid.).

Third, difference in capability approach is not a deviance from norm but the norm itself—a condition of being human—"a specific variable with an objective reality" that needs to be considered in relation to one's capabilities and functionings (Sen, 1999; 1992 in Reindal, 2010; Terzi, 2014). Individual differences may extend across: personal, social, institutional, cultural, social, relational and environmental factors that interact with each other transfiguring the capabilities of individuals to transform resources into valued functionings (Saito, 2003). Language and class are then distinct variables that individuals bring to education interacting with the provision of educational resources. Inclusivity in education then begins with the understanding and recognizing these differences because as same resources may result in different outcomes for individuals (Terzi, 2014). As difference becomes the norm, we are able to build on the work of Graham and Slee (2008) and question the centre, i.e., the assumed superiority and privilege of what is considered to be "normal," from which "constructions of Otherness and the designation of marginal positions become possible" (Ferguson, 1990 in Graham & Slee, 2008, p. 278). While I question the pre-constructed privilege of the centre assumed in the term inclusion, I do use it to engage with the current literature. Hence I "keep it visible but crossed out," as suggested by Derrida (1967 in Graham & Slee, 2008, p. 279) to be constantly reminded of the problematic nature of the construct. Similarly, I would like to use the term centre and keep it also crossed out because of its illusory nature, presence yet absence. The paper also distinguishes between the construct of inclusion and the more problematic "absorption," (Bernstein, 1996); the latter denotes a perpetual state of domination of one culture over the other and is therefore problematic (in Slee & Allan, 2011, p. 186).

This also allows a relational understanding of disadvantage or advantage, the source of which is located neither in the individual or in the social conversion factors: personal, social, cultural or institutional become important in analysis as they transfigure the capabilities of individuals to transform given resources into valued outcomes, i.e., "functionings" (Saito, 2003; Terzi, 2014). This constructs a complex idea of exclusionary and inclusionary processes (Terzi, 2014), across a spectrum of dimensions: economic, social, intellectual and psychological (Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018). The resulting "profile of disadvantage and advantage for individuals" enables us to embrace a complex understanding of inclusion and exclusion, different in degrees, working at different levels (ibid.) and even running simultaneously (Hilt, 2015).

Finally capability approach by introducing the idea of social conversions encourages understanding of "intersectionality", i.e. "the interplay of 'multiple oppressions,'" (Oliver & Singal, 2017, p. 1220). This facilitates our discussion of the interplay of language, class and education within the given sociolinguistic hierarchies constructed by the language policy in the country, deciding directly or indirectly "who are included and [...] who are dispersed to the margins" (Slee & Allan, 2011 p. 179). Languages, class and social institutions (including educational institutional), language policies, and the consequent sociolinguistic and sociocultural context can be seen as distinct variables within which individuals are grounded—affecting inclusionary or exclusionary processes.

3. Methodology

The study used a qualitative multiple case study design. Sixteen cases were purposely chosen from three public and four private schools in urban metropolitan areas in Sindh, Pakistan, and Punjab. The aim was to map out typical language learning and language-related experiences and trajectories of students in these schools. Each case comprised a pair of same sex siblings, with the younger sibling in the final year of secondary school and the 4–6 years older sibling with completed secondary school education. This was to capture time-related processes in schooling experiences and language-related experiences in the wider sociocultural context.

The sampling was multi-stage and purposive. In the first stage, private and government secondary schools (offering education until grade 9 & 10) were chosen with a population of at least 300 students that prepared their learners for the same provincial board examinations. In the second stage, participants were chosen as per the above mentioned criteria, with the help of

teachers.[4] The data collection methods included ethnographic style individual interviews (1 – 2 hours in duration), participant observations and documentary analysis. Participant observation was carried out in schools, public places, hospitals, banks, offices and social gatherings to understand the use of languages and the cultural meanings people assigned to them (Spradley, 2016). Documentary collection and analysis were not systematic but a part of the participant observation. This included newspapers, pamphlets, airline tickets, etc.

The analysis followed a constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), in which categories were allowed to emerge from the data itself through an iterative process. First, all interviews were fully transcribed and coded individually. Line-by-line coding at this stage comprised mainly key words used by the participants, while notes or memos were posted side by side as some concepts seemed to develop. This was followed by revisiting the data several times, comparing initial codes as they seemed to come together in broad categories under different descriptive domains, for example, language-related experiences in schooling, higher education, work and wider social context. The specific categories were then revisited with the help of detailed matrices as data from within and across cases were compared and explanations sought. This led to a cyclical process in which earlier categories collapsed to give way to new categories and abstract themes began to emerge, lending coherence to different types of data.

3.1. Participants

In the given data sets, the participants seemed to cluster around three different classes in a relational sense, corresponding to their access to different types of school and languages. First were the middle-class participants, with a higher socioeconomic background, educated parents, and fair amount of exposure to English and Urdu at home. The parents often used the regional language amongst themselves or with the elderly in the family. All of these were or had been in high fee private schools, while the older ones were in higher education.

The second group of participants is from lower middle class, with lower income than the above (from either a small-scale business or low-paid job) and often only one educated parent. They were also in government-run schools. Their exposure to English language was quite limited at home, where Urdu and regional languages were used. All of the older siblings were in higher education.

The third group of participants with the lowest socioeconomic backgrounds could be described as working class. The parents were uneducated and engaged in skill-based or daily wage work. These participants hardly had any exposure to English. Regional languages were spoken at home and they had picked up Urdu either at school, from their neighborhood, and more rarely, from home. A number of these participants were also working while studying in government-run schools. The elder siblings held low-paid jobs, who had either never been in higher education or were college dropouts. Even if not seen in deterministic terms, there can be no doubt that this social positioning placed the lowest income group most disadvantageously in the educational space. Table 3.1. shows the number of participants and their demographics that are relationally clustered in different social classes.

Informed written consent was taken from all participants and they had the opportunity to opt out of research any time. They were apprised about all aspects of the study and prospective publications. In addition, no formal consent was required by any ethical committee.

4. Findings

4.1. Spatial exclusion and the differential distribution of linguistic capital in schools

The provision of private and government sector schools in the given context seemed to result in a de facto class-based segregation, as the middle-class participants (MCPs) were in elite private schools, while the lower middle (LMCP) and working-class participants (WMCP) were in government ones. The difference between the two schooling systems crystallized in different languages being

Table 3. Participants and Social Classes				
	Middle class	**Lower Middle Class**	**Working class**	**Total**
Participants	16	10	06	32
Schooling: Private	16	-	-	
Schooling: Public	-	10	06	
In last year of secondary school	08	05	03	
In university	08	10	-	
Males	08	05	02	
Females	08	05	04	
Linguistic[5] repertoire: Urdu	16	10	06	
English	04	-	-	
Sindhi	02	02	02	
Punjabi	04	08	04	

used as medium of instruction for participants, with English being used in private and Urdu in government sector schools. Significantly, all the participants referred to each other as "Urdu medium," and "English medium" with an intersubjectively held understanding that "Urdu medium is a stigma," as Hira (MCP), in the final year of her medical college explained.

The language in education policy, in both schooling systems, seemed to be inclusive. The working class (WCPs) and lower middle-class participants (LMCPs) were much more familiar with Urdu language than English in this urban context. Similarly, the middle-class participants (MCPs) had more or less exposure to English in their environment. It also seemed fair that the same set of languages (English, Urdu and Sindhi (in Sindh only)) were being offered in both types of schools. From the capability approach perspective, one could argue that the languages policy for these schools, was generally equitable and responsive to the different linguistic repertoire of the learners, although the extent of this inclusivity would have varied for individuals depending on their linguistic repertoire.

However, the spatial segregation of social classes led to clustering of disadvantages for the LMCPs and WCPs, as their schooling experiences bespoke not only of scarcity of resources but also poor teaching and learning, especially of the language they highly valued English, a phenomenon, also well documented elsewhere (ASER, 2019; Tamim, 2014a; Tamim, 2014b). According to self-reports, the LMCPs and WCPs hardly learnt any English.

Class-based exclusionary processes even worked within government schools, when an afford-able opportunity to be "included in English medium section" became available. Maria (WCP) narrated her experience of studying in a well-resourced model government school, which offered the choice of English medium education to a small number of students, after passing an entrance exam at Grade 6 level. Maria, though desperately wanting to be in that section, soon realized that she could never pass the entrance test, which could only be taken successfully by someone who had been able to afford English medium private schooling in earlier grades. Hence, the access to English medium education remained bracketed off to those from a relatively higher socioeconomic class in an exclusive niche in the shared space of a government school. The language most of the LMCPs and WCPs learnt best was Urdu, though they attached little value to it, while none of them learnt Sindhi. Nevertheless, the distribution of literacy in Urdu was also marked by relative class differences, with those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds placed in low ability sections. Yasir (WCP) one of the latter, now working in a blue collar job at a factory, explained that he barely knew how to write a sentence in any language, though he was able to bribe his way into getting a secondary school certificate. Recalling his schooling experiences, he narrated that there were different sections in the school with varying number of students. "The top section had only 25 to

30 students, others had around 40 students … I was in a class with 80 students. The teachers would hardly come and I learnt nothing" He remembered being severely beaten on several occasions. Showing the mark of a deep cut over his eyebrow, he said, "Ask me the reason for being hit? There has to be a reason … the reason was that I asked a question."

In sharp contrast to these participants, the MCPs felt they had been quite successful in learning English. Although only a small fraction of these (2% -seven of these seventeen students) felt highly confident in their English language skills, all of them were more or less comfortable in using the language and were aware of the edge it gave them over Others. Although all of these participants could speak Urdu well, they invariably rated their reading and written literacy in Urdu reading as "poor." However sharing the perceptions of LCMPs regarding its low value, they were hardly worried. Neither did any of these participants ascribe any value to the learning of Sindhi, which none except one felt she had learnt.

The institutional distribution of linguistic capital emerges as clearly class based, with MCPs best equipped with the most valued linguistic capital of English language; followed by the LMCPs who gained access to Urdu, the national lingua franca but little English. While, the poorest WCPs like Yasir and his brother among them did not achieve literacy in any language. The poor learning of value languages is well documented (ASER, 2019; ASER, 2018; ASER, 2017; Tamim, 2014a; Mansoor, 2010). This also validates Cummins (2000) argument that historically "subordinated groups" are "systematically denied access to the language of power within our society" (p. 109).

Capability-based evaluation revealed that although all participants had similar functioning in terms of having completed or being near completion of secondary schools, their capability to use valued languages was widely different. Class emerged as a distinct variable that intersected with institutional structures, and refracted into spatial exclusion across educational institutions but also within them- dissipating the benefit of instruction in a language that participants well understood. There were then "degrees of inclusion and exclusion" (Qvortrop & Qvortrop, 2018), as differentially valued linguistic capital was distributed on the basis of class positioning in the segregated spaces.

4.2. Educational Institutions and construction of an imagined centre: Teaching to exclude

Elite schools seemed to actively construct a centre of privilege differentiated by the Othered from which the excluded, through strategies and practices Other was identified as one with poor English language proficiency. The cost of membership, however, involved not only learning or having access to learning of English but also dismissal of all local languages. MCPs invariably reported that regional languages were categorically forbidden in their schools. Sana (MCP), now in her final year of school, shared a circular sent from a prestigious private school system to parents, which warned them: "No foul languages are allowed in school, like Punjabi," the latter being a mother tongue of 44% of the population (Rahman, 2005). The use of Urdu and Sindhi was also discouraged on campuses, even when they were being taught. Several participants reported punishments and fines for speaking in Urdu on campus. Salman (MCP), in the final year of his secondary school narrated the humiliating treatment of his friend who went to see the Head teacher, only to be sent back because he could not express himself in English. He explained:

He felt very bad. Even if I were in his place, I would have felt very bad. My point is perfectly all right but I am not able to explain to sir. Sir insists that you have to do it in English … then you feel bad […] the whole class then laughs that Sir did not even hear him out (*Source: Interview middle class boy private school participant Lahore, Tamim, 2014 b*, p. 289).

Salman empathized, "I would have felt very bad [if I were in his place]," yet ends up almost condoning the punishment. "I wish we are forced to speak in English all the time," he says. Umair (MCP), now studying in a private university also expressed a similar desire "I wish there were more punishments [for not speaking in English at school]," so he could have learnt English better.

Sites of higher education, despite offering the spatial inclusion of all social classes perpetuated exclusionary processes by centralizing English language in education. It is not surprising then that despite, the highly subsidized yet quality education was offered by public sector institutions and a range of merit and needs-based scholarships offered by private institutions, none of the working-class groups stayed in higher education, even when it was affordable. While Yasir (WCP) and his brother never entered college because of poor literacy skills, other LMCPs for example, Kiran, Farheen and Naseer dropped out after one or two years of college, either because their subjects of choice were not in Urdu anymore, or they could not cope with the compulsory subject of English language.

The lower middle-class participants who seemed to survive higher education, barely did that, "survive." They were included yet excluded. Hasnat and Kamran (LMCPs), in their third year of BSc and BBA, had been bright students, aspiring for careers in medicine but could barely pass the FSc exam. Both explained that making connections with their previous school-based knowledge in the subject was difficult as important terminologies changed from Urdu to English. At this highly competitive stage, Hasnat (LMCP) recollected the excruciatingly slow pace of his work in these years:

For one thing English was there all of a sudden … in the beginning … could not understand at all. Could understand nothing … at all … first look up the meaning of each word and then learn. Then … then have to teach the whole chapter … all was in English. In matric there was a small book (of English). Now there were so many thick books. (*Source: Interview lower middle-class elder male sibling higher education Lahore*(Tamim, 2014 a), p. 290)

Nazia (LMCP) in the second year of their college explained that 60% of her class, which was from government school background, stood excluded from any meaningful learning when the lectures were delivered exclusively in English (in English classrooms). She recollected requesting the teacher to "explain a little in Urdu" only to be rebuffed by her "'you are at the stage that you have to take English with you.'" At the other end of the spectrum all the older siblings of MCPs were in higher education and thriving with success. Huma in the last year of her medical school remembered doing another degree in journalism simultaneously because it interested her. She also realized her English language skills allowed to fully participate and lead in debates and dramatics and anything she wanted to. She also confessed "manipulating," her teachers and peers with her language skills, to get her way. Farhan and Arif both in the third year of BBA in different universities not only felt that they were academically successful but also that they were "automatically" chosen by peers and teachers to represent the student body at the university because of their English proficiency. Even those less proficient in the language felt much more successful than those from low socioeconomic backgrounds in terms of academic success.

Foucault argues that punishment within "of disciplinary power" brings 'into play the binary opposition of the permitted and the forbidden [it] differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short it *normalizes* ([Itl org.] Rabinow, 1984, p. 195) and this "normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power," (ibid. p. 196), a centre indicating homogeneity from which discourses of the other are legitimized through "classification, heirarchization, and the distribution of rank" (ibid.). No wonder the middle-class participants almost savour punishments to be normalized into the centre. The institutions almost seemed to teach the MCPs to exclude the Other, the under classed with their poor English language proficiency. This was a privileged centre that alone could claim the right to speak and be heard (Bourdieu, 1991), a right denied to Others until they could access the linguistic code of the centre, as in the case of Salman's friend, giving a message that their local language and culture has no place in school and by implication in society because it is inherently inferior (Cummins, 2000).

At sites of higher education, once the class-based hierarchy had been crystallized in differential access to English, the spatial exclusion is no longer required to keep the classes apart. The use of English almost organically resurrects class-based boundaries and leads to the delayed elimination

of the relatively socioeconomically disadvantaged. Contradictory processes of inclusion and exclusion emerge here running simultaneously at sites of higher as the LCMP and WCPs are spatially included and given equal resources in the same classes but excluded (Hilt, 2015) from meaningful learning, resulting in "delayed elimination" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The language used in higher education and the linguistic capital of the participants then interacted with resources of space as social conversion factors resulting in different capabilities for participants to convert the same resources into valued functionings.

4.3. The Nexus of Class and Language: Psychological and Social Exclusionary Processes

The exclusionary processes were not just cognitive, as discussed in section 4.2 but also social and psychological. The subtle layers of exclusionary dynamics at school were not lost on Maria (LMCP), a final year student in her model government school that also offered English medium instruction to a selected few. She explained:

> There is a difference ... like when we have our games ... or a funfair ... then the teachers take only English medium girls [...] English medium children are selected more [...]. We feel bad [...] When an Urdu medium girl starts [saying] anything [in a programme] ... they [English medium girls] start hooting ... we do not like it [...] we remain quiet [...]. If anyone of us goes in the labs we find a project is underway [in which English medium girls are involved]. We see children are holding certificates [coming into school] we ask what happened [they say] this programme took place in the school.

> (Source: *Interview lower middle-class girl government school, Lahore*)

The most painful to her was the mandatory use of different uniforms in the same school: one for English medium, one for high achievers and one for Urdu medium,' Maria explained. "One can tell who is an excellent child, who is from English medium and who is from Urdu medium ... Then it does not feel good [to be identified as Urdu medium]."

In higher education also Ayesha (LCMP) in her second year of college, described a strong sense of "isolation" despite sitting with middle-class students in the same class, reading the same books and listening to the same lecture, yet only grasping very little because the teacher used English. She realized that she was actually "invisible," to the teacher:

> I used to see that the teacher who is coming to teach us does not bother that you understand English. She would go close to them [those who could understand English] and explain to them only. This is what was going on. We used to hate it ... It is obvious if we do not even understand anything how do we raise any questions. (*Source: Interview lower middle-class elder female sibling higher education Lahore*(Tamim, 2014 a), p. 289).

The sense of rejection was not only felt coming from teachers but also MCP peers. Najma (LCMP), in her second year in college, said, "We wanted to sit with them ... the English medium girls and learn English but they don't want to sit with us. It is as if they are higher and we are lower." Significantly, none of this seemed to be happening mechanically but through the active rejection, distancing and exclusionary attitudes and practices of those in the privileged centre. In higher education, the close proximity of the Other only seemed to have increased the level of threat to those in the centre, who intensify their efforts to barricade the class boundaries with the use of English. Nimra (MCP) in her 4th year of BA argued, "anyone who does not speak in English is out," as "there is obviously this barrier between those who know English or not," she continued. Faizan (MCP), a third year BBA student, revealed in his English language proficiency "My English gives me a hell lot of security." He explained how he deliberately used difficult vocabulary and feigned American accent in class, thereby earning the respect of his peers. Rizwana (MCP) in the last year of her BSc asserted, "With English you do not have to fear that someone will let you down or make you feel incompetent." She commented, "these days the one who speaks Urdu is made to

feel let down." Farwa (MCP) in her third year of BBA said, "Just speaking in English makes you feel superior because it silences others." Mehwish (MCP) in the final year of her BA Architecture emphasized, "there is this terror of English that forces the other person to oblige." Hira (MCP) in the final year of medical school explained that "the term Urdu medium is a stigma giving rise to several negative connotations and judgments. She talked about an "Urdu medium" girl who had made headlines in national news for achieving a top position in the board examination and entering their prestigious medical school, yet 'She became a college joke because of her poor English skills and her Punjabi accent. "She does not even understand that everyone is making fun of her, when they laugh," she commented.

The processes of exclusion and inclusion here emerge as multidimensional not just cognitive but also psychological and social (Qvortrop & Qvortrop, 2018; Hilt, 2015). In the we/they discourse Maria strongly senses the "unequal relations of power" (Norton, 2000, p. 9) essentially exclusion-ary, stemming at the nexus of class and language as social judgments come disguised as academic judgments around "talent," and ability from institutions (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). English becomes a "code" for privileged class, of centeredness (Graham & Slee, 2008), and the boundaries of this centre are guarded by subtly excluding the Other, identified as under classed, inferior, and "Urdu medium." Hence, spatially distanced and debarred from access to English and meaningful participation in school life. De Beco (2018) argues that a sense of isolation and limited opportunities for participation are important aspects of exclusion, i.e., capability deprivation. Maria suffers also from the shame of being "marked" (Foucault, 1972) as being "Urdu medium," as her uniform functions to make her an "object of gaze." Foucault (2015) argues that marking is "a sign on the body," "visible or symbolic" to emphasize something that "must not fall into forgetfulness," a reminder of the infamy of the scarred—here it becomes as a reminder of her exclusion from the privileged centre, her low ability and her low socioeconomic class.

In higher education, the discursive Otherness makes them "invisible" and insignificant, and rejected despite inclusion in the same space. The socially excluding discourses perpetuating from the centre comprised of MCPs are divisive and derogatory. If one were to understand what is left "unsaid," yet said (Graham & Slee, 2008) by the MCPs, the exclusionary processes become visible. The discourses of MCPs seem to point out the intersubjectively held assumptions in the context, that those who do not have the valued capital of English language would feel afraid, incompetent and inferior. They would be silenced, manipulated, made invisible and powerless. The exclusionary suffering emerges as multidimensional not just cognitive but also social and psycho-logical exclusionary processes.

Inclusivity in education then clearly emerges as much more than spatial inclusion in the relational understanding offered by the capability approach (De Beco, 2018; Reindal, 2010). The different social, structural, relational and institutional factors interact with personal variables of class and language for the LCMPs & WCPs resulting in their capability deprivation to participate in positive valued educational experiences (Reindal, 2010), triggering multidimensional exclusionary processes at multiple levels as suggested by Qvortrop & Qvortrop (2107), lead to "multiple oppressions" (Oliver & Singal, 2017).

4.4. Questioning the monolingual centre/the privileged centrality of English
Addressing the exclusionary processes discussed above may seem simple, i.e., increasing access to English. However, Slee & Graham (2008) argue that the centre itself into which others have to brought in must be deconstructed, if inclusive education is to be "authentic." Hence, we turn our gaze from the Other to the legitimacy of the centre and building on their work, we question: What is the legitimacy and nature of this imagined centre (in terms of language-based privilege) into which everyone has to be included.

To address the question I triangulate the interview data with participant observations and documentary analysis to understand the use of language in some key institutions: hospitals;

judicial courts; parliament; local businesses; banks, schools and universities. The data revealed that English was the official language and used in written communication, documentation and official announcements. It was the main language for higher education and almost all private schools. The job advertisements appearing in dailies insisted on English language skills and so did those interviewing for jobs. Nasir (WCP), a college drop out, commented, "these days one cannot even get a job of waiter in Pizza Hut, until one knows English." It seemed then as if English language was salient to one's success and social mobility.

The data, however, also revealed that all the above mentioned places were essentially marked by plurilingual practices as people sifted through their linguistic repertoire: Urdu, English, regional languages, and their varieties. For example, in an observed Supreme Court session, while the judge dictated his verdict in English, the lawsuit was mainly contested in Urdu with code-switching into English, whereas plurilingual practices marked the corridors of the court, with heavy reliance on local languages. Same was the case, in the proceedings of the parliament, hospitals, and banks. Even in private sector educational institutions, while English was strongly emphasized, Urdu unofficially found its way into classrooms and on campus. Similarly, plurilingual practices were also common in middle-class homes, as reported by the participants themselves.

Local language use was also quite embedded in the market structure, despite the fact that English language skills were important to land a good job but not always. Arif (MCP) in the third year of his BBA, who owned a family-run textile[6] business explained, "we need to hire local people who know local languages to connect with people with expertise, if we insist on their English language proficiency in hiring what will we do with it." In local businesses also it was Urdu and local languages were mainly used. Faiza (WMCP), who after dropping out of college had started her business by bringing the needlework expertise of culturally home-bound women in her vicinity into the market, attributed this to her knowing multiple local languages. With her business flourishing, she was now making enough money to put her younger brother back in school and achieved economic independence not only for herself but also for other women, without being held back by her poor English.

The relevance of the centre to the periphery can be seen challenged as Hira (MCP), a final year medical student, fluent in English but barely so in local languages now faced the dilemma of treating patients coming from rural areas, who could not understand English at times not even Urdu, making diagnosis problematic. She explained:

There are so many of us in class … even if you try you will realize … […] They can't translate what is coming to their mind in English into Urdu. We don't know how to speak Urdu. We think we know Urdu but we do not … . and this poses a huge problem in diagnosis because we have so many people coming to us from rural background. If you cannot speak or understand Urdu or Punjabi, you cannot understand them. Any word spoken in English is simply lost on them … as if it was never spoken. One should know Urdu as well as Punjabi. (*Source: Interview middle-class elder female sibling higher education, Lahore, Tamim, 2013, p. 11*)

What emerged then was a rich multilingual context, within which the norm was plurilingual practices in multilingual communities. This was a far cry from the emphasis on monolingual exclusivity and centrality ascribed to English language in educational institutions. If inclusive education is not an end in itself but a means to achieve an inclusive society where individuals have the capabilities to achieve their goals (Reindal, 2010) then clearly a multilingual repertoire was required, as suggested by Faiza and Arif. Hence, while knowing English language enhanced Hira's capabilities to choose a career of her choice, but when the context changed, her lack of local languages led to capability deprivation. Moreover, the centre is hardly inclusive in itself as it demands "assimilation," (Bernstein, 1996) a "dislocation of self" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) demanding MCPs to look down upon their own local languages to be in the centre. In addition, the centre also glossed over the English language proficiency differences within MCPs who

comprise it, where only a fraction was highly confident in their English language skills, while the rest basked in the reputation of the group (Bourdieu, 1989). It is understandable then that MCPs welcomed punishments at school, in the desire to be purged of their local languages. This can hardly be termed as inclusion.

5. Concluding discussion

This paper sets out to explore inclusivity in education in the multilingual context of Pakistan at the interstices of class and language, through the lived in experiences of participants from different social classes. The use of capability approach offered a powerful vantage point revealing complex interplay of language and class in educational institutions. The findings showed that while individuals from different social classes had similar functionings or achievements in terms of completion or near completion of secondary education, and in some instances even being in higher education, they masked the differences in their capabilities or opportunities to achieve their valued goals (Unterhalter 2003 in Reindal, 2010) be it to learn the language of prestige English and/or pursue education through it. Class-based spatial exclusion, in the name of ability or "need," was very much there, across schools (for example, private and public schools) and within the government schools also, crisscrossing with access to dominant languages, leading to clustering of disadvantages for the relatively socioeconomically disadvantaged. Even though LMCPs and WCPs were given language as per their "need," which made their education inclusive, it left them stigmatized as class and language conflated in the segregative system. Moreover, the ability/class-based segregation with these schools diluted this language edge for the poorest, as in Yasir's case, who hardly learnt any language. This endorses the stance of inclusive education against segregative systems (Oliver & Singal, 2017; Reindal, 2010; Thomas, 2013).

Educational institutions appeared to be playing an active role in both classifying, hierarchizing certain values, languages and ways of being and doing but also in constructing an imagined monolingual centre of privilege from which discursive construction of the Other emerged, identified by poor proficiency in English, declassed and stigmatized. Later, even the provision of same resources and shared physical space in higher education did little to address exclusionary processes. Once class difference had transubstantiated into different linguistic capabilities, all that was needed now was to teach everyone equally to create inequality (Bourdieu, 1991) or exclusion. English proficiency or lack of it became a social conversion factor that sealed class privilege for the MCPs, while multiplying the oppressions of LMCPs and WCPs as they were deprived of the capabilities to convert the equally provided resources in the shared space of higher education into valued functionings. This validates the emphasis on the capability approach that mere inclusion in space cannot in itself be viewed as an end in itself or lead to inclusivity in education (Terzi, 2014) until structural changes are made to make education responsive to diversity (Graham & Reindal, 2010; Slee, 2011; Thomas, 2013).

Exclusionary processes that emerged were multidimensional: cognitive, social and psychological (Thomas, 2013), often running simultaneously with processes of inclusion (Hilt, 2015). Inclusion in physical space happened with exclusion from meaningful learning as in higher education; while inclusivity in education with the use of familiar language in government schools was marred by class-based segregated spaces and the resulting stigmatization (De-Beco, 2018). The psychological and social aspects of exclusion (Thomas, 2013) were as incisive and divisive as the cognitive aspects, generating a sense of inferiority, isolation and alienation (ibid.). The deconstruction of monolingual privileged centre revealed its fictional nature (Graham & Slee, 2008) but also its forbidding power to perpetuate discourses of marginality (Foucault, 1972). This centre demanded "absorption" (Bernstein, 1996) coercing individuals to dismiss their local languages and culture, which in itself is exclusionary and repressive, yet never seen that way. This was evident in the contrast between the significance given to English in the country and its limited use in the local context on the one hand and the devaluation of local languages versus their actual widespread use on the other hand. Those in the centre also suffered from capability deprivation but of another kind, as not knowing the local languages negatively affected their agency to fully participate in this

multilingual context. This becomes clear when inclusive education is not seen as an end in itself but as a means to establish an inclusive society, where individuals can achieve goals that they value (Reindal, 2010; Terzi, 2014).

In the multilingual Pakistani context, conceptualizing inclusive education at the interstices of class and language would then mean a rejection of class-based spatial segregation marked by different languages by: a) improving the teaching and learning in government sector schools, so they can compete with private schools and become a viable educational option for MCs; b) making a structural change in educational institutions by moving towards bilingual education models that are responsive to the multilingual context; c) "re-reading of [seemingly] benign strategies" (Oliver & Singal, 2017, p. 1225) or practices in schools for example shunning and degrading of local languages; d) training teachers to capture and understand and address class and language-based biases and challenging these in classes. This would need deconstructing the centre from which exclusionary discourses of the other are perpetuated and bringing it under scrutiny (Graham & Slee, 2008). It is argued that "being in the centre is certainly a relation of domination", hence a relation of power , that must be problematized (Rabinow, 1984). Finally, the need for equitable teaching and learning of English language is clear and must be emphasized (Chana, 2017; Akram, 2019;Mahboob, 2017) but this will never be enough to address issues of inclusivity, until there is a simultaneous emphasis on the learning of local languages and restoring their prestige in educational institutions. The latter will only be possible if the wider language policy adds an exchange value to the local languages to enhance the capabilities of individuals to communicate globally, engage locally, and access opportunities at both levels.

The essence of the argument made in the paper is that the nexus of class and languages in education are central to issues of inclusion/exclusion in multilingual contexts, which can be addressed only through a desegregated bilingual system of education that is responsive to the multilingual context. The current study endorses the results of previous studies that highlight language-based marginalization in education (Tamim, 2014a; Tamim, 2014b;Pennycook, 2010; Rahman, 2005; Mansoor, 2015; Phillipson 2002; Kedzierski, 2016) and negative attitudes and poor literacy in local languages (Manan, Dumanig & David, 2017). However it goes beyond the previous studies by exploring the intersection of class and language within the discourses of inclusive education to make suggestions for ensuring inclusivity in education. This discussion is particularly relevant as almost all low- and middle-income, postcolonial countries now use English or another "global language" as the medium of instruction at the secondary and tertiary level (Sibomana, 2015; Tikly, 2016), resulting in a "mismatch between the languages people speak and the languages that are privileged by the school and other institutions of power" (Benson & Kosonen, 2013, p. 6), leading to serious issues of social justice and equity (Tikly, 2016). In any planning of Post-COVID education, it is crucial then to be mindful of the exclusionary processes stemming from the nexus of language and class in education so that now the widening learning gaps and inequalities across classes may be addressed through inclusive education.

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Notes

1. The country has 24% of its population below the national poverty line −31% in rural areas and 13% in urban areas and 38.8% suffering from multidimensional poverty −54.6% in rural areas and 9.4% in urban areas (Economic Survey Pakistan 2018–2019).
2. Goal 4 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 pledges to achieve inclusive equitable education for all (UNESCO, 2017).
3. Some of the schools in the province of Sindh offer Sindhi medium education.
4. …
5. These were languages they had acquired at home according to self-reports. In the case of Punjabi, they believed they could understand it to some extent but not speak it.
6. Textiles is one of the most flourishing export industry in Pakistan

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