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Reflections on the Methodology used in a Comparative Study of Malaysia's Three Cultures of Primary Schooling

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Introduction

In this article, the main aim is to reflect on the methodology used in my 'Comparative Study of Malaysia's Three Cultures of Primary Schooling'. First, I explain the reasons for adapting 'video-cued multivocal ethnography' for this purpose, before discussing the origins, strengths and weaknesses of this approach, as well as examples of how this method has been used in a number of other comparative studies. The bulk of this paper then focuses on my own experience of adapting this method to collect the data for my study, reflecting on the challenges posed by Malaysia's educational topography as well as the constraints of my status as a PhD student. In contrast to the projects conducted by Tobin and many others who have used this method, who worked as a team of researchers drawn from different countries and with access to considerable resources, I have conducted this study as a solo doctoral researcher. I therefore discuss the limitations imposed by these conditions, relating to data collection, site selection, ethical issues and the analysis of the data itself.

The data collection process involved two phases of fieldworks from June 2016 to August 2019. Phase 1 involved filming three different primary schools (Malay-medium, Chinese-medium and Tamil-medium) and Phase 2 involved organising focus group sessions (FGS) among teachers to discuss the three primary schools filmed.

Approaching the research question

This research is of a qualitative nature as it is mainly concerned with the experience of teachers working in primary schools. Merriam and Tisdell explain that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Merriam and Tisdell 2015: 6)". For example, in the case of Malaysian primary education, rather than simply studying the trend of ethnic polarisation in enrolment

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in different types of primary schools, which can be done using a quantitative approach, I am interested in finding out how teachers see and adjust to such polarisation and how they think about their school's identity and culture. Braun and Clarke pointed out that the most distinctive feature of qualitative research is that it uses "words as data... collected and analysed in all sorts of ways" instead of "numbers as data" to be analysed using statistical techniques" (Braun and Clarke 2013: 3-4).

As the current study is exploratory, an ethnographic approach has been chosen to draw on "valuable insights into how people construct meaning" (Neuman 2014: 353). To understand cultural practices through the lens of primary education, ethnography gives us a different perspective on the study of education in Malaysia, which has to date been mostly dominated by quantitative studies involving statistics. Ethnography, by contrast, is a qualitative approach that "strives to understand the interaction of individuals not just with others, but also with the culture of the society in which they live" (Merriam and Tisdell 2015: 24). Ethnography allows the development of an intricate understanding of social practices and knowledge held by a community (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Originally pioneered by researchers in the discipline of anthropology, ethnography has been adopted in many fields and disciplines, including education.

Methodology

The method used in this ethnographic study is an adaptation of Tobin's 'Preschool in 3 Cultures Method', also known as 'video-cued multivocal ethnography' (Tobin et al., 1989; see also 2009). First, activities in primary schools of the 'three cultures' - Malay, Chinese and Tamil - are video-recorded which are edited into short 20-minute videos. Then these videos are shown to members of those three school communities. Comments and feedback on what they see are collected in focus group sessions. These result in a video-cued teachers' dialogue involving members of three different ethnic groups discussing the same set of videos. Tobin, Wu, and Davidson (1989) described this method as "an ongoing dialogue between insiders and outsiders, practitioners and researchers". Rather than focusing primarily or solely on key events in schools that have been directly observed, as is common in more traditional ethnography, this research analyses the reactions of participants to the activities filmed in those schools. The method focuses on encouraging discussion among focus group participants who then share their experiences, views and thoughts. Watching and commenting on the practices of preschool videos of different cultures reveals how they think about what these practices meant and what they are for. The logic behind these 'common' practices is something of which practitioners themselves may not be consciously aware. In other words, it helps researchers make "implicit thinking" visible (Adair and Kurban, 2019:2).

Origins of Tobin's 'video-cued multivocal ethnography'

This method was first developed and implemented in the Tobin, Wu, and Davidson (1989) research project, which resulted in the book Preschool in Three Cultures: Japan, China, and the United States. That study aimed to compare how preschools in Japan, China and the US reflect and influence culturally-embedded conceptions of the aims of early childhood education and pedagogy, as well as broader social patterns and beliefs. Twenty years later Tobin led another team, and with Hsueh and Karasawa 'revisited' the three original research sites (plus a further three sites, one from each culture) to investigate the effects of globalisation and social transformation on pre-schooling in the three cultures, adding another layer of comparison, i.e. 'time' in terms of changes and continuity in the pre-schools they studied.

This method has multiple origins, according to Tobin (2009). The idea of using videotapes as an interview cue could be traced back to the work of Connor, an anthropologist, together with Timothy and Patsy Asch, ethnographic filmmakers, who videotaped a Balinese shaman / healer conducting a trance and then asked her to comment on a film of herself in the state of trance (Connor et al, 1996). It was considered an innovative contribution to ethnographic methodology at that time where films were made and deployed as research tools. George and Louise Spindler (1987) made similar use of the method when comparing schools in Germany and Wisconsin. So did their students Fujita and Sano (1988) when comparing daycare centres in the US and Japan.

Another source of origin was the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), a psychological technique by which "individuals construct imaginative fantasies in response to picture cues" (Murray 2008:16). It is also known as the technique of image interpretation because it involves asking the respondents to provide an explanation of what is shown in the pictures. The rationale behind the procedure is that individuals will generally interpret vague circumstances in accordance with their past encounters and current motivations, whether consciously or unconsciously (Cramer 1996). Psychologists use this to evaluate the thoughts, attitudes, emotional reactions and observational abilities of the respondents. William Caudill (1962), a medical anthropologist, adapted Murray's TAT technique as an ethnographic tool for studying cultural beliefs. For example, in one of his studies, Caudill used eight drawings of everyday events such as having a meal, sleeping, bathing, sex, sickness, etc. in his "visual questions" interviews to compare the physical and emotional patterns of Japanese and American differences. Applying this idea in Tobin's day in a preschool video, each scene is like a "moving, noisy version of the pictures" (Tobin et al. 2009:7).

Next, Tobin referred to one of Akira Kurosawa's films, Rashomon (羅生門) (Kurosawa 1950), a film adapted from the short story of Ryusukeno Akutagawa. It is a murder story told by four different witnesses. Each informant, i.e. the bandit, the wife and her 'dead' samurai husband, and the woodcutter,

recounts a different version of the same event. Kurosawa has shown the power of perspective and, more importantly, each perspective reflects the wishes, thoughts and ego of the speaker. Similar to the witnesses in the film, Tobin's interviewees "revealed something about themselves and their worldviews" during a discussion of the videos they watched (Tobin et al. 2009:8).

Last but not least, Tobin drew from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian philosopher, with his notable ideas of "multivocality," "hybridity" and "dialogism". These ideas were first applied to anthropology by James Clifford (1983) in his essay 'On Ethnographic Authority', hence the development of 'multivocal ethnography'. Bakhtin's notion of dialogism provides a theoretical justification for the decision to use focus groups rather than individual interviews during most of the research. Tobin added that, following Bakhtin, the interpretation emerges from the 'dialogical engagement' between the participants and the interviewer is seen as a 'co-construction of meaning'.

In the field of education, numerous research projects adopting the method of Preschool in Three Cultures in one way or another have contributed to theoretical reflections on this approach. For example, Anderson-Levitt (2002) used it to compare the approaches of American and French primary school teachers to the teaching of language arts. Thomauske (2013) studied how children's home languages are perceived or valued in early childhood education systems by parents and educators from France and Germany. Again, Tobin (2013) compares how immigrant parents think about early childhood education in France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States in his 'Children Crossing Borders' study. Henward, Turituri and Tauaa (2019) use this method, along with traditional ethnographic approaches, to study how American Samoan teachers implement and adapt to the federal curriculum as opposed to US mainland teachers. Although the method is primarily designed to highlight the differences between cultures, Hsueh and Tobin also stressed that it is "a valuable tool for encouraging teacher reflection and developing cultural understandings of how teaching practices embody the culture in which they live and work" (Hsueh and Tobin 2012).

Strength and Weaknesses of video-cued multivocal ethnography in the field of education

From an ethnographic point of view, this method 'condenses' the time taken to gather qualitative insights and understanding of the culture it studies. In other words, it "collapses and shortens ethnography's traditional period of extended fieldwork" (Hsueh and Tobin 2012:117). In the kind of 'participant-observer' approach typical of much education fieldwork, the researcher conducts observations as well as participates in school activities and then interviews his or her informants to reflect on and explain those activities, while also referring to the researcher's field notes and memory. By contrast, this method replaces extensive fieldwork with a single set of videos, which serve as 'cues' for stimulating discussion that can enable the researcher to gather insights from numerous informants drawn from

the same and other 'cultures'. However, this method is not easier than a traditional ethnographic study. This is because producing an informative video requires thorough planning, negotiating with school administrators, learning on-site routines, filming, editing rounds, and repeated interviewing.

Second, using a video-cued approach during focus groups allows multiple viewings of the same set of scenes that create a rich discussion within the community of teachers. The results reflect the collective experience of different communities reflecting on the same set of cues or themes. Each scene in the videos provides verbal or non-verbal stimuli for responses that offer insight into the cultural and professional beliefs of the respondent. For, showing the teachers a scene of pupils being punished in front of the assembly standing on chairs with hands pulling their ears and asking, "What do you think of this situation?" would yield a better discussion than a question such as "What do you think of corporal punishment in school?". The former gives the teacher a clear scenario or focus to reflect on their experience, while the latter is considered difficult because it is too abstract. Each teacher might think of corporal punishment differently leading to different responses. Moreover, scenes can be replayed many times if needed to help viewers understand the 'questions' better before a response. In other words, "the video cues not only make the questions... concrete and specific... but also offer an identical referent for (respondents) from different cultures to explain the same behaviours" (Hsueh and Tobin 2012:116).

Furthermore, this method shifts the focus from the researcher's perspective to a teacher's perspective. The videos of the three schools present a narrative of a school day with scenes deliberately and carefully chosen to be used in the FGS. It serves as the first layer of voice created from the researcher's perspective. Sans and Ines 2010 explain "...carefully constructed narratives are basic, identifiable tools in anthropology" (5). However, the analysis in this research centres on the reactions and discussion of observers to the activities filmed in these schools. That lessens the bias that might be generated from the researcher's narrative and emphasises the collective ideas generated by the teacher's.

One significant issue that arises with this method is that of the 'typicality' of the site selection. Some readers criticised the decision to film a single "stimulus" institution in each country, particularly in the first book by Tobin et al. (Hess 1990, Bjork et al. 2009). For example, Hess comments:

> *This volume has the familiar advantages and drawbacks encountered when case studies are used to represent the character of large, heterogeneous groups. . . . As the authors recognize, no single school in this instance, no one class within a school) can represent countries as large and diverse as these three.* (Hess 1990: 306)

Tobin et al. (1989) addressed the issue of typicality in two ways. First, the preschools chosen were more or less comparable by selecting 'middle-class' preschools and videotaping similar incidents in each country. Still, they did not define the term 'middle-class' and there was an obvious wealth gap

between St. Timothy's and Dong-feng in terms of resources like books and toys in the first book. Secondly, the schools videotaped served more as stimuli for 'layers of conversations' than as data, complemented by the variety of 'voices' of respondents commenting on the videotapes. But Hess argued that the little information given about the respondents suggests, in turn, that they might not be representative. In the follow-on study, Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited, Tobin et al. (2009) worked on their methodology to include a bigger and wider pool of participants to conduct the focus group,

> *We address the question of typicality by showing the videotape we shot, for example, at Komatsudani Hoikuen in Kyoto to over 300 teachers and directors in five other settings in Japan and we asked these informants to tell us in what ways Komatsudani is like and unlike their preschool. We also showed the Komatsudani tape to Japanese early childhood education experts and asked them to tell us in what ways they felt that Komatsudani is typical of their nation's preschools.*

Adair and Kurban (2019) associate typicality in the context of video-cued ethnography with 'familiarity'. Is the site being filmed familiar enough to connect and engage participants? If the site chosen is not typical or is from an exceptional one, participants might feel unqualified to comment. The nature of this research enables me to address typicality in two ways. The choice to use public primary schools of three different cultures in Malaysia sets a comparable standard, as these schools are regulated by the Ministry of Education using the same national curriculum in accordance with the Education Act 1996. In other words, there is sufficient familiarity for teachers of different ethnic groups to engage in and discuss videos. Second, the FGS was conducted following a stratified cluster sampling strategy covering schools from all four (North, South, East and West) peninsular regions of Malaysia and asked administrators and teachers how their schools are typical or atypical of those shown in the videos.

Data Collection Process and Site Selection

The data collection process involves two phases, i.e. Phase 1 of filming three different primary schools (Malay-medium, Chinese-medium and Tamil-medium) and Phase 2 of organising FGS among teachers to discuss the three primary schools filmed. The locations for filming and FGS should be comparable and connected. Approaches for ensuring comparability in schools and data or 'voices' that are collected, as well as limitations, are discussed in this section. It is worth noting that Tobin's method requires a field-research team to undertake a project of this scale. However, as a solo researcher, it was necessary for me to improvise and adapt to the limitation to achieve similar data-gathering capabilities.

Phase 1: Filming

Phase 1 follows the Participant-Observation Research Method, where I obtain information through prolonged interaction and observation with the teachers and pupils of the classroom being studied, as well as through first-hand involvement in the relevant activities of their school days. This involves direct classroom observation and informal conversational interviews with the teachers. For the purpose of filming, the permission of videotaping the school and the classroom activities were obtained before the studies.

A typical classroom participant-observation requires the investigator to scribble notes quickly, type on a laptop, or voice-record his or her comments as a means of collecting primary data. But in my adaptation, I rely heavily on video recording tools to capture the scenes both as an observer and from the perspective of a 'filmmaker'.(1) For example, during classroom observations, two video cameras (Stationary Camera I and II) are placed at the front, facing the pupils and one at the back of the classroom, focusing on the teacher. These two video cameras are set on record mode throughout the day, capturing the day of a classroom from the beginning to the end. My note-taking involves carrying a DSLR camera and 'taking notes' of the scenes that I find interesting or worth taking by recording them. To minimise the intrusion, the two stationary cameras were placed for a few days before actual filming to reduce the anxiety or 'excitement' of the teachers and pupils. A buffer period is needed for participants to get used to the cameras, and eventually, they will ignore the presence of the cameras (and me, hopefully). In addition, I limit my movement (DSLR Camera III) to only the back of the classroom and the corridor outside of the classroom. The camera's setting is illustrated below.

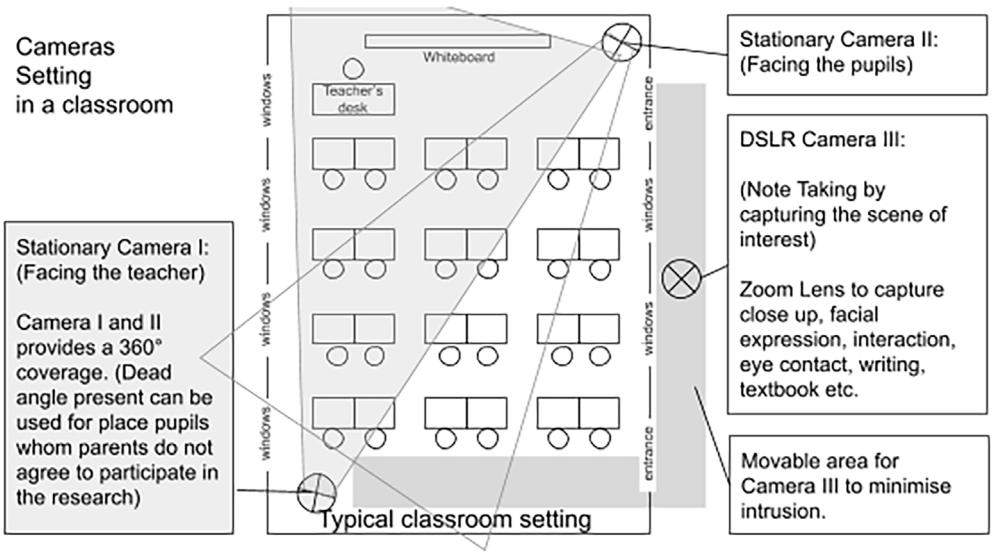

Illustration 1: Cameras setting in classroom observation.

The following is the period and duration of the fieldwork conducted at three participating schools. First primary school is a Chinese-medium school (**SJKC**)[2] in the state of Selangor where the fieldwork was conducted from 14 to 17 June, 2016. The second school is a Tamil-medium school (**SJKT**) in the state of Negeri Sembilan, taken from 22 to 24 June 2016. Lastly, fieldwork at the Malay-medium school (**SK**) in Perak state, was conducted from 12 to 14 February 2018. The video-recording of the school days of these three different types of schools (each school consisting 15-20 hours of raw video footage) were edited to make three 20-minute "visual mini-ethnography". These videos show scenes of arrival, lessons, activities inside and outside the classroom, recess and departure as well as the school surrounding. The videos portraying the typical day in each school were used as cues for phase 2 focus group sessions. Initially, I edited three 40-minute videos of each school. However, I decided to further trim the videos into three 20-minute videos to allow for better time management of the FGS.

A properly crafted 20-minute video with a comprehensible storyline, smooth transitions and discussion triggering scenes are key points for a successful FGS. It is important to draw strategies of 'visual storytelling' from documentary and filmmaking (Adair and Kurban 2019). In the digital age, a video that has poor aesthetic qualities can be distracting for viewers. As Tobin and Hsueh write:

> *Aesthetic quality is a worthwhile goal in its own right and also because its absence carries the possibility of interfering with the audience's flow of attention. Amateurish shots can interrupt audience engagement, but so, too, can slickness.* (Tobin and Hsueh 2007: 82)

Video-cued ethnography works best when a researcher on the fieldwork assignment hones some skills of filming, editing, and visual storytelling. In other words, it works best when the researcher and the videographer is the same person, observing the class and navigating his way around unfolding events and shooting key scenes and imagining how they fit into the storyline. There are two reasons for this. First, researchers understand their research topics and school context better and are able to anticipate events that could happen better than professional videographers. The ability to pick up cues such as teachers' gestures, change of tone, or pupils' facial expression before an 'event' occurs can mean getting good materials for editing or missing the opportunity to capture it. When a student walks out of the class, for example, I often needed to make a decision to either stay in the classroom or follow the student out to see what he or she was up to. For example, at the SK School, I decided to follow one of the boys as he walked out of class. That decision helped me to get an interesting shot where he stood at the entrance to the washroom and prayed before entering the washroom. The second explanation is that professional filmmaking skills involve taking transition shots and using various angles to depict a scene, or showing close-up images of facial expression or student school work that adds details to the story being told. Having multiple camera shots of students walking out of the classroom from two

different angles seems excessive, but it is important to create a smooth transition and tell a cohesive story. Such a move is not difficult to accomplish with the positioning of the two stationary cameras and the 'running' DSLR camera as seen in illustration 1.

Phase 2: Focus Group Sessions (FGS)

FGS are held across these three school-types, with a total of twelve participating schools from several states in the Peninsula of Malaysia. Stratified cluster sampling was applied to achieve a maximum of sampling variety within a limited timeframe and resources. Three types of schools i.e. the Malay-medium, Chinese-medium and Tamil medium 'strate' are chosen from four different geographical 'clusters' i.e. North, South, East and West of Peninsular Malaysia. The clusters covered are Penang and Kedah in the Northern Peninsula, Negeri Sembilan in the Southern Peninsula, Kelantan in the Eastern Peninsula, and Selangor and Perak in the Western Peninsula. The FGS started from 2 May 2019 until 21 August 2019.

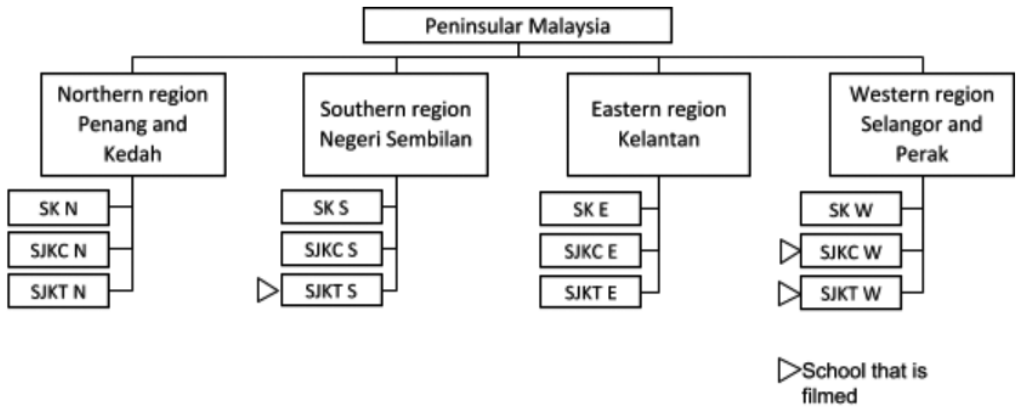

Chart 1: Stratified cluster sampling of the FGS participating schools

Snowball sampling approach is applied to get in touch with the headmasters of schools. Snowball sampling is a non-probability method used in social sciences where it is difficult to find the desired sample characteristics, such as drug addicts, single moms. But in my case, failing to get the official approval of the governmental bodies to conduct studies, I would have to rely on the contacts of school headmasters who are open-minded to participate in my research. This process is repeated until the stratified cluster quota has been met, starting from the two primary schools that I worked with during my Master's (see detailed explanation under 'negotiating initial consent'). With the consent of the headmaster of a school to assist or participate in the project, I invited a few teachers from his school to participate in the FGS.

Before proceeding with the FGS, verbal consent was granted and meetings were set up by the

'gatekeepers' i.e. usually the headmasters or the deputy headmasters. The FGS process begins with an ice-breaking and a self-introduction, followed by an explanation of the research objective and the focus group process, and then answering their questions (if there is any). Then I gave them a consent form to read and sign. Majority of the participants agreed to the terms and signed the consent form, with the exception of a few teachers who insist that their identity can not be recognized in any form of report or presentation. I also asked for permission to do voice transcription recording during FGS, again not all teachers are willing to have their conversation recorded. During the FGS, I gave the teachers the choice to choose which school video to watch first, the rationale is that when teachers have the freedom to choose, they tend to focus better while watching and engage more than FGS that is structured and rigid. Semi-structured interview questions are prepared but are usually used only when the participants remain silent after watching the videos and need a 'push' to start the discussion.

From the 12 schools, a total of 63 teachers (including administrators) participated in the study. Participants are 84.1 percent female and 15.9 percent male. As for the age group, 20.6 percent belong to the 20-29 age group, 39.7 percent to the 30-39 age group, 15.9 percent to the 40-49 age group, and 23.8 percent to the 50-and older age group. The ethnicity of the participants was 33.3 percent Malay, 30.2 per cent Chinese and 36.5 per cent Indian. Most of them are degree holders (58.7 percent), while 20.6 percent have a diploma degree and 20.6 percent have a master's degree. In terms of overall experience in the field of education, 3.2 percent of participants have less than 1one year of teaching experience, 15.9 percent have 2-5 years of teaching experience, 22.2 percent have 6-10 years of teaching experience, 19 percent have 11-15 years of teaching experience. The majority of them, which is 39.7 percent, have worked in the field for more than 15 years.

Ethical Considerations

I started the process of negotiating the initial consent for my fieldwork and filming by contacting the headmasters of the schools selected as study sites. With little credential and credibility (I filmed the first two National-type Schools when I was a Master's student), it was not surprising for my proposal to be turned down, usually after one or two email exchanges. The most typical reason for refusal was that I had no permission from the Ministry of Education (MOE). Understanding the context of how government departments work in Malaysia, had I gone through the standard procedure, I would not be able to get any fieldwork done and complete my master's project[3]. At a turning point, I managed to get my first appointment, one from the deputy headmaster of my Alma Mater Chinese primary school, Madam CYC, and subsequently arranged a consultation session with the headmaster. During this consultation, I outlined the purpose and scope of the research, including the use of filming materials as well as the criteria for the selection of the case-study class; that is, the case-study class should be either Grade 5 or

Grade 6 and the fieldwork period should not be close to the UPSR examination period(4). Taking into account the nature of fieldwork, Madam CYC advised that homeroom teachers might be reluctant to participate, and we should approach this patiently. After obtaining the consent of the headmaster, Madam CYC began to approach home-room teachers who met the criteria, and eventually I was permitted to observe Grade 6 students of a young homeroom teacher who is in her 3rd year of the teaching career. We discussed the circumstances of the filming of individual students, their privacy and the potential benefits and harm to the students of being part of the project. Madam CYC acted as the 'gatekeeper' to the school, the homeroom teacher and her students.

Flewitt (2005: pg554) questions the ethics of accessing study participants via a gatekeeper "as the researcher risks exploiting the relationship between the gatekeeper and the person they are introducing". In my case, because of the authority and seniority of her colleague, the home-room teacher could feel obligated to participate in the study, or fear that refusing to participate may have an effect on her career. According to Flewitt, therefore, it is important to include both formal and informal opportunities for participants to choose whether or not they want to participate. In an informal setting, I reassured the homeroom teacher that there would be no adverse consequences if she chose not to participate. If she was interested, as a token of appreciation I decided to give her a copy of her classroom video as a remembrance of her class that year. The same offer was given to the gatekeeper Madam CYC as well(5).

When social research involves direct contact with children, ethical issues that are avoided when the research is indirect or directly involves adults may need to be addressed. While most of the methodological and ethical issues that arise in dealing with children are also present in dealing with adults, there are significant differences; and recognising these differences is educational for researchers and enhances the value of what is produced (Thomas and O'kane 1998). The filming of the video also involves filming pupils so the consent of the parents should be obtained prior to study, in particular the pupils in the classroom that was chosen to be filmed. As I learned from the practice of filming a class day at Japanese elementary school, the common practice for pupils who have not received consent from their parents is to have them sit in the corner of the classroom, away from video camera recording. Also, if the faces of the pupils are recognizable in the video, the mosaic should be added to their faces. In addition, during the editing of the videos, I made a conscious effort to put mosaics on anything that might expose the name or location of the filmed schools. By the time the videos were used 'publicly' during the FGS, all the pupils in the videos had already graduated from their primary schools. This added another layer of privacy.

Limitations of the study

One limitation of this research is the relatively small representation of each culture group, i.e.

Malay, Chinese and Indian teachers participating in the FGS, which restricts the generalisation of findings beyond the specific research setting. I have tried to overcome this by selecting schools from different states of the Peninsula of Malaysia and conducted 12 FGS from 12 different schools. The number of participants varies from school to school, but of all 63 participants, it was obvious that there are only about 20 teachers from each ethnic group. The findings of this inquiry are specific to this group of teachers. However, general themes and insights that emerge from the focus group discussion, and experience of the teachers may be used in other contexts.

Secondly, in the section on the weaknesses of video-cued multivocal ethnography, I addressed the issue of 'familiarity' raised by Adair and Kurban (2019). However, a different 'familiarity' issue arises in the context of the study of three different cultures bound by the same nationality and a standardized curriculum. Teachers may find the videos too familiar, thus unable to engage or debate more deeply in discussion. Similarly, my position as a Malaysian researcher, could not create a sufficient cultural distance from the participants, to effectively draw out 'taken for granted' practices during a discussion. Moreover, to think past my own cultural assumptions and bias requires constant reflection and to remind myself of my position as a researcher. In Tobin's research, this can be overcome by having researchers of different countries or ethnicities as interviewers to facilitate the FGS. This helps to position oneself as an 'outsider' to effectively prompt some of the 'obvious' questions that would otherwise be missed.

Last but not least, while video-cued discussions were used to triangulate the information and teaching experience of the teachers and administrators, the data relying on the recollections, thoughts and impressions only from the teachers is a limitation of this study. The reason is mainly due to time and resources constraints. Suggestion for future studies to include viewpoints from policymakers, parents, and even pupils.

Conclusion

This article shows the possibility of conducting multi-vocal ethnography with minimal resources. A decent quality classroom mini-ethnography video can be shot by only a single person, using multiple stationary cameras covering different angles, and using a handheld camera to effectively record sufficient raw data during fieldwork while minimizing intrusion. When the data is handled carefully, taking into account both ethical and privacy concerns, this opens up new possibilities for creating classroom observation videos that can be used not only for FGS, but also for assessment, as a self reflection tool, as learning materials for students and so on. The small number of FGS carried out was compensated for by stratified cluster sampling to cover as much variety as possible given the logistical limitations of this study. In future studies of a similar type, I would suggest conducting FGS online to increase the diver-

sity and number of participants.

Notes

(1) In the case when a school doesn't allow a prolonged observation period, filming starts on the day one but the video-recordings taken were rarely used in post editing.

(2) Throughout the paper, Malay-medium primary school or National School will be referred to as **SK** (Sekolah Kebangsaan). Chinese-medium primary school or National-Type Chinese School will be referred to as **SJKC** (Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina). Tamil-medium primary school or National-Type Tamil School will be referred to as **SJKT** (Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil).

(3) At the beginning of the PhD studies, I filmed the third school while applying for a permission to the appropriate Economic Affairs Unit directly under the Prime Minister Office to do FGS at primary schools. Upon approval, secondary evaluation will be done by the Ministry of Education. My proposal was turned out after a year of follow-up and appeal.

(4) UPSR is a national examination compulsory for all year 6 pupils before transitioning to secondary school.

(5) This became a standard offer to the gatekeeper (headmaster and home-room teacher) who allowed their schools and classrooms to be filmed. On top of that, I offered to film and edit other school events, such as a retirement ceremony, and a prayer ceremony, if time permits, usually during the negotiation and reporting period. These ethnographic videos I've made prove to be valuable for future comparative studies.

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マレーシアの３民族語小学校における学校文化の比較研究方法論の吟味

ロー　ゼーハン

本論文は、未発表の博士論文「マレーシアの３民族語小学校における学校文化の比較研究」の方法論を形成するものである。本研究の目的は、３つのタイプの公立小学校（マレー語、中国語、タミル語を教授言語とする学校）における教育の目的の価値体系と文化的理解が、どの程度類似しており、相互に適合しているか、もしくは類似しておらず、相容れない可能性があるのかを明らかにすることである。この民族誌研究で使用されている手法は、J. トービンらによる「ビデオを媒介とするマルチボーカルエスノグラフィー」(Tobin et al., 1989; 2009）を基にしている。まず、文化的に異なる３つの小学校での活動をビデオで記録し、各々20分間のビデオに編集した。これらのビデオは３つの学校コミュニティのメンバーに提示される。このフォーカスグループセッションで彼らが見たものについてコメントやフィードバックをしたものを収集する。これによって、３つの異なるエスニックグループすべてが同じ一連のビデオについての議論に参与するような、ビデオを媒介とする教師の対話が生まれる。この手法は彼らの経験、見解、思考を明らかにするために参加者の間で議論を促すことに焦点を当てており、それは調査者が「暗黙の思考」(Adair and Kurban、2019：２）を可視化するのに役立つ。本論文では、この研究で使用された方法論について考察する。ビデオを媒介とするマルチボーカルエスノグラフィーの起源と用法、その長所と短所、本研究の性質とコンテキストへの手法の適応、場所の選択とデータ収集、倫理的な考慮と限界について議論する。