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# Language, Sexuality and Inclusive Pedagogy

## Abstract

This paper examines linguistic practices of inclusion and exclusion relating to sexual orientation and sexual identity as they surface in the context of language education and multilingual contexts. I argue that queer linguistics can provide a helpful theoretical framework for examining how normative and non-normative constructions of sexual identity are enacted inscribed in language practices in classrooms, and how these language practices may effect particular discourses of sexuality. **I examine extracts of interview data with young people analysed using APPRAISAL analysis.** The analysis focuses on how language works as a form of social practice which can include and exclude sexual identities in classroom settings.

## Keywords

Language; sexuality, inclusion; inclusive pedagogy; queer linguistics

## Introduction

This paper examines reported linguistic practices of inclusion and exclusion relating to sexual orientation and sexual identity as they surface in secondary schools in the UK.

Motschenbacher (2016) highlights the need for a greater examination of the concept of 'inclusion' from a linguistic perspective, and discusses how linguistic research is well-placed to offer insights into how to develop and implement inclusive language education.

Motschenbacher (2016: 166) describes the central aim of inclusion within education as:

[...] to provide positive learning conditions for all learners in a class and to eliminate barriers (not just in the physical sense) that may have detrimental consequences for (language) learning.

Linguistic research can be used to identify language-related barriers to creating positive learning conditions in education. The research presented in this paper offers a linguistic investigation of exclusionary school practices based on sexuality. The school context in which the research took place are not just restricted to language classrooms and the research investigates school inclusion and exclusion issues more broadly from the perspective of LGBT+-identified students. It is hoped that the research findings presented and discussed in this paper can be extended beyond the research site itself and, in particular, applied to the domain of language education.

I argue that queer linguistics can provide a particularly helpful theoretical framework for examining how normative and non-normative constructions of sexual identity are enacted through and inscribed in language practices in classrooms, and how these language practices may effect particular discourses of sexuality. In the empirical section of the paper, I analyse extracts of interview data with LGBT+-identified young people analysed using queer linguistics-informed appraisal analysis. **It should be made clear that it is not empirical data from classroom practices that is being analyzed, but rather research participants' deployment of affective and evaluative linguistic resources to describe their experiences and opinions of school practices. These deployments can therefore be said to constitute a social practice in which discourses of inclusion/exclusion with relation to sexual identity/orientation in schools are made relevant, reinforced or challenged.**

A key finding of the research presented in this paper is that the subject of English emerges as having much transformative potential and is recognised by participants as a key site for establishing and developing inclusive pedagogy in relation to sexual diversity and inclusion.

## **Language and sexuality in educational contexts**

To date, work which has explicitly examined language and sexuality in educational contexts has predominantly focused on ESL classrooms and foreign and second language education (e.g. Liddicoat, 2007; 2009; Nelson, 1999; 2006; O'Mochain, 2006) (see Pavlenko, 2004 for a useful review of work in the field of sexuality in foreign and second language education). Liddicoat (2009), for example, examines classroom interactions from foreign language classes in which lesbian and gay-identified students present challenges to heteronormative constructions of their sexual identities. Liddicoat observes how the language classrooms examined are dominated by a 'heteronormative framing of identities' and that heterosexuality is always potentially present in the classes. Ellwood (2006) and O'Mochain (2006) both explore ways in which English language classes can enable LGBT students to speak more openly about their own sexual identities, especially if a conducive environment is created by the teacher. Nelson (2009) investigates English language teachers' and students' experiences of talking in class about sexual diversity and of negotiating sexual identities in language classroom contexts. Within the overall ethnographic approach to the research, Nelson draws on focus group and teacher interviews as well as classroom observations to explore some of the pedagogic challenges and opportunities that arise as queer themes become increasingly visible in English language teaching around the world. Nelson concludes that a useful way forward is for teachers and students to see challenges *as* opportunities and offers a number of 'macro-strategies' for enabling this to happen. These macro-strategies include: teaching sexual literacy as part of teaching language/culture; deconstructing anti-gay discourses for teaching purposes; recognising that student cohorts and teaching staff are multisexual in a way that is intellectually enriching; evaluating teaching resources to consider whether they are upholding or challenging heteronormative thinking.

Other recent work has examined language and sexuality in foreign language textbooks and other learning materials and their use in classrooms (Goldstein, 2015; Gray, 2013; Pakula *et al*, 2015; Pawelczyk and Pakula, 2015; Sunderland, 2015). In their study of EFL textbooks used in Poland, Pakula *et al* (2015) find a persistent non-representation of anything other than heterosexuality. Gray (2013) critically examines the ways in which materials used for English language teaching are implicitly heteronormative and frequently render LGBT identities invisible. Beyond sexuality, Motschenbacher (2016) is critical of educational practices which conceptualise classes as homogeneous learning groups and argues instead for conceptualising 'learner heterogeneity in terms of valued diversity rather than as a teaching obstacle' (2016: 160). This principle applies to sexuality and education – diversity along the lines of sexuality is often ignored and rendered invisible. I argue that explicitly recognising and valuing sexual diversity can enhance the learning experiences of all students, not just those identifying as LGBT+.

Some work in UK mainstream school classrooms has examined in more depth the role of silence, as well as continuing to investigate overt homophobic language. Epstein *et al* (2003), for example, identify schools as sites where heterosexuality is constructed as normal and sexualities which transgress this norm are silenced, often tacitly rather than actively. A range of routine silencing and regulatory discourses in a range of schools in international contexts have also been explored by Francis and Msibi (2011), Gray (2013), Moita Lopes (2006) and Sauntson (2013) amongst others. Recent and current work combines classroom discourse analysis with ethnography (e.g. Nelson, 2009; 2012; Sauntson, 2012). Within a broadly ethnographic approach, Sauntson (2012) uses interactional and interview data from British secondary school settings to explore how gender and sexuality are discursively constructed in classrooms. The study focuses mainly on student-student classroom talk and uses a range of discourse analytic frameworks. The study reveals the intricacies of classroom

interaction as a site where gender and sexuality identities are played out on a daily basis and as a site of constant ideological struggle. Although the work outlined above makes use of a range of linguistic analytical frameworks, what it has in common is its overarching use of queer linguistics, the approach also adopted throughout this paper.

### **Queer linguistics**

Queer linguistics seems an appropriate approach to use to examine the ways in which particular discourses of sexuality are produced in school contexts through the deployment of specific linguistic practices. In previous work (Sauntson, 2012; 2018), I argue and illustrate how linguistic methods of analysis can be used alongside queer theory to critically examine the discursive constructions of 'normal' and 'queer' gender and sexuality in school classrooms. I show how queer linguistics-informed discourse analysis can help to uncover the ways in which heterosexuality is naturalised and how other forms of sexual and gender identity are 'queered' in classroom interaction. Nelson (2009) argues that because identities within queer theory are conceptualised as performative acts which are produced through discourse, using a queer theory framework has the potential to engage teachers and students in LGBT issues in language classes. Nelson (2012) is critical that, in language-focused education research, there has been little dialogue between applied linguistics and queer linguistics and calls for more attention to be paid to how linguistic analysis can offer important insights into gender, sexualities and education. Queer linguistics is well-placed to be able to identify gender and sexuality discourses (which may serve as barriers to inclusion) as they emerge in contextualised linguistic practices. The field of critical applied linguistics in conjunction with queer linguistics can be particularly useful for responding to this call.

**Motschenbacher and Stegu (2013) importantly note that queer linguistics is not the same as gay and lesbian linguistics in which the object of study is 'queer subjects'. As they explain:**

**Using a Queer perspective [...] is not so much a matter of deciding what is Queer, but of choosing to view certain behaviours in a non-heteronormative light or from the perspective of the sexually marginalised.' (2013: 520)**

Motschenbacher (2011) and Motschenbacher and Stegu (2013) argue that queer linguistics lends itself well to an eclectic combination of linguistic analytical frameworks (or methodological pluralism) in order to provide mutually qualifying positions. Leap has also referred to a 'scavenger methodology' (2017: 10) as being particularly appropriate for queer inquiry across a range of disciplines. **This means that any linguistic frameworks may be drawn on, either partially or in their entirety, in order to achieve the aims of queer linguistics.** In this paper, the linguistic framework of APPRAISAL (Martin, 2000; Martin and White, 2005) is used to uncover language practices in a data-set of interviews with young LGBT+-identified people reflecting on and evaluating their experiences of inclusion and exclusion in school. APPRAISAL is a specific type of discourse analysis which focuses upon categorising evaluative language. When talking about sexuality, people often focus much of their talk on feelings, emotions and judgements, and the APPRAISAL framework is designed to analyse these aspects of talk. APPRAISAL, therefore, provides a framework for analysing and describing evaluative language and categorising the ways that feelings, emotions, attitudes, social relationships and experiences are encoded in language. In this paper, APPRAISAL is used within a broader queer linguistics approach to explore how language embodies the participants' feelings, attitudes and values towards sexuality-based inclusion and/or exclusion in schools, **and how they perceive normative genders and sexualities to be constructed and reinforced in the school environment.** As stated in the introduction, this can have implications for language education and other educational contexts. The rationale for employing

APPRAISAL within a broader queer linguistics approach is that the framework can be used to reveal the linguistic strategies people use for engaging in processes of identification and intersubjective positioning/stance-taking. The data comprises interviews which are essentially narratives of personal experience and therefore lends itself well to being analysed using a social identity-focused frameworks such as queer linguistics-informed APPRAISAL.

### **Research design**

The data consists of interviews with 20 young LGBT+ identified people (aged 13-25) who attend or have recently attended schools and colleges in two UK cities. This data-set was generated as part of a broader research project investigating a language, sexuality and education practices more widely (Sauntson, 2018). The broader project presents a range of data obtained from secondary and high school educational contexts in the UK and USA and applies different methods of linguistic analysis to investigate aspects of the relationship between language, sexuality and education. Under a broad queer applied linguistics approach, in the wider project I 'scavenge' the linguistic analytical frameworks of tactics of intersubjectivity, APPRAISAL, corpus linguistics and CDA to examine the data-sets comprising classroom interaction, interviews with teachers and young people, and curriculum documents.

In the interview data-set reported on in this article, the young people reflect on their experiences of, and attitudes towards, school in relation to their LGBT+ sexual identities. The young people were identified through their membership of LGBT+ youth. This was the most practical way of accessing openly LGBT+ young people for the research and it had the advantage of providing a context in which the young people felt comfortable talking about their school experiences. All interviews were individual and were semi-structured to allow for a degree of flexibility. The same set of questions was used in each interview, although there was flexibility for interviewees to discuss other related points if they wanted to. The questions focused on interviewees' perceptions of sexual diversity issues in school. They lasted between 20 and 40 minutes.

Through the telling of narratives in an interview situation, participants construct identities for themselves and others through the language used in these narratives. De Fina and Perrino (2011) are critical of how narrative interviews are sometimes viewed as 'inauthentic' linguistic data. They describe research interviews as being a 'legitimate interactional encounter' (2011: 1) and argue from this that the language produced in narrative interviews is just as rich and authentic for sociolinguistic analysis as language collected from other situations. Narrative interviews are thus seen as real interactional events in their own right – in narrative interviews such as those used in this research, participants are not simply reflecting on the language practices they use elsewhere, they are simultaneously engaged in language practices which contribute to the sociolinguistic construction of identity. The interview data in this paper therefore does not provide direct evidence of institutional school practices, but contains young people's accounts of how they have perceived and experienced those practices, how they are meaningful to them, and how they feel those experiences have contributed to the construction of their sexual identities.

### **APPRAISAL**

APPRAISAL is applied to explore how the language used in the interviews embodies the young people's feelings, attitudes and values towards sexual diversity, and issues of inclusion and exclusion, in schools. APPRAISAL consists of the systems of ATTITUDE, GRADUATION and ENGAGEMENT. ATTITUDE is the primary system through which people express emotions, judgements and values and is therefore of most interest in the present study. Martin (2000) identifies three broad subsystems of attitudinal positioning within the APPRAISAL system:

AFFECT, which refers to the linguistic resources deployed for construing the individual's emotional responses; JUDGEMENT – the linguistic resources deployed for construing moral or social evaluations of behaviour; and APPRECIATION – the linguistic resources deployed for construing the 'aesthetic' qualities of processes and natural phenomena. Some examples of each of the main sub-system of ATTITUDE are included below (appraising items are underlined).

*AFFECT:*

it's sort of discomforting when they're saying you have sex with a woman and that's the end of it (INSECURITY)

over the summer I'd been feeling really bad (UNHAPPINESS)

*JUDGEMENT:*

they don't really get that it's part of their job (-CAPACITY)

I didn't say anything to any of the teachers (-VERACITY)

*APPRECIATION:*

this kind of was a positive story (+VALUATION)

it's just a waste of effort and money and stuff and we're not actually learning what we need to learn (-VALUATION)

Each of the categories can have a positive or negative value. These values work on a sliding scale of GRADUATION, where evaluations may be intensified, played down and where comparisons may be drawn for amplifying effect. APPRAISAL categories are mainly distinguished semantically, and are realised primarily through the lexico-grammar of a text. Figure 1 provides an overview of the system of ATTITUDE that is used in the analysis.

[Figure 1]

Within the sub-systems of ATTITUDE, AFFECT is primarily concerned with the semantic resources deployed for construing emotions and feelings. Martin (2000) and Martin and White (2005) sub-divide AFFECT into four sub-systems to add delicacy to the framework. Table 1 shows the AFFECT sub-categories which work on a sliding scale of positive and negative dimensions.

[Table 1]

JUDGEMENT enables a speaker/writer to evaluate behaviour as conforming or not conforming to a particular set of social/cultural norms. This is the aspect of ATTITUDE that deals with social evaluations of behaviour and social practice, and it is these aspects of evaluative language that position the individual within a broader social and cultural system. JUDGEMENT is subdivided into two broad areas:

*Social esteem* – Assesses institutions, individuals and behaviours in terms of their: NORMALITY (how usual/unusual they are), CAPACITY (how capable they are) and TENACITY (how determined or resolute they are). Social esteem markers provide

evaluations of how behaviour conforms or does not conform to socially desirable standards.

*Social sanction* – Assesses institutions, individuals and behaviours VERACITY (how truthful they are) and PROPRIETY (how ethical they are) and provides evaluative markers which indicate whether a behaviour is seen as right or wrong.

(Based on Martin, 2000)

Figure 2 summarises the JUDGEMENT system.

[Figure 2]

APPRECIATION is the subsystem of attitude that expresses positive and negative evaluations of texts, processes and phenomena. AFFECT and JUDGEMENT are different in that they refer to the feelings and judgements of *people*. According to Martin (2000), the APPRECIATION subsystem is organised around three variables – REACTION (the degree to which the text/process/phenomena in question captures our attention and the emotional impact it has on us), COMPOSITION (our perceptions of proportionality and detail of the text/process/phenomena) and VALUATION (assessment of the social significance of the text/process/phenomena).

Martin argues that both JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION are, to a certain degree, ‘institutionalisations of feeling’ in that they both encode feelings. Martin proposes that affect is the basic system of ATTITUDE, which is then institutionalised into JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION so that ‘JUDGEMENT institutionalises feelings as proposals (about behaviour), whereas APPRECIATION institutionalises feelings as propositions (about things)’ (Martin 2000, 147). For example, in the extract below, Sex and Relationships Education classes as a phenomenon are negatively valued using the appraising items ‘a waste of effort and money and stuff’ and ‘we’re not actually learning what we need to learn’ which are labelled as APPRECIATION.

it’s [SRE] just a waste of effort and money and stuff and we’re not actually learning what we need to learn (- VALUATION)

But describing SRE lessons as being ‘a waste of effort...’ implies that I *feel* dissatisfied by the lessons and I experience negative emotion as a result of its negative value, therefore the evaluation contains an element of AFFECT at its most basic level which is then institutionalised into an evaluation of something as ‘a waste of effort and money’. For ease of reference, I have simply ‘double-coded’ the relevant examples cited in this paper, as the distinction between whether the APPRECIATION is institutionalised AFFECT or not is not of central importance in this analysis.

In the next section, I analyse extracts of interview data with young people using the queer linguistics-informed APPRAISAL analysis framework described above. The analysis focuses on how language in the data works as a form of social practice which can include and exclude sexual identities in classroom settings.

### **Analysis and discussion**

In the analysis of the interview data, each attitude marker was identified in the data and then all markers were counted up. Within each sub-system, the numbers of ATTITUDE markers in the whole data-set are presented and discussed in the sections below. It was also useful to separately examine the ATTITUDE markers used when the young people were referring to their

own feelings and judgements only. In the overall markers, attitudes expressed towards and ascribed to others (e.g. teachers) are also included. The quantitative findings are presented using bar charts in each case and then discussed in more detail with illustrative examples from the data. Whilst the quantitative findings are useful for giving an overview of the main feelings, judgements and valuations which predominate in the data, a qualitative examination of specific examples is revealing for seeing how these markers are being used in context and, importantly, what some of their key referents are and how they help to realise intersubjective processes of identification, and feelings and experiences of inclusion and exclusion based on sexuality.

### *AFFECT*

Figure 3 shows the distribution of the different types of AFFECT markers used by the young people to refer to their own feelings and emotions.

[Figure 3]

The most frequently-occurring AFFECT category is UNHAPPINESS followed by INSECURITY. In all four of the AFFECT sub-categories, negative feelings occur more frequently than the corresponding positive ones. This shows that the young people's evaluation of their own feelings throughout the interviews in relation to their gender and/or sexual identity and school is overwhelmingly negative. The young people attribute these negative affectual feelings to being excluded. The most frequently-occurring of all of the affect subcategories relating to feelings of exclusion is UNHAPPINESS. Some examples are included below (appraising items are underlined):

Ashley: I've always had sort of really terrible anxiety and depression and gradually feelings got worse and worse

Fay: I hated school I used to do whatever I wanted to get away from it was that bad

Josh: screaming on the inside like I'm not happy at this school I'm getting bullied

Martin: I had loads of problems at school [...] it was just awful for me

The young people also express INSECURITY relatively frequently when discussing their own feelings of being LGBT+ in school. Some examples include:

Amy: it probably didn't help that I wasn't comfortable with the label either

Ashley: there was a dress code and I had to abide by that and all of that made me feel very uncomfortable

Ashley: it would be just very confrontational in a way that sort of made me very anxious gave me sort of panic attacks

John: I got that all the time as well as the dirty looks that make you feel uncomfortable



Josh: it's just sort of discomfoting when they're saying when you have sex with a woman and that's the end of it

Abby: I remember this relationship I had with this one girl and like I was terrified she'd like use it if we'd fall out I don't know why it'd bother me but if we'd fall out she'd be like I'm going to tell everyone and stuff I would be absolutely terrified I would like have nightmares I wouldn't be able to sleep for weeks

Although not occurring as frequently as UNHAPPINESS and INSECURITY, DISSATISFACTION occurs much higher than the corresponding SATISFACTION sub-category (which occurs only once in the entire data-set). In the examples below, factors reported as causing feelings of dissatisfaction included, most notably, the strict gendering of the school environment (Ashley and Ashford), the school's perceived failure to challenge homophobic bullying (including derogatory use of the word 'gay') and the school's Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) provision (Todd). These appear to be key factors which are identified by the young people as having the potential to contribute to an inclusive school climate, but which they currently experience as overwhelmingly exclusionary:

Ashley: I hated the fact that it was all boys I hated the fact that they didn't really want me to use my chosen name they didn't want me to use my chosen pronouns

Ashford: that annoys me when the fire bell goes why do I need to line up with a bunch of girls

Todd: you get like sexual health but it's only on straight people which was so annoying I was like I don't need to know all about this straight stuff

Although the young people's evaluations of their own feelings were more negative than positive in all of the AFFECT sub-categories, it is still interesting to examine the instances where they expressed positive AFFECT in order to uncover what it is about school environments that can result in feeling of inclusion and associated positive AFFECT. Some examples of SECURITY are included below. The factor that the young people attribute to their SECURITY the most is having the support of individual teachers in the school.

Ashford: my teacher that I trust (SECURITY) the most that I went to about being trans he is one of the most progressive people in the entire school

Tad: luckily I had in the school which I was being bullied in a teacher who was gay and she worked with physical education and she made it more comfortable for me (SECURITY) to even be in that environment in fact she did something really remarkable as I was so uncomfortable with the boys in their changing room [...] I was removed from PE but I wanted to join in with something different I loved hanging around with girls then because that's when I felt more comfortable (SECURITY)

In fact, the importance of individual teachers in facilitating inclusion or exclusion is a recurring theme throughout young people's interviews. This supports previous work in the

related area of inclusive language policies, which finds that teachers are repeatedly seen to play a key role as the shapers of communicative norms (including those relating to inclusion) in classrooms (e.g. Creese, 2010). And specifically in relation to sexuality, Ellis and High (2004) found that discussions about school experiences from young LGB people in their study revealed the power of individual teachers in the pedagogic relationship and how this facilitated positive attitudes towards sexual diversity.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of AFFECT markers used when the young people refer to the feelings of other people who they mentioned in the interviews.

[Figure 4]

Figure 4 shows that INSECURITY is the most frequently-occurring AFFECT sub-category used by the young people when talking about the feelings of others, followed by DISINCLINATION and UNHAPPINESS. The total occurrences are lower overall though reflecting that the young people provided more evaluation of their own feelings than those of others in the interviews. However, the AFFECT attributed to other people is also overwhelmingly negative. In the DISINCLINATION, UNHAPPINESS and INSECURITY examples below, the young people attribute some of these feelings to other LGBT+ students.

Fay: there could be kids out there like 'I like this what does that make me' something like that if they're like struggling (UNHAPPINESS) to know who they are

Jack: there's seven people in that class that are thinking 'oh shit' (INSECURITY) right now

Dan: the only trans we have in the school which is quite I've talked to him and he was like saying he found it really hard (UNHAPPINESS) when he came cos he was the only one and he found it really hard (UNHAPPINESS)

INSECURITY examples, in particular, were also attributed to teachers feeling 'afraid' to openly address sexuality issues in their classes and in school generally:

Hannah: I think a lot of teachers are scared (INSECURITY) to bring it up

Josh: Miss was very shocked (INSECURITY) when I wrote about a gay teen suicide of Jamie Rodemeyer

Taken together, these typical examples of AFFECT suggest an overwhelmingly negative school climate for LGBT+ students. They report experiencing a pervasive lack of inclusion across various aspects of school with the only successful challenges coming from a handful of individual teachers.

### *JUDGEMENT*

Figure 5 shows the distribution of JUDGEMENT markers used by the young people when evaluating their own behaviour.

[Figure 5]

The JUDGEMENT sub-categories of CAPACITY and VERACITY occur the most frequently when the young people are making judgements about their own behaviour. The positive and negative VERACITY examples refer mainly to the young people disclosing or not disclosing (being 'out' or 'not out') their gender or sexuality identity, as in the following examples.

Amy: you don't wanna say that to anybody so it was keep it quiet it'll go away keep it quiet it'll go away (-VERACITY) kind of a feeling for me [...] if I just carry on and just keep doing my work and stop playing football and say 'yea I like that boy in the magazine' try and conform (-VERACITY) that it'll all be just go away

Ashley: I came out in secondary school I was very open (+VERACITY) about being trans I came out about 16 so both the school and pretty much all of the students knew about it (+VERACITY)

Jack: I didn't come out (-VERACITY) at school just because it was quite homophobic and well especially in a Catholic school when it's always depicted as being wrong in RE and stuff so I weren't willing to do it so I kept it to myself (-VERACITY)

Stephen: I kind of came out (+VERACITY) slowly to my teachers like I told my SEN worker then they had a meeting with all the staff

Abby: I'm still not out (-VERACITY) in that area because it's just not spoken about

In the positive CAPACITY occurrences in which the participants are evaluating their own behaviour, these tend to occur in relation to positive assessments of their own academic ability – they do not refer to anything explicitly to do with gender or sexuality. However, the negative CAPACITY occurrences often refer to the participants perceived lack of knowledge and awareness of gender and sexual diversity, in particular, anything outside of heteronormativity (traditional gender binaries and heterosexuality).

Fay: I didn't know (-CAPACITY) what a lesbian was I only thought there was gays and bis I didn't even know (-CAPACITY) there was a lesbian until I met that guy he told me about lesbians and transsexuals and hermaphrodites and loads of other areas but until I met him I didn't know (-CAPACITY)

Jack: when I was young I was thinking 'I'm never gonna be able to (-CAPACITY) come out' just couldn't (-CAPACITY) get on with my life just be pretending

In the NORMALITY and PROPRIETY sub-categories of JUDGEMENT, negative occurrences are higher than positive ones. Some examples of negative NORMALITY and negative PROPRIETY are included below. The negative NORMALITY examples most often occur when the participant is evaluating their own behaviour as different from the perceived 'norm' operating in the context of their school. The negative PROPRIETY examples below often occur when

participants reflect on what behaviours (of their own and others) were disallowed, condemned or excluded in the school context.

Fay: I've had comments about being a dyke being a weirdo being a freak (-NORMALITY)

John: I wasn't like out or anything like that but I still got like 'you poof' and all crap like that (-NORMALITY)

Josh: I've moved nearly every single time because of bullying just like being the odd one out never really fit in (-NORMALITY)

Abby: the girls didn't have to wear ties and they wore like the feminine v-tops which I hated but we weren't allowed to wear ties (-PROPRIETY) until the last year because it was you know in a grammar school it's like boys and girls there's no in between or anything

Nicky: it's almost like if you're the first one to come out and be gay or dress differently you're the one that's going to be made an example of (-PROPRIETY) [...] it's like being gay and kind of like dressing gay is on another level so you don't wanna kind of bring attention to yourself

These examples very clearly show the young people reflecting on their experiences of exclusion in school as a result of the norms of social sanction and social esteem operating within the context. As well as semiotic barriers to inclusion, such as school uniform regulations, the young people also identify some linguistic barriers such as receiving explicit homophobic remarks (John) and negative responses to coming out (Nicky). Importantly, silence is also a linguistic practice which is seen to routinely produce barriers to a positive learning experience for LGBT+ students. This supports earlier research (Francis and Msibi, 2011; Gray, 2013; Moita Lopes, 2006) which finds absences and silences to be significant discursive practices which function to reinforce and uphold heteronormativity in classroom settings. Drawing on insights from speech act theory, I have previously termed such practices as 'illocutionary silencing' (Sauntson, 2013) whereby heteronormativity in schools is upheld not by what is said, but by what is *not* said – through linguistic *absences* around sexual diversity. Illocutionary silencing is again reported by the young people and is experienced as an exclusionary discursive practice.

Figure 6 shows the distribution of JUDGEMENT markers used by the young people when evaluating the behaviour of other people who they discuss in the interviews.

[Figure 6]

Figure 6 reveals quite different trends in evaluating the behaviour of others from the most frequent ways that the young people evaluated their own behaviour. In making judgements about the behaviour of others, PROPRIETY emerges as the highest category (both positive and negative) suggesting that the young people are concerned with the moral and ethical behaviour of others, whereas they are more concerned with honesty and capability when evaluating their own behaviour. Because of its high frequency, it is worth examining who and what sort of behaviour is being judged as unethical and immoral. In the examples below, several instances of PROPRIETY are attributed to other young people in relation to their

positive or negative attitudes towards gender non-conforming and/or LGBT+ identities and relationships (both their own and those of others):

Ashley: no-one has really said anything awful to me about my gender or sexuality everyone's been kind of accepting (+PROPRIETY)

Carl: every time we had an assembly if there was an award ceremony and he had to go up and get a certificate or anything they'd all shout out hide your arse or watch your arse something like that (-PROPRIETY)

Fay: they like treated me with respect (+PROPRIETY) they didn't treat me like I was different

Hannah: we had a gay teacher once and she got mocked a lot for being gay (-PROPRIETY)

Nicky: there was an out lesbian couple and as soon as everyone found out about them people refused to get changed in the same changing room at PE and no teacher ever did anything about it (-PROPRIETY)

Other examples attribute positive or negative PROPRIETY to particular teachers in the young people's schools.

Fay: some of the teachers were really horrible to me (-PROPRIETY) because I was bi

Ashford: the entire class is just really transphobic (-PROPRIETY) and it's just not a very nice atmosphere and the teachers almost laugh along with it (-PROPRIETY)

In a notable number of instances, the participants specifically identify English teachers, and the subject of English, as facilitating inclusion around sexuality in their lessons.

Stephen: my English teacher's like she's really supportive of it and she's always on about treating people equally no matter what the sexuality or what the sexual identity is (+PROPRIETY)

Amy: I think English is perhaps the best subject to introduce it through it's a very what can I say creative subject you can't get English right or wrong because it's all about a matter of opinion and your perception a book can mean something to me and mean something completely different to you and I think it's a good way of maybe celebrating differences so I think it'd be a perfect subject to really egg on the issue of homophobia and sexuality making it just an everyday thing that it's not it doesn't have to be a 'right now we're gonna talk about gay issues' you know it can just be a part of everyday conversation

Ashley: the first person I came out to at school was a teacher and was the head of the English department [...] he was

completely accepting of it (+PROPRIETY) I sort of came to him in a distraught mess and he was just great (+PROPRIETY)

In the examples above, the participants attribute the appropriacy of English for practices of inclusion around sexuality to the subject's tendency to encourage debate and discussion around a range of topics, and the use of literature within the teaching which can facilitate identity work around fictional characters. This provides a 'safe distance' through which students can develop empathy and explore diversity without having to reveal personal information. And English teachers are, presumably, seen as being open to such discussions and skilled at handling diversity as it emerges through the texts which form large part of the teaching materials.

Despite the perceived contributions of English to developing positive inclusive learning experiences, negative PROPRIETY also occurs when evaluating the wider school's purportedly negative attitude towards LGBT+ issues when compared to their positive attitudes towards race and ethnicity.

Ashford: it is dealt with a lot more seriously than homophobia [...] it's like Black History month is celebrated in schools and anything to do with sexism and breaking down barriers and sexism is celebrated in schools all different religions celebrated in schools and then Pride month is completely ignored (-PROPRIETY)

Here, Ashford perceives an inconsistent approach to different domains of inclusion and exclusion. Ashford believes there to be inclusion around race and ethnicity which is achieved through visibility, but exclusion around sexuality through the use of silence as a discursive practice.

Many of the negative (and some positive) CAPACITY examples used by the young people usually involved judging the behaviour and perceived capabilities of teachers. These examples reflect the participants' perceptions that many teachers are unable to know how to address issues of gender and sexual diversity in schools. So students express concern over a perceived lack of knowledge and ability for adequately meeting the needs of a sexually diverse student population in their schools. The negative CAPACITY examples often function to construe teachers as less knowledgeable and therefore 'less authentic', as in some of the examples below.

Ashford: they were talking about friends and relationships and all that in French and in his paragraph he put down boyfriend and he keeps doing it to see how many times it's corrected to girlfriend and right now it's been seven times he's been corrected from boyfriend to girlfriend in French

Jason: I actually think it's been quite poorly handled (-CAPACITY) in my experience they never really sit you down and talk to you about it they sort of just push it aside and sweep it under the mat (-CAPACITY)

Ruby: schools just like it's not really their problem it's like something personal that they have to deal with and they don't really get that it's part of their job (-CAPACITY) it's like literally your job

Stephen: teachers have to be better educated (-CAPACITY)

Nicky: I just go back to they need to be educated better (-CAPACITY)

Ashford specifically talks about heteronormative assumptions being reinforced through the teaching of French to the point where here gay friend's sexual identity is reported as being erased by the teacher. In other examples (see Ruby and Dan below), some of the young people cite instances where teachers have gone so far as to present incorrect information about the legal status of same-sex relationships. Ashford reports being reprimanded for including asexuality as an identity category in a piece of school work.

Ruby: at my school they're currently discouraging gays and stuff [...] they're just like we don't like people being gay and we don't encourage people being gay

Dan: when we did about marriage it has to be heterosexual I asked the teacher and she said we can't do anything like LGBT and marriage because it's illegal to do it in the church and school

Ashford: we had to do an anti-homophobia poster and on mine I referenced asexuality on it and my teacher told me off for it

The VERACITY examples are mostly negative and predominantly refer to students' perceived pretence on the part of teachers/the school that identities beyond heterosexuality and binary cisgender exist, as in the following examples:

Alex: didn't even mention it (-VERACITY) anything like that

John: when I was at school it was never spoke about (-VERACITY)

Jason: that's all just like shoved under the carpet and ignored (-VERACITY)

Todd: they were silent on it they didn't really talk about it (-VERACITY)

The VERACITY markers construe a denial of what the students themselves perceive to be the 'truth' i.e. that gender and sexuality are diverse, non-binary and unstable. Therefore, the VERACITY markers work to construct gender and sexual diversity in the schools as a kind of 'untruthful absence'. Again, we see silence as a linguistic practice functioning to construe feelings of exclusion in these typical examples. There is an implied learner homogeneity as heterosexual and cisgendered. The routine coding of students as unquestionably heterosexual or as having no sexual identity in English language classrooms has long been observed (e.g. Britzman, 1997) and the examples above show that this practice continues to pervade classrooms in UK schools with the effect of making LGBT+ students feel excluded and experiencing school as overwhelmingly negative.

#### *APPRECIATION*

Figure 7 shows the distribution of positive and negative markers of the three main sub-categories of APPRECIATION.

[Figure 7]

Figure 7 shows that VALUATION is by far the most frequently-occurring sub-category of APPRECIATION. Given that VALUATION is the APPRECIATION sub-category that occurs the most in the data, it is worth examining what particular things, entities and processes in the school environment that the young people are actually evaluating in these occurrences. Table 2 provides a summary of the key entities which are valued positively and negatively and which, therefore, may allude to factors within the school environment which the young people consider to be facilitators of inclusion (or barriers to inclusion in the case of negative valuation).

[Table 2]

Out of the frequently occurring appraised items, school environment and school policies are often ascribed negative value in relation to gender and sexual diversity. The examples below show how the negative valuations of school environment and policies often materialised as a perceived lack of support and inaction. In particular, the students perceived their schools' anti-bullying policies as being largely ineffective and exclusionary due to them not being acted on.

Alex: I don't think there was any positive (-VALUATION) in my school it's just nothing it was mostly negative (-VALUATION)

Hannah: I just don't think there was any support at all (-VALUATION) in our school

Martin: overall I think it [school bullying policy] was ineffective (-VALUATION)

The subject of English (and, to a lesser degree, the Arts-based subject of Drama, Music and Art) stood out as being positively valued by many of the young people.

Amy: I think English is perhaps the best subject (+VALUATION) to introduce it through [...] it's a good way of maybe celebrating differences so I think it'd be a perfect subject (+VALUATION)

Carl: when I done Drama that was okay that was good (+VALUATION) I had a nice teacher

Whilst Amy attributes the positive value of English to the nature of the subject itself (as being concerned with exploring 'difference' and encouraging discussion of topics), Carl attributes the positive value of Drama to the Drama teacher, rather than to the subject itself. Valuations of individual teachers occur frequently throughout the data, although some teachers are valued positively whilst others are ascribed negative value. Because teachers are 'people', the APPRECIATION markers are often double-coded with JUDGEMENT as evaluations of teachers' behaviour. The frequent evaluations of individual teachers show that they play a significant part in the school lives and experiences of the young people. Again, a key finding is that the behaviour of individual teachers is seen as being able to 'make or break' the young people's experiences of inclusion or exclusion around sexual diversity in particular school subjects.

Amongst processes and phenomena that were frequently ascribed negative value, binary constructions of gender in schools were commented on by a number of the young people.



Ashford: another thing that schools need to change is segregating or like putting people in different things because of their gender (-VALUATION) [...] girls' changing room right next to it they're on completely different sides of the school and even our PE lessons are quite often segregated which is ridiculous (-VALUATION)

Examples such as those above reveal how the young people expressed an overwhelmingly critical attitude towards what they perceived to be gender 'segregation' along the lines of binary sex. Therefore, the students themselves experienced a relationship between gender and sexual diversity – if gender was restricted, then that also made sexuality restricted and heavily policed in the school context. This process was perceived as forming a significant barrier to inclusion.

In the valuation sub-category of APPRECIATION, there were many occurrences of irrealis positive VALUATION in which the young people ascribed positive value to imagined or hypothetical phenomena and processes (*irrealis* is a term used in APPRAISAL analysis to indicate that the speaker is referring to something hypothetical rather than actual instances). These irrealis examples are a useful indication of what young LGBT+ people themselves believe would help to make schools more inclusive and accepting of gender and sexuality diversity. High up in the category of irrealis positive VALUATION are the inclusion of explicit discussions and conversations about gender and sexuality identity in school:

Ashley: I think that it would be good (irrealis +VALUATION) to implement discussion of sexuality and gender identity in any kind of conversation about sexual health

Other students also value such discussions but not as explicit topics. Instead they place positive value on the hypothetical scenarios of gender and sexuality issues becoming a normal part of everyday conversations in school spaces:

Hannah: when you do work around characters individually that would be a part of it I think that would just raise awareness or it would just make it more everyday or more kind of normal (irrealis +VALUATION)

Nicky: make it visible and available rather than being like this is what goes on in the world cause people that aren't sure of their sexuality we got the whole straight thing rammed down our necks so it wouldn't necessarily be nice for us to be like right everyone's gay now here you go this is gay education and stuff like that but something that's just ready and available for them if they do want to explore (irrealis +VALUATION)

In sum, findings from the queer linguistics-informed APPRAISAL analysis discussed above reveal that the young people in the study report experiencing high levels of UNHAPPINESS and INSECURITY which they relate directly to the experience of identifying as LGBT+ in school. Within the JUDGEMENT attitudinal sub-system, teachers were often attributed negative CAPACITY as a way of evaluating their perceived in/abilities for dealing with issues around sexual diversity. The negative CAPACITY markers often co-occur with UNHAPPINESS and INSECURITY suggesting that a lack of capacity on the part of teachers is felt to result in

negative AFFECT for the young people themselves. Negative PROPRIETY also occurs relatively frequently, again with the young people evaluating the moral behaviour of individual teachers as a key part of their experience. Given the amount of evaluative language that is focused around teachers, the professional role of teacher is clearly a highly significant and impactful one for young people identifying as LGBT+. Teachers were discussed using evaluative language much more than peers and family members, for example, and were therefore afforded a high priority in terms of affecting young people's feelings and own behaviours in schools.

The patterns of APPRECIATION show there is much positive VALUATION of the subject of English and of specific teachers involved in working with the young people participants. Conversely, there were high levels of negative VALUATION attributed to the subject of SRE, the schools' handling of homophobic bullying, and specific teachers that the young people had contact with in school. Given that some individual teachers were ascribed positive value, this again suggests that the attitudes and behaviours of individual teachers can make a significant difference to the school experiences of LGBT+-identified young people. The markers of unrealistic positive VALUATION provide potentially useful information about what the young LGBT+ people would find helpful for increasing their levels of positive AFFECT in the school environment, namely, the inclusion of explicit discussions and conversations about gender and sexuality identity in school.

### **Concluding remarks**

This paper has offered linguistic insights for inclusive education across subjects. In particular, I have shown how APPRAISAL can be used within a queer linguistics approach as a framework for analysing linguistic markers of evaluation as they occur in relation to issues of sexuality and inclusion. Examples have shown how APPRAISAL can be used to explore how language embodies the participants' feelings, attitudes and values towards sexuality-based inclusion and/or exclusion.

A key finding is that the LGBT+-identified young people in the study experience more exclusion than inclusion. Teachers are seen as being at the heart of inclusive pedagogy around sexuality and are perceived by the young people to have the capacity to create inclusive or exclusionary learning environments in relation to sexual diversity. This supports previous work which has found individual teachers to play a key role in promoting inclusion in education. As Motschenbacher (2016: 180) summarises:

Teachers thus play an important role as guardians of inclusive language policies, as shapers of communicative norms in the classroom community and as “agents of change” more generally. (Motschenbacher, 2016: 180)

This perhaps highlights a continuing need for issues of language, sexuality and inclusion to form an integral part of teachers' pre-service and in-service training.

Another key finding is that the subject of English is experienced by the young people as having greater potential for inclusion than other subject areas (along with arts-based subjects such as Drama, Music and Art). In the context of language education, Motschenbacher also observes that ‘the teaching of English seems to be highly compatible with inclusive purposes’ (2016: 180). Arguably, the subject of English in UK schools, and English language teaching in the context of EFL, are closely related so research from both domains can be mutually informative. Examining linguistic practices of inclusion and exclusion in the subject of English broadly can offer useful insights into promoting inclusion around sexuality in English language education, and vice versa. Nelson (2009), for example, highlights a need to routinely conceptualize English language classrooms as ‘multisexual’

and presents data to show that doing so can enhance the classroom and learning experience for all learners.

Finally, Motschenbacher argues that 'Full inclusion can only be reached when the included identities are positively represented in classroom materials and talk' (2016: 167). The findings presented in this paper support this argument and, through the use of APPRAISAL analysis, draw attention to the exclusionary practice of discursive silencing of non-heteronormative identities in school, and the detrimental effects of such practices on LGBT+ students. A potential implication is that inclusion policies need to contain focus on language issues, and those language issues need to consider linguistic silence as well as linguistic presence.

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