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REVIEW

Education without a shared language: dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in Norwegian introductory classes for newly arrived minority language students

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ABSTRACT

Based upon fieldwork in two upper secondary schools in Norway, this article offers an analysis of inclusion and exclusion processes for newly arrived minority language students. Minority language students are defined by policy as students who have a different mother tongue than the Norwegian and Sami languages, and students who are newly arrived in Norway are considered especially at risk for marginalisation. This article explores processes of inclusion and exclusion in two schools with segregated classes for this group, called introductory classes. The analytical framework is Niklas Luhmann's theory of autopoietic social systems, where inclusion is defined as the requirements for participation set by a system, and exclusion accordingly as being unable to meet these requirements. The article displays different constellations of inclusions and exclusions for newly arrived students in the educational system: in school organisations, organisation-based interactions and informal networks of students. It will be showed that introductory classes erect several barriers towards newly arrived students' inclusion, especially towards those students who are placed at the basic level of the schools' hierarchy of performances. As a consequence of multiple educational exclusions, informal networks emerge as alternative socialities that include and exclude students on the basis of mother tongue.

Introduction

Inclusion of immigrant students has become a global policy priority during the recent decade. According to the OECD (2010), immigrant students have generally more restricted access to quality education, leave school earlier and have lower academic achievements. In Norway, immigrant students are often categorised as 'minority language pupils'[1] in educational policy, defined as having a mother tongue other than Norwegian or Sami. This group has become a frequent addressee for inclusive policy measures (Hilt 2015).

Recently, minority language students who are newly arrived in Norway have received increased political attention. In addition to poor Norwegian language skills, they are perceived as lacking sufficient basic education. Thus, the policy emphasises that newly arrived students are especially at risk for a poor learning outcome, dropout from school and marginalisation in general (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2010). In Norway, education for newly arrived students is

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often organised in more or less segregated classes called introductory classes.[2] The purpose of this article is to analyse the processes of inclusion and exclusion for newly arrived minority language students in schools where these students attend introductory classes. The analysis is based on material from fieldwork (2013–2014) in two Norwegian schools at the upper secondary level with such classes.

If we understand inclusive education as the vision that all students should be learning together as a community in regular classrooms of their neighbourhood schools (Loreman 2007), then introductory classes are obviously not in agreement with the ideal of inclusive education. However, as Erten and Savage (2012) point out, research has to look beyond a physical definition of inclusion. Hence, this article aims at exploring processes of inclusion and exclusion in schools with introductory classes through a *multi-systemic* approach, in accordance with the theoretical framework of Niklas Luhmann's (1927–1998) systems theory.

In systems theory, inclusion is identified with being addressed by a system. When an individual is addressed by a system, he/she becomes a relevant person for the system, for example, as a student in the educational system. As systems have different requirements for inclusion, those who do not meet the requirements are excluded (Luhmann 2002). This article will explore the characteristics of inclusion and exclusion in the educational system for newly arrived students: in school organisations, in classroom interactions, as well as in informal networks of students. It will become apparent how inclusions and exclusions in these systems are independent, yet related. A form analysis of inclusion (Luhmann 1997a; Stichweh 2009; Jønhill 2012b; Hilt 2015) will show how certain groups of newly arrived students have to cross several borders in order to be included in the mainstream system; thus they are at particular risk for domino effects of exclusions.

Introductory classes can be characterised as involving an education without a shared language, which has considerable consequences for inclusion and exclusion. An analysis of communication media (Luhmann 1995; Tække and Paulsen 2010) will show how especially the mediation and regulation of language reinforce processes of inclusion and exclusion. As a consequence of multiple educational exclusions, network systems emerge that include and exclude students on the basis of mother tongue. The article will show how these network systems constitute a competitive social structure in the schools, and offer inclusion for the excluded.

The political context

Norwegian schools are regulated by the principle of the unitary school: children and young people are to be included in the same school, whatever their capabilities and heritage (Nilsen 2010). Equality and inclusiveness are central values for Norwegian educational policies (Arnesen, Mietola, and Lahelma 2007), and exceptions to the principle of the unitary school are strictly regulated by the Education Act. From the first grade in elementary up to and including the third grade of upper secondary, education is free of charge and based on right. Even so, one could argue that educational exclusions are far from being eradicated. Educational exclusions do not come in the form of non-access, but as internal differentiations within the educational system.

Despite controversies, the organisation of newly arrived students in introductory classes was accepted as an exception to the principle of the unitary school by an addendum to the Norwegian Education Act (1998) in 2012. The organisation in introductory classes is connected to minority language students' right to language training. This right persists until the students' skills in Norwegian are sufficient to benefit from mainstream education (Norwegian Education Act 1998, § 3.12). The right is effectuated at county level, but the law is not specific about how to organise language training. However, an Official Norwegian Report 'Diversity and Coping' (2010) suggests that introductory classes are the best way to organise education for this group, and after the judicial legitimation, a national guide for introductory classes was published by the Directorate of Education (2013).

Due to the principle of a unitary school, the use of segregating structures such as classroom division, even though they are preliminary, remains very controversial. Nevertheless, with increased

immigration to Norway, especially work immigration from European Economic Community countries, the need for introductory classes at the upper secondary level has increased substantially. Even though newly arrived students are being segregated from the mainstream, the policy argues that the remedial measures offered to them will increase their ability to be included in the longer run (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2010).

Theoretical framework

The concept of inclusion

Inclusion and education for all have been pronounced as political goals in international politics, both in the OECD (2003) and in UNESCO, with the Salamanca Statement (1994) as a point of departure. Inclusive education can be seen as the key strategy of the United Nations Education for All movement (Erten and Savage 2012). The political ambition is to develop a system of education that is responsive to the diversity of learners, creates equal opportunities and minimises exclusions (UNESCO 2000).

Miles and Singal (2010) argue that since Salamanca, inclusive education has taken on manifold meanings across the world. As a consequence, there is also a lack of consensus on how to define inclusion within research (Allan and Slee 2008). According to Nind et al. (2004), one of the greatest methodological challenges in the field of inclusive education is how to look for and recognise inclusion in schools. As Slee (2004) emphasises, however, theory-making is not necessarily about deciding on a final definition of inclusion, but on providing analytical tools to recognise exclusions.

Yet, as Hansen (2012) points out, although there seem to be agreement that inclusion has a limit in pedagogical practices, inclusion is theoretically often formulated as a vision that is, at least in principle, limitless. A notion of inclusion as limitless may make it difficult to examine phenomena worth investigating at the borders or margins of inclusion – and thus to look for and recognise exclusions in pedagogical practices (Hansen 2012). Crucially, without a meaningful notion of exclusion, inclusion runs the risk of becoming merely a buzzword.

In this article, inclusion and exclusion are seen as processes that are separated by a distinction. Thus, in order to proceed from exclusion to inclusion, and vice versa, a person has to cross a boundary (Jønhill 2012a). The article will explore the *limits to inclusion* for newly arrived minority language students in two school organisations in Norway. This analysis will contribute to an understanding of how educational practices not only include, but also exclude students, even though the aim is inclusion. Yet although there are limits to inclusion, these limits are not necessarily generalisable. As different systems have different requirements for inclusion, these processes will be analysed in a multi-systemic approach. Contrary to a binary approach, where a student is seen as either fully included or excluded, a multi-systemic analysis will give a more nuanced account of inclusion as systemic requirements in education, and thus of the excluding effects of these requirements.

Systems theory as analytical framework

In the analysis of the fieldwork material, systems theory was used as an analytical framework. Luhmann (2002) defines inclusion as being addressed by a system. To be addressed is to become a person for the system at issue, and every system has its requirements for this 'personification' (Hilt 2015). In terms of logic of forms (Luhmann 1997a; Jønhill 2012b; Hilt 2015), inclusion can be visualised as shown in Figure 1.

Even though inclusion as a meaningful social form consists of inclusion and exclusion (as illustrated), inclusion is the marked side of the distinction. Inclusion is identified with the conditions for participation set by a system. Exclusion is what remains unmarked when conditions are set; hence it is a side effect or 'logical shadow' of inclusion. The educational system can, for example, focus on certain academic skills as requirements for participation, while other competencies or skills are not valued or made relevant by the system. What is not relevant for the system, is by this
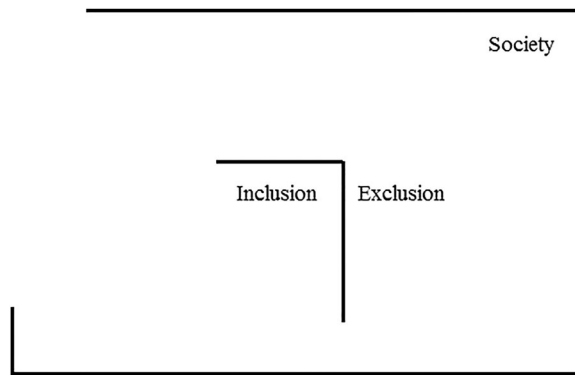
Figure 1. Inclusion is a two-sided form: inclusion on one side and exclusion on the other side, made distinct by a mark. Everything social is always in society, and the final frame of an inclusive operation is therefore always society.

understanding what is *excluded*. As not everyone meets the requirements of the system, inclusions are ambiguous and always accompanied by exclusions (Luhmann 2002; Venneslan 2013).

Luhmann (1995) understands social systems as autopoietic (self-producing) systems of communication. Because systems have different requirements, the meaning of inclusions and exclusions are not generalisable, and should as Jønhill (2012a) points out, be studied in context. In this article inclusion and exclusion will be operationalised differently depending on the systems in play, and these system types will now be presented.

The educational system is a global system with the function of career selection and making human beings into persons (Luhmann 2006). Education is therefore essential for inclusion in other systems as well, for instance the economy. The functional system of education is open and including with generalised addressees such as student- and teacher-roles (Luhmann and Schorr 2000). However, although we are all welcomed to the system, those who do not meet the requirements (Luhmann 1997b) associated with these roles are excluded. Functional systems are thus generally including, but are also equipped with an ability to exclude through organisations (Luhmann 2000).

The educational system is dependent on school organisations to make decisions about rules, content, time-schedules and so forth (Luhmann 2006). Organisations are first and foremost excluding, as only those who are members are included (Luhmann 2000). You may, for example, be excluded from a school organisation if you are not part of the school district. However, school organisations can also exclude *internally*. As organisations reproduce themselves as communication systems through decision-making-processes, decisions can duplicate or re-enter the distinction between the inside (inclusion) and the outside (exclusion), resulting in internal differentiation (Luhmann 1997a).

For example, a school organisation can categorise students differently and make decisions about differentiation in subsystems (e.g. classes) based on these categories. Classes can be characterised as interaction systems based on co-presence of persons (Luhmann 1995). In organisation-based interaction systems such as classes, requirements for inclusion and exclusion are decided by the school. The requirements, and the relations between these subsystems, are contingent: the classes can, for instance, be differentiated as *segmentary* (equal) or *stratificatory* (hierarchical) subsystems (Luhmann 1997a). Consequently, in order to grasp inclusion and exclusion in subsystems at the level of interactions (classes), one has to understand the criteria for differentiation.

While organisation-based interactions are based on formal requirements decided by the school, other interactions are informal and may have other criteria for inclusion. According to Luhmann (2000), networks can emerge that are dependent on positions in organisations, for example, among students. Access is not based on formal requirements associated with organisational positions, but rather on personal knowledge and trust (Luhmann 2002). The criteria for inclusion are thus decided by the network itself, and these decisions can be renewed from moment to moment.

While some networks are unstable and emerge and disappear from moment to moment, others are stable and obtain the characteristics of systems with independent criteria for inclusion and clear-cut distinctions towards their environment (Luhmann 2000).

When analysing the fieldwork material, these systems-theoretical distinctions were applied *abductively*. This can be characterised as an inferential process from some initial observations to a theoretical hypothesis which can explain them (Peirce 1955). The presented matrix of systems was not taken for granted, but served as an analytical framework to get behind the case circumstances. To understand the dynamics between the systems at issue, however, the final part of the analysis focused on communication media.

When Luhmann (1995) explains how social systems emerge, he takes the situation of *double contingency* as a starting point: how can we understand each other and relate to one another, given that our bodies and minds are separated? After all, understanding, and the conduct that results from it, is what makes an utterance part of a social structure. The answer to this question is first and foremost *communication media* (Luhmann 1995). Language is for instance the medium that increases the possibility of understanding. Dissemination media, such as writing and emails, solve the problem of reachability and symbolically generalised communication media, such as power, increase the possibility of acceptance and communicative success (Luhmann 1995).

The analysis will not give a complete picture of communication media, but will account for those relevant for the purpose of this article: language, power, and social and digital media. These communication media are available for the systems at issue, but the selection of them is contingent. For example, although the relationships between teachers and students are always based on power, *which* forms of power are realised in an educational situation vary (Tække and Paulsen 2010). This contingency accounts for both sides of a relation (Luhmann 2003), in this case, both teachers and students. Teachers can create forms of education through media of language and power and incite students to accept these forms. Students may or may not accept these educational forms, and may on their side produce other social forms based on the same media.

Methods

Data collection

This article builds on qualitative material from ethnographic fieldwork (Silverman 2011) in two upper secondary schools in Norway with introductory classes. The schools were visited regularly for seven months. One of the schools, in this article called 'Northside', is a university-preparatory school that provides general studies for this purpose. The other school, called 'Southside', provides vocational courses that do not in themselves qualify for university entrance, but give a certificate for completed apprenticeship.

Both schools differentiated newly arrived students according to performance: Southside in advanced, intermediate and basic, and Northside in basic and advanced. The students were tested in English, mathematics and Norwegian, and placed accordingly in classes that varied in each subject, with usually 10–15 students in each. The students had different reasons for immigrating, and had been living in Norway from a few days up to two years. The classes were multilingual, but students who spoke Arabic, Tigrinja and Polish were often in the majority. Twelve students and nine teachers participated in an interview study.

Instruments/tools

In accordance with Eberle and Maeder (2011), multiple methods of data gathering were applied, although the central data collection strategies were interviews and classroom observations (Kvale 1996). I chose to 'sit in' in the classes for an extended period and made careful records of what the teachers and students said and how they interacted (Hatch 2002). I observed classes in each

subject at different levels: 48 school hours in total. I conducted field conversations with teachers, leaders, advisors and students and also observed recesses, a parents' meeting and a teachers' meeting. Descriptive protocols made records of these events.

After an extended period of observations, I conducted an interview study. The interviews were semi-structured with separate interview guides for teachers and students (Kvale 1996).[3] The guides indicated topics and questions and had two purposes: to verify the findings in the observation study and gain new information about processes of inclusion and exclusion. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed afterwards. The project has been approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Service. All of the informants for the interview study signed an informed consent.

Participants

I recruited informants for the interview study with teachers directly when observing classes. All of the nine teachers that participated taught introductory classes to a substantial degree. I selected 12 teachers, 6 teachers at each of the school. Two of the teachers at Northside did not want to participate, and one of the teachers at this school never answered my request. Nine teachers accepted the request. All except one had university degrees at graduate level, and they taught English (1), Norwegian and social science (5) and mathematics and science (3).

The 12 students were recruited indirectly through the teachers, but were purposively selected. As the students were so academically, linguistic and culturally diverse, the interviewees were selected in accordance with this manifold. I selected 12 students, 6 from each school, with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Six of them were boys and six girls. At Northside, three from the basic level and three from the advanced level participated. At Southside, two students from each level (basic, intermediate and advanced) were selected. They came from Somalia (1), Ecuador (1), Philippines (1), Eritrea (2), Ethiopia (1), Iraq (1), Afghanistan (1), Poland (1), Romania (1) and Lithuania (2). All of the students accepted the request and participated in the study.

Data analysis

When the fieldwork ended, I read through the entire material with the purpose of identifying inclusion and exclusion processes. I operationalised inclusion as *requirements* set by a system, and exclusion as the side effects of these requirements. This made it possible to analyse in depth the dynamics of participation in *multiple* social arenas at the two schools. In order to make the material more manageable, and to reduce it into excerpts that were of relevance for the sub-questions (see 'Presentation of data analysis and findings'), I chose to perform a concept-driven coding (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 202) of the entire material.[4] For this purpose, I used the qualitative analysis program *Nvivo* that makes it possible to organise and analyse unstructured data. In the next section, I will present the analytical framework with relevant concepts.

Presentation of data analysis and findings

The analytical procedure can be reconstructed as four analytical phases with independent sub-questions. The following sections will mirror these four phases and present the findings from the analysis of fieldwork material according to four sub-questions.

Including exclusion: the distinction between newly arrived and mainstream students

This first section addresses the first sub-question: What characterises the processes of inclusion and exclusion for newly arrived minority language students in the school organisations? The section focuses on the decisions in the school organisations that distinguish newly arrived students from mainstream students and thus the legitimation of introductory classes as an organisational principle.

Introductory classes are first and foremost an organisational principle that implements the right to language training that is granted to minority language students by the Norwegian Education Act (1998). From the outset it is therefore lack of skills in Norwegian that excludes these students from mainstream education and includes them in introductory classes. However, when newly arrived students enter Northside and Southside, they are categorised in a more comprehensive manner by decisions in the school organisations. Newly arrived students were, for example, not just offered language training, but educated in several subjects. At both schools they had English, Norwegian, physical education and mathematics, and at Southside they additionally had science and social science. Thus, the students' past education in these subjects was seen as insufficient.[5] The teachers expressed frustration about some of the students' educational background, here the mathematics teacher 'Birte' at Southside:

> What do you do? What do you do with students that … some of them, right? They come to Norway, and they have not attended school. […] And then they are here, and I am supposed to teach them the entire mathematics, mathematics that other students have learnt for ten years in elementary school. […] It is absurd, and there are language problems as well.

The 'other students' this teacher is referring to, as opposed to the minority students, are obviously the mainstream students. Newly arrived students are placed in segregated classes in order to catch up, not just due to lack of language skills, but also a lack of sufficient learning strategies and subject content knowledge.

However, insufficient educational background was not the only issue. The teachers also expressed concern about lack of cultural references among the students, here explained by the English-teacher 'Beate' at Northside:

> They have no references, you know, no matter what you are talking about in English class that is not about grammar and things […], if it is Bruce Springsteen or Queen Elizabeth, you know, history, it is in a way … completely empty, there is nothing there, science fiction, it is just … I was trying to explain what a science fiction movie is […] And they are so polite, so they just sit there and nod and smile, but I could see that they did not make sense of it.

As we can see from the quote, newly arrived students are generally understood to lack the necessary cultural references. If they do not understand these references, they are 'empty', 'there is nothing there', indicating that their cultural references from past experiences are of no use in the Norwegian system. As the students had a different cultural repertoire than mainstream students, some teachers expressed that they were in need of a different kind of education. 'Terje' at Northside explains this in a teacher meeting:

> You know, what kind of educational background do they have? They have a completely different starting point. Some of them speak Norwegian, but come from a totally different culture and are in need of a completely different pedagogy.

Due to this, many teachers saw it as pivotal to teach the students the conduct necessary to function in the Norwegian system. Thus, introductory classes were not only seen as language training and academic catch-up, but a necessary approach to resocialise these students into the Norwegian student role, to learn the conduct, values and references necessary to function in the mainstream system. The Norwegian teacher Turid explains this as follows: 'They are just like Norwegian students, but they do not know what it means to be a student'. The newly arrived students needed to learn the expectations in the Norwegian society and school system.

The system of education is based on grade-level progression where one level leads to another and where the students at one level at least to some degree can be expected to know and manage the same. Minority language students challenge this system, as their educational background is seen as inadequate to achieve grade-level benchmarks. Their lack of cultural references and language skills makes it difficult to communicate. Thus we have reached a limit to inclusion: Newly arrived students do not meet the requirements in the mainstream system. However, they are not being excluded in the

form of non-access. Rather they are being excluded in the more acceptable form of inclusion (Stichweh 2009). Newly arrived minority students are being excluded from the mainstream, but included in introductory classes.

This *including exclusion* (Stichweh 2009) had comprehensive consequences for the education offered to newly arrived students. With few national guidelines, the instructions for introductory classes were primarily decided by the school organisations. The schools' understanding of newly arrived students as being in need of resocialisation and remedial education constituted a state of necessity giving legitimacy to a number of exceptions from educational principles. At both schools, introductory classes were called 'year zero', and did not count as a year of education in the mainstream system. They were exempted from the national curriculum, but not given an alternative.[6] The curriculum was not standardised on the national or regional level in any of the subjects, except in 'Norwegian as a second language'. Consequently, the students could not be evaluated by grades and did not receive any certificate of completion. Many teachers complained about the lack of available educational material and books, and in some subjects they were forced to make their own material for each class. The teachers expressed frustration about their lack of competency and status.

Decisions about differentiation were also exceptions from the principles that regulate the mainstream system. The students in introductory classes were tested at the beginning of the year and placed in different classes according to their test results. Students that lacked sufficient progress throughout the year were advised to retain in introductory class one more year. Neither retention nor differentiation on the basis of performance is being practised, or even allowed, in the mainstream system in Norway. As expressed by the teacher 'Guro' at Northside: 'The usual rules suddenly do not apply for this group'.

A symbolic distinction between students in mainstream and introductory classes manifests itself through exceptions from principles and values held high in the mainstream. As none of the schools had established permanent structures where newly arrived students could interact with the rest of the school, the distinction between mainstream and newly arrived students remained clear-cut. In both of the schools, newly arrived students were placed in different buildings and on different floors than the first graders of upper secondary. As the teacher 'Ingunn' explains:

> Yes they are [only interacting with each other]. It varies a bit from year to year, but … uhm … we do have this floor […] All their classrooms are on the same floor. […] And to a large extent they stay there when they are at school.

Hence, newly arrived students were also physically excluded in the school buildings, making the *including exclusion* visible in the architecture at both schools. The teachers expressed a high degree of ambivalence about these exceptions, but understood them as a necessary consequence of the pronounced differences among newly arrived students. The differences were seen as too great to follow the ordinary guidelines for education, making visible a borderline fringe in education, a point of imbalance between the educational logic and the conceived educational reality of these students (Agamben 2005). Because the organisational principles did not follow the usual guidelines, the reasons and justifications for the exceptions were attributed to the students.

From the perspective of systems theory, however, it is the requirements of the system that brings about exclusions (Luhmann 2002). Despite good intentions, the organisation of newly arrived students in segregated classes is an exclusion incorporated as inclusion, making visible a limit to inclusion in the mainstream system. The exceptions are justified by the fact that newly arrived students are considered different from the mainstream students, lacking the necessary language and academic skills, as well as cultural understanding of the Norwegian school system and society. The students are not only to be educated, they are to be resocialised.

Newly arrived students are being included as members of the school organisation in the role of students. However, they are being internally excluded, a social form called *including exclusion* (Stichweh 2009). The school organisation re-enters the distinction between inclusion and exclusion on the inside, resulting in systemic differentiation with two categories of students offered quite

different educational programmes. Thus, newly arrived students are being included in the schools in a different way and with a different symbolic meaning than mainstream students. This distinction justifies an organisation that resembles a 'state of exception' (Agamben 2005): an exception of the order within the order. In Figure 2 the internal educational differentiation is visualised.

Distinctions between different categories of newly arrived student

This section will go further into the analysis and focus on the second sub-question: What characterises processes of inclusion and exclusion for newly arrived minority language students in organisation-based interaction systems? The section focuses on distinctions between different categories of newly arrived students, and thus on the further differentiation in subsystems.

At both schools, introductory classes were differentiated into levels. Thus, the students were included and excluded in different interaction systems (classes) depending on their performance on tests. These subsystems were mutually excluding, but the differentiation was quite flexible in the sense that the teachers could easily make decisions about promotion or demotion. The schedule for each class was parallel, so the students could be promoted if they crossed the limit to the next achievement level.

The students were differentiated into levels in all of the subjects. This implied that they could be included at different levels in different subjects and that each class had a different composition of students. This constituted a complex constellation of different paths of inclusions and exclusions. At both schools the form of differentiation was *stratification* (hierarchical): advanced–basic at Northside and advanced–intermediate–basic at Southside. This is different from the mainstream, where the classes are organised as *segmentary* (equal) subsystems.

Inclusion of newly arrived students in different strata had symbolic value, both for the students and the teachers. The students attributed normative meaning to the level they attended. There was a stigma attached to attending introductory classes, and this stigma was especially apparent at the basic levels. As explained by 'Rouman': 'The other ones think we are bad in Norwegian, or … things like that. […] But it is better for us in the C-group […], because we can learn on a higher level'.

This student was, as he saw it, considered by 'the others' to be bad in Norwegian, as he was excluded from mainstream. But at least he was not on the basic level in the school's ranking, he was able to 'learn on a higher level'. Crucially, the schools' ranking constituted a map of limits the students had to cross in order to be included at continuously higher levels, with a final limit
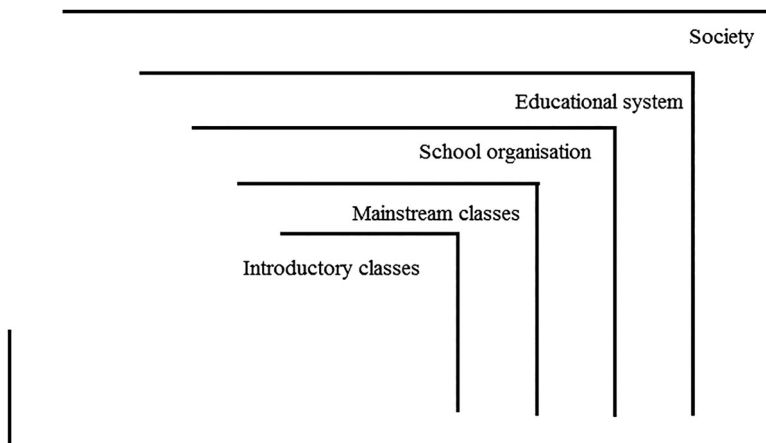

Figure 2. Re-entry of the form inclusion: The school organisation re-enters the distinction between inclusion and exclusion on the inside. Newly arrived minority language students are excluded from mainstream, but included in introductory classes.

to mainstream education. Obviously, the paths to inclusion for the lowest ranked students were rougher; not only did they have to cross the limit to mainstream, but several other barriers in the form of achievement levels. The ranking of students was also an important matrix for the teachers, and had consequences for the education offered to the different strata. Here expressed by 'Eva' in a teacher meeting at Northside:

> […] you have the elite, and you have those who cannot speak Norwegian or English. They should not be here. The way it is now, we spend most resources on the A-group. They are the ones that can move on to Upper secondary, thus they are the ones that are supposed to be here […]. This [the great differences between students] also creates tensions among the students: [they say] 'why should we be with students that do not know Norwegian at all?'

As can be seen in the quote, the valued students were those that had the possibility to cross the limit to mainstream the following year, as was the official goal of introductory classes: 'They are the ones that are supposed to be here'. The allocation of resources seemed also to be affected by the prospects of crossing the limit to the mainstream. Students that were considered unable to cross this limit, at the most basic levels, were considered misplaced: 'They should not be here'. This group caused trouble and ruined the education for 'The ones that are supposed to be here'. As expressed by the school leader at a teachers' meeting at Northside:

> They [the county administration] are sending students out to the school without the necessary knowledge, and then we are stuck with them. Then you [referring to the teachers] are stuck with them. You are the ones with all the frustrations. […] We have to agree on the goals for introductory classes. One example is this student that had trouble concentrating. Eventually it turns out he had not learned mathematics at a higher level than fourth grade. This is very damaging for those who actually are able to achieve something.

As we can see from the quote, the school leader's concern was for those who were able to achieve something, meaning the students that had the necessary skills to cross the limit to mainstream the following year. The students who failed to meet these expectations were in the way and ruined the education for the others. These students at the basic levels were excluded from the highest ranked interaction systems, and included in the classes with the lowest status and educational expectations in the school organisation. Some of the students had been considered to be at a higher academic level in schools in their home- and transit country, and they now experienced a drop in educational expectations and status. Here 'Ahmed' explains his experiences:

> Ahmed: [In school in Iran] I was busy with homework all the time; I was at the highest level. For example: there were only five students in schools [at the highest level], and I was one of them. It was like that all the time and the teachers cared for me. Yes, so that was good!
>
> Interviewer: Is it the same here […]?
>
> Ahmed: I do not think so. I am not very clever. No, perhaps the first day, but not now. […] I do not master English that well, so I am sort of at the bottom floor. […] Therefore, it is different.

To be a student in introductory classes thus also carried certain expectations, even though these expectations were defined in opposition to mainstream students. Students in an introductory class should be in need of re-education, resocialisation and better Norwegian and English language skills. However, they should not totally lack academic and language skills, as the purpose of introductory classes was to eventually cross the limit to mainstream. Students at the basic level do not meet these expectations, leading to a further differentiation within the including exclusion.

To conclude, students at the basic level of the introductory class were in the most marginalised position in the schools' stratification, being excluded not only from the mainstream, but also from the highest ranked introductory classes. Obviously, these students will have difficulties positioning themselves on higher levels in the academic order. Some of them end up retaining in the introductory class, repeating the same content for another year. Although there was a great diversity when it came to the students' linguistic and cultural background, a vast number of the students at the basic level spoke Arabic and Polish. Figure 3 illustrates the internal differentiation of introductory classes.

Excluding inclusion: requirements for inclusion in networks of students

This section will address the third sub-question: What characterises inclusion and exclusion processes in networks of students? At this level, the analysis will focus on the requirements for inclusion in informal networks of students, and the exclusions that result from these requirements.

None of the newly arrived students who were interviewed interacted to a substantial degree with Norwegian-speaking students at schools. Thus, they were excluded from these networks. In the interviews, the students had different rationales for this, but a majority attributed it to their lack of skills in Norwegian. If they had friends at school outside introductory class, it was usually other minority language students in the mainstream.

Networks among minority language students did also emerge. Some of these networks included and excluded solely on the basis of personal connection and trust, and crossed language boundaries. They emerged in the moment as informal interaction systems, and those who were present were included. This was especially the case in classes with students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The networks were multilingual, including across language boundaries, and made pragmatic decisions on language use from moment to moment. As explained by 'Freweini', a Tigrinja-speaking girl:

Interviewer:	Are there any other students in class speaking the same mother tongue as you?
Freweini:	Yes, yes, there are four from the same country.
Interviewer:	Four, yeah. Do you speak together a lot?
Freweini:	Mmmm, sometimes.
Interviewer:	Sometimes yeah.
Freweini:	Yes, we speak […] because they are my friends, and sometimes we speak Norwegian, sometimes English, we always switch.
Interviewer:	So you switch between the languages?
Freweini:	Yes, because we have a friend who is from Albania.
Interviewer:	Yeah, okay.
Freweini:	So it is completely different, sometimes we speak Norwegian, or English or our mother tongue.

Whether the language spoken in these networks was English or Norwegian or mother tongue seemed to be a pragmatic decision depending on the language skills of the students that were connected to the network in the moment. Usually English was a preferred language, but they spoke Norwegian if some participants lacked English skills. If all the students present spoke the same mother tongue, however, they spoke this language.
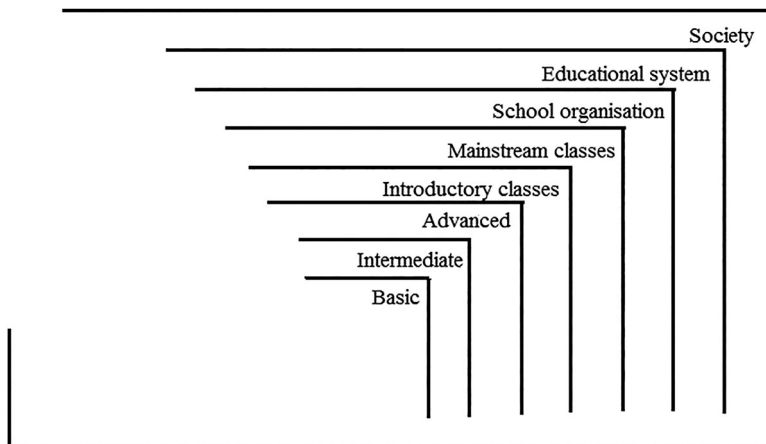

Figure 3. Differentiation of introductory classes exemplified with Southside. The school organisation re-enters the distinction between inclusion and exclusion, creating subsystems with independent requirements. Newly arrived students are included at advanced, intermediate or basic level.

In all of the classes, networks of students that spoke the same mother tongue emerged. There were networks of Tigrinja-, Latvian-, Polish-, Arabic- and Lithuanian-speakers. Many of these networks retained flexible criteria for inclusion, and were *not stable*. Mutual trust and personal knowledge seemed to be requirements for inclusion, and decisions of inclusion could change from moment to moment, sometimes across the borders of language, sometimes corresponding to these borders.

In some of the subjects, especially at basic levels, the networks became strikingly more stable, and obtained the characteristics of systems with independent criteria for inclusion. Arabic- and Polish-speaking students were over-represented at the basic levels. With these marginalised positions as a basis, network systems emerged that included solely on the basis of the Arabic or Polish language. Those who did not speak this language, both teachers and students, were excluded. In these transcripts, two teachers at the basic level at Southside talk about the Polish-speaking network:

'Birte':   And it is difficult to relate, because they speak Polish […]. They speak Polish with each other in the classroom. […] It is difficult to get them to speak Norwegian. And the result is that the relations in class are not very close. […] Because the Polish, they are sort of… one group.
'Karianne': The other students tell me that it has been a bit difficult, especially in recess, right? […] They only interact with each other.

In these quotes we can see the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that result from the emergence of stable network systems based on language. The network systems work as wedges that split the classes, and offer alternative socialities to the organisation-based interactions.

Stable network systems could also be observed in classes where Arabic-speaking students were over-represented. This is a field note from a field conversation with one of the teachers in the class-room during recess:

The teacher points towards the Arabic-speaking boys […]. She says: There has been so much nonsense with them. You know Facebook and everything. They are on a very basic level, and it is all about their attitude. They do not work. And now I have to give them even easier assignments and I have to read everything with them, word for word [She seems very frustrated].

As we can see in this quote, the Arabic-speaking network system became a competitive social structure within the class and posed a threat to the teacher. In the session that preceded the quoted field conversation, the network system completely took over communication in class, consistently speaking in Arabic, making the teacher more and more frustrated.

The failure to educate these students was attributed to a flawed attitude among Arabic-speaking students. The teachers found it difficult to resocialise them, and ascribed their lack of success to cultural differences. As expressed by the teacher 'Per' at Southside:

They spend a lot of time adjusting and understanding what kind of role they are supposed to have here. […] Uhm, especially students that come from Arabic-speaking countries […]. They tend to realise the freedom given to them here by misbehaving. […] They require a little more … more direct feedback.

The teachers attributed the formation of network systems and lack of educational success to a culturally deficient attitude among Arabic-speaking students. Also the network of Polish-speaking students caused frustration, but the teachers did not attribute the failure to educate these students to cultural differences. Rather, all of the teachers complained about lack of motivation among the Polish speakers, and ascribed the motivation problems to the uncertain future for children of work immigrants in Norway. They believed that many Polish-speaking students wanted to return to their home country, and accordingly excluded themselves from educational communication. Contrary to this, the students did not express such intentions in the interviews. In the next section, the formation of network systems will be understood from the perspective of communication media.

Communication media: dynamics between including exclusion and excluding inclusion

The previous sections presented the systemic constellations with their independent inclusion and exclusion processes. This section will focus on the dynamics between organisation-based and

network-based interactions, and address the final sub-question: What characterises the use of communication media, and what consequence does this have for processes of inclusion and exclusion? The section will focus on how language, power and digital and social media reinforce processes of inclusion and exclusion, and thus the interconnectedness of these processes.

One of the challenges in organisation-based interactions was to enable understanding and acceptance of educational communication without a shared language as medium. The teachers were not familiar with the students' mother tongues, thus they had to communicate in English or Norwegian. The students mastered English and Norwegian to different extents, and some of them lacked sufficient skills in both languages. Despite this, English was used as a support language in Norwegian classes, and Norwegian as a support language in English classes.

The most important medium for communication in organisation-based interactions was, however, translation programmes on the internet. The teachers encouraged students to translate words online, either on computers or mobile phones. By using Google Translate the students translated words and sentences in a second, and classroom interactions could thus proceed at an adequate tempo without constant interruptions. However, ensuring connection to educational communication by using Google Translate obviously had problematic sides, such as lack of meaningful context and precision of information.

The teachers were dependent on computers and mobile phones to enable understanding and acceptance of educational communication through translation programmes, but the technology also generated problems of discipline. As the teachers were unable to supervise all the screens and phones at the same time, they could never be certain what the students were doing. Thus, the extensive use of computers and mobile phones also posed risks, and the teachers had to rely on sanctions to counteract the non-educational use of technology.

Especially for students lacking sufficient skills in English and Norwegian, mediation of educational communication had difficult conditions. Even though the students were physically included in the classroom, and addressed by the teachers, they were excluded in the sense that they were unable to communicate and understand what was going on. For these students, language networks were crucial to enable connection to educational communication. Without an adequate support language, they would otherwise be educated merely through Google Translate. The networks encouraged understanding by translations, and constituted communicative aid structures within the *including exclusion*.

When language networks worked as aid structures for education, they were unstable in the sense that students switched between network communication and educational communication. To utilise language networks in education was, however, a balancing act for the teachers. Being unfamiliar with the students' mother tongue, they could never be certain what the students spoke about and thus the relevance of communication themes. As a consequence, power in the form of sanctions was used to cope with this uncertainty. In this transcript, 'Beate' explains the risks posed by language networks:

> I want them to speak Norwegian and English. Because it is so excluding, especially the Arabic students, right? […] It is always the majority that speaks Arabic. […] It often creates a certain tension between them and the Eastern European students. Because it is not nice when people are sitting there talking and you do not understand what they say, right? […] So that is why I try to be consistent: it is English or Norwegian! […] But of course, they may very well explain things to each other in their mother tongue. […] I think it is okay when it is, like, controlled. Controlled use of mother tongue (laughs). […] Because suddenly groups emerge: If you are not conscious about having a shared language.

As 'Beate' explains, if you are not conscious about having a shared language, oppositional network systems emerge. Both schools accordingly had a language policy where communication in language networks was disapproved of in settings that were not relevant for educational communication. Non-educational use of mother tongue could be sanctioned with reprimands, separation of students or dismissal from class. However, as a great deal of students at basic levels had difficulties connecting to educational communication, network systems that included on the basis of mother tongue became an alluring alternative. When the non-educational activity in the network systems increased, the teachers responded with sanctions, which gave rise to more resistance in the network systems. In this

self-reinforcing process, the classroom interactions were characterised by alternating restlessness, noise, apathy and resistance. The language networks no longer worked as aid structures, but became unrecognised and excluded communication structures.

The unrecognised communication structures did not, however, disappear. Rather, network systems offered alternative socialities to educational communication among excluded students. Thus, exclusion in education fostered a new inclusion based on the criterion of mother tongue. The language networks emerged as *stable* systems within the school-based interactions (Figure 4). Unlike the language networks that worked as aid structures, network systems were characterised by communicative closure and counter-powers.

The most pronounced examples of network systems that included on the exclusion-side were those with Arabic and Polish language as requirements for inclusion. It was, for example, remarkably quiet in classes with Polish-speaking networks, except for Polish talk. When the teacher asked questions, they often looked down, shook their heads, looked at each other, and said 'I don't know'. Few of them said anything on their own initiative, and the teacher complained that they did not want to speak Norwegian. The Arabic-speaking networks, however, were more visible and persistent in their resistance towards the teachers. They reacted with noise, disturbances and loud talk in Arabic, making the teachers increasingly frustrated and powerless. The Arabic-speaking network system also sanctioned students that tried to connect to educational communication.

When mother tongue became the inclusion-criteria of the network system, teachers and students that did not master this language were excluded. The network systems used computers and mobile phones for their own non-educational purposes, often on sites in their own language. Some of the language networks even used chat programmes to communicate with each other in class. Thus the networks, mediated by mother tongue, counter-powers and social media, constituted a competing social structure within the classes.

Luhmann (2000) emphasises that networks work on positions in organisations, but with opposite signs. The network systems worked as parasites (Luhmann 2002) on the most devalued and marginalised positions in the schools' stratification. Obviously, for students that meet a plurality of barriers for participation in the school organisation, and who have difficulties connecting to educational communication, inclusion in network systems is tempting. Inclusion among equals in network systems may make it easier to endure inequalities and exclusions in education. The network systems offered inclusion for the excluded. However, this inclusion is an *excluding inclusion* insofar as it is an oppositional or deviant position with regard to the normative structure of the educational system (Stichweh 2009).
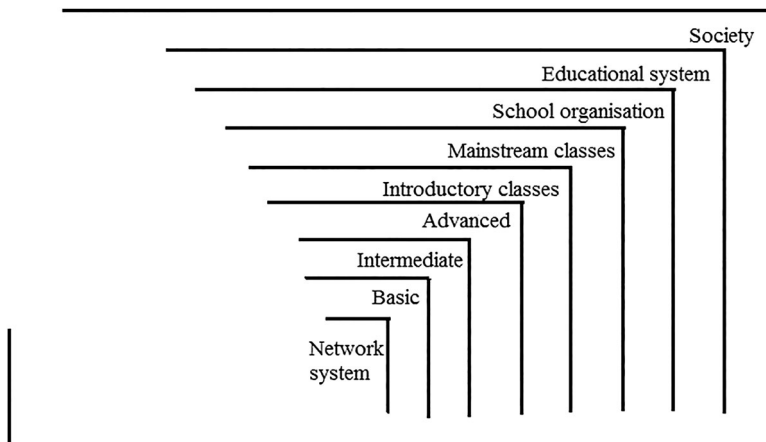

Figure 4. The differentiation of a language network as an independent subsystem that includes among the excluded from the basic level. Read from below, the figure displays the multiple limits the most marginalised students have to cross.

One can interpret the dynamics between organisation-based and network-based interactions as an antagonistic logic of power and counter-power (Tække and Paulsen 2010). The dynamic can be seen as a self-reinforcing process with reciprocal exclusion as an effect. Language networks that obtained the characteristics of systems made it increasingly difficult for teachers to educate. The organisation of newly arrived students in introductory classes as an *including exclusion* now had to struggle with network systems of students based on mother tongue as an *excluding inclusion* (Stichweh 2009).

However, the structure of excluding inclusion not only created problems for the teachers. Crucially, the network systems were excluding for students that did not speak the mother tongue in question. Some students did not share mother tongue with anyone, lacked sufficient skills in both English and Norwegian and were at the lowest level in the schools' stratification. These students could not communicate with anyone, and were accordingly excluded from all possible systems. *Their* situation can be characterised as a *total exclusion*.

Conclusion

This article has presented findings from a fieldwork in two Norwegian schools with introductory classes for newly arrived students. Field and observation notes, as well as transcripts from interviews with 9 teachers and 12 students, have served as data material for a multi-systemic analysis of inclusion and exclusion processes. Based on this study, it can be argued that introductory classes, at least in its present organisational form, erect barriers towards newly arrived students' educational careers. Further, the study has showed that the lower a student is placed in the schools hierarchy, the more barriers to inclusion does he/she meet.

In agreement with Graham and Jahnukainen (2011), this article has revolved around the social barriers that newly arrived students encounter, rather than their special educational needs. As also Razer, Friedman, and Warshofsky (2013) point out, exclusion is a systemic process and cannot be attributed to any single actor or factor. Through a multi-layered analysis, this article has displayed how newly arrived students are excluded at several levels as a consequence of educational requirements. Inclusion and exclusion can thus be characterised as multifaceted and interconnected phenomena in education.

Differentiation between students in introductory classes and mainstream classes constitutes an *including exclusion* in the schools. This article is, however, not critical of the organisational principle of introductory classes *per se*. Research suggests that power structures remain intact, despite mainstreaming and 'full' inclusion (Olsen 1997; Platt, Harper, and Mendoza 2003). The article does, however, point out critically that the education offered in introductory classes is based on a construction of newly arrived students as deviant from the mainstream.

To realise that inclusion and exclusion are deeply interwoven in educational practice does not have to result in resignation on behalf of the disadvantaged. The educational system excludes persons that do not meet its requirements, in this case culturally, linguistically and academically. These requirements ensure the communicative process, and deviance from them makes it difficult to communicate and educate. Nevertheless, given the contingency of the distinction, it is pertinent to question whether newly arrived students might have a better basis for educational careers if the requirements of the systems were more attuned to the language skills, cultural references and competencies that these students already have.

Newly arrived students are further differentiated into strata according to their performances. This organisation constitutes a complex constellation of different paths to inclusion and exclusion with severe consequences for students at the basic levels. These students have to cross several limits in order to eventually enter mainstream education and continue their educational careers. In educational policy it is argued that the exceptions from the ordinary principles are only temporary, and that introductory classes will increase minority language students' ability to be included in the longer run. For the most marginalised students, however, one can question whether these policy prospects are realistic.

As Jønhill (2012a) points out, exclusion is not necessarily a problem, as long as it is not cumulative and as long as one is included in other systems. The problem is when the barriers to inclusion are as multifaceted as they are with the lowest ranked students. Being excluded at more than one level, these students will have difficulties positioning themselves on higher levels in the academic order, with severe consequences for their educational careers. As educational careers enable inclusion in other systems of society, for example, the job market (Luhmann 2006), this may become part of a domino effect of exclusions for the lowest ranked students (Hillmert 2009).

The article has also illuminated the emergence of stable network systems that include on the basis of language. The teachers attributed the formation of network systems to flawed attitudes and motivation problems among the students. This article suggests that these phenomena should be interpreted systemically. The emergence of stable network systems results from insufficient mediation of educational communication, combined with a failure to recognise the language networks as a means for educational support.

Notes

1. In Norwegian, the term *elev*, translated as 'pupil', is also used for students in upper secondary school.
2. The classes are categorised differently in the different regions of Norway, but will be called 'introductory classes' in this article.
3. The topics that were indicated in interviews with teacher were: communication, understanding, languages, organisation, differentiation, competencies and available resources, use and sanctioning of mother tongue languages, student- and teacher-roles, descriptions of newly arrived students, for example school-background and academic differences. For the interviews with students, the following topics were indicated: communication, understanding, languages, school-background, contentment, friendship and inclusion in networks of students, educational expectations and differences between schools in Norway and in home countries.
4. I used the following codes: 'organisation', 'differentiation', 'networks of students' and 'communication-media'. The latter code had the following sub-codes: 'power', 'social media', 'digital media' and 'language'.
5. Despite the fact that a great deal of the students had a sufficient educational background and in some cases were on a higher level than students in the mainstream.
6. Although work had started on the regional level to develop a local curriculum for introductory classes.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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