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**“IT Speaks my Language !”
Inclusion and Literacy for pupils with English as an
Additional Language: A computer-based home language
intervention**

By

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This thesis is submitted to Cardiff University in candidature for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Social Sciences
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DEDICATION

To my parents, Dil and Dilys Jones

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I would like to record my gratitude and sincere thanks to the following people, without whom this study would not have been possible. Firstly, I am very grateful for the friendly co-operation of the pupils, staff and parents at the schools in which the study was based. In particular, I would like to thank the pupils who took part in the 'CAL Intervention' and so wholeheartedly welcomed me into their school lives.

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On a personal level, I would like to express my warmest thanks to my close friends who have encouraged me along the way and in particular to Helen, Jan, Bev and my sister Debbie. Most importantly, the writing of this thesis has been a family affair. The 'behind the scenes' support during this time has been unwavering. My husband Andrew has provided emotional and financial support and my children Tomas and Rosie have lived with the consequences of this study with good grace and can finally have 'Mum back'. My parents have played a critical role by providing tremendous support in numerous ways, including child minding, dog walking and proof reading. Without this unstinting help and encouragement this thesis would not have reached its conclusion. I therefore dedicate this thesis to my family and in particular to my parents, Dil and Dilys Jones.

ABSTRACT

This study explores issues relating to the participation of English as an additional language (EAL) pupils within the National Literacy Strategy and in particular the Literacy Hour. A review of the literature highlighted a range of issues relating to the English language demands placed upon beginner EAL learners within the mainstream classroom, with many EAL pupils excluded from the communication process due to their inability to 'keep up' with classroom discourse solely in a language that they are only just beginning to learn.

Inclusion within the curriculum can be increased by encouraging the use of the pupils' home languages within the classroom. The 'ideal' scenario is considered to be copious amounts of bilingual support from a bilingual class teacher or bilingual assistant. However there are serious constraints placed upon such support in terms of the availability of bilingual staff members, the range of languages to be covered particularly in classrooms where a number of languages are present and the provision of relevant funding. In reality, bilingual support is often provided on a piecemeal basis and for only certain languages within a class, resulting in a 'double dose' of exclusion for some EAL pupils.

Existing home language support for many EAL pupils is therefore non-existent or inadequate. This study aimed to address the need for increased home language support via the medium of the computer. With the increasing profile of ICT use within the school environment, it is suggested that ICT offers a cost-effective way of providing home language classroom materials. A key feature of the study was the development of computer-based 'talking stories' which provide a practical means of utilising home languages within the Literacy Hour. Based upon initial fieldwork findings, computer-based home language materials were designed, piloted and implemented. The short-term effectiveness of these home language materials in assisting EAL pupils to identify unfamiliar English words and to retell stories in English was systematically evaluated. It was found that listening to a story with a home language translation increased EAL pupils' ability to correctly identify unfamiliar English words compared to a story presented in English only. These gains also remained over time indicating that the EAL pupils had retained the meaning of the unfamiliar words following exposure to the stories. Listening to a home language translation also enabled EAL pupils to provide more detailed story retellings suggesting that an increased awareness of the components of the story was gained in comparison to a story received in English only.

Initial fieldwork findings conducted in two primary schools sampled for this study, uncovered feelings of frustration experienced by young EAL learners due to the teachers' reliance upon the English language as the means of communication in the Literacy Hour. The enjoyment gained from the use of home language materials and their perceived value for EAL pupils was also captured. This mixed-methods research approach therefore enabled the experiences and perceptions of EAL pupils, teachers and support staff in relation to the Literacy Hour to be explored and also provided the opportunity to design home language 'talking stories' aimed at increasing 'access' to the Literacy Hour for EAL pupils. Whilst this educational tool is not considered a panacea for the educational disadvantage faced by EAL pupils, it does offer one form of practical help for both pupils and teachers.

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

ACCAC	Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwn as Aseu Cymru/ Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
BECTa	British Education Communications and Technology Agency
CAL	Computer assisted learning
EAL	English as an additional language
EALAW	English as an Additional Language Association of Wales
EMAG	Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant
EMAS	Ethnic Minority Achievement Service
Estyn	Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (formerly OHMCI)
GEST	Grants for Education Support and Training
ICT	Information Communications Technology
NLS	National Literacy Strategy
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Education: A primary arena in the fight against inequalities and social exclusion

This thesis, funded by an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) doctoral studentship explores issues around the school performance of pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) with reference to their participation within the National Literacy Strategy and in particular within the Literacy Hour. It fits firmly into the Research Council's thematic priority of 'Social Exclusion' (ESRC, 2000). Overcoming social exclusion has become a prominent policy issue for the 'New' Labour Government. Social exclusion has been defined as 'a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown' (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001, p.10) As Corbett (1999) acknowledges, social exclusion does not begin or end at set points, rather it is a lifelong process of experiencing alienation and frustration and therefore needs to be addressed in the early stages of education. Indeed, at the core of the social exclusion process lies poor educational achievement (Parson & Bynner, 2002). Within the education system itself, ethnic minority pupils may experience social exclusion in a number of ways. For example, ethnic minority pupils, notably Afro-Caribbean pupils, are disproportionately represented within school exclusion rates (Wright, Weekes & McGlaughlin, 2000). In addition, low ability groups have continued to act as 'dumping grounds' for an excessive number of ethnic minority pupils (Cummins, 1984).

Social exclusion can also be experienced by ethnic minority pupils in more subtle ways via the ethnocentricity of school practices and of the curricula. Education can therefore be seen as a primary arena in the fight against inequality and social exclusion.

Yet as McWilliam (1998 p. x) notes, with increasing diversity within the classroom, teaching is becoming

‘...increasingly more complex and teachers who have always struggled to provide a curriculum of relevant linguistic skills, knowledge and attitudes which keeps pace with children’s needs are ever more hard pressed to do so.’

To provide an inclusive education the cultures and languages of all children must be legitimised via the pedagogic practices, curricula and overall school organisation (Moore, 1999). Yet in practice, children continue to be excluded and marginalized through the persistence of culturally biased curricula and also through forms of pedagogy that render pupils and their existing cultural practices as invisible (Coard, 1971; Moore, 1999). In particular, the curriculum is often taught at children’s English language proficiency levels as opposed to their cognitive levels and without reference to their prior ‘lived experiences’.

Inclusion within the curriculum can be increased by encouraging the use of the pupil’s preferred language, enabling them to tackle cognitively challenging tasks in a way denied to them by the insistence on the use of English (Moore, 1999). As Cummins (1984) advises, cognitive development needs to be conceptualised within existing knowledge and this cannot take place if instruction is solely through a language which the pupil is only beginning to learn.

Where children are learning a second language, it will be some time before they are able to express ideas commensurate with their intellectual and social development.

Brumfit, Moon & Tongue (1991, p. 223) also stress the importance of appropriate experiences of using the first language during this time and point out that it

‘should not be underestimated, both for cultural reasons and for promoting intellectual development and learning, which will ultimately contribute to their [pupils’] competence in using their second language.’

There is now considerable research pointing to the benefits of home language use within the classroom. Both in terms of the pupils’ development of English and in acknowledging language more broadly, not just as a code but also as a cultural resource (Commission for Racial Equality, 1983). In recognising, acknowledging and making use of the children’s bilingual background and identity, the teacher ensures that their capacity to learn is also increased and extended (Commission for Racial Equality, 1983).

In this vein and pertinent to the focus of this study, the DfES (2002a, p.73) considers successful schools to be those which

‘show they value all children’s home languages: where possible, use home languages in teaching to support understanding and encourage and where possible, build on children’s literacy development in home languages as well as English.’

Where a first language is given real status within the classroom, pupils are likely to settle more easily, participate more actively and confidently and draw on all their language and literacy knowledge in order to learn. In addition, teachers are more likely to recognise a pupil’s full range of abilities, raising overall expectations for educational performance.

Bonds with parents and the local community are likely to be strengthened with greater participation within the educational setting (DfES, 2002a).

Despite this fulsome acknowledgement by government, Levine (1990) some fifteen years ago suggested that home language usage within the mainstream classroom was a rare commodity. Whilst the home language has been found to be invaluable for teachers at times of emergency or distress, Gregory (1996) points out that it is not envisaged as playing a decisive part in young children's formal education. A range of factors, including available resources, perceived need and teacher motivation, appear to influence its inclusion within the curriculum. There is more likelihood of home language use where bilingual support is available. Even then however, only a small number of children are likely to have access to such support, which is often used on a remedial basis (Gregory, 1996; Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000; OFSTED, 2002). Where it is provided, it often appears on a piecemeal basis amounting to one or two hours per week.

Where multiple languages are present in a single class, the use of home languages is often dismissed as impractical or focuses only upon one or two particular languages: providing a 'double-dose' of exclusion for the other minority languages present. Where there are no adults available who share the home language, the DfES (2002a) recommends that all languages and literacies of the classroom are still explicitly welcomed and put to use for learning in the classroom. This recommendation is rather 'ideal' and it is unclear what this might actually mean for teachers and pupils operating in such classrooms. In reality, there often appears 'superficial readiness' to support the 'forms' of equal opportunities without necessarily providing or managing

the 'means'. A salient observation made by Levine (1990) over a decade ago. Clearly, such 'responsiveness' to language diversity in classrooms has huge resource, time and cost implications.

With the increasing profile of Information Communications Technology (ICT) within the school environment, it is suggested that one way of utilising home languages is via the medium of the computer. Whilst ICT is not considered a 'magic cure', it has been found to offer an individualised approach to learning within a non-threatening environment (Hope, 1986). In an era where teachers are being encouraged to improve their computer skills, it is possible to purchase 'off the shelf' software that will enable a teacher to 'scan and dub' material of their choice onto the computer screen. This enables material to be tailored to the specific needs of individuals or groups and for the 'voice' to be recorded in any chosen language. Whilst it can be argued that this is just one form of 'quick fix' for a more abiding difficulty of overcoming marginalisation (Moore, 1999), the reality is that there are many pupils (in some cases 70 to 80 per cent of the class) who are learning English as a second language and need practical help 'here and now'. This doctoral research project reports upon the research, development and implementation of home language computer materials as one response to this urgent situation. It has evolved from a desire to build upon children's existing language skills and the language experiences which they bring from home to school. There has been plenty of rhetoric espousing the importance of social inclusion and 'equal opportunities for all' but in reality very little has been done for those pupils who are classified as EAL learners.

Fieldwork data (see Chapter 6) have repeatedly highlighted teachers' genuine willingness for home language use within the classroom through the use of bilingual assistants. Without the benefit of bilingual assistants, teachers have identified a number of reasons for not using home languages within class including a lack of relevant resources, 'know-how', time and support. The diversity of languages present within a single class has also been cited as a challenge or deterrent to teachers. Without the financial resources to employ a large number of bilingual assistants, the breach between the theoretical ideal and the realities of the classroom continues to grow. The purpose of this study is to 'bridge the gap' between policy and practice and illustrate one way of making home language use within the classroom a feasible option. This doctoral research has utilised mixed research methods and has also involved the development and design of computer based 'home language' materials which are believed to be a useful educational tool within the classroom. A modest 'CAL intervention' with post tests was undertaken with 40 EAL pupils (see Chapter 7). In particular, the materials have been developed to assist EAL pupils and their teachers within the Literacy Hour. Clearly the usefulness of the resulting CD materials and talking texts in 'home languages' will eventually depend upon the ways in which schools, teachers and bilingual support staff embrace and use them.

It is estimated that the ethnic minority population, in general, will have doubled by the year 2020 (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996). Despite the fact that more and more EAL pupils will be entering mainstream schools, little research has been undertaken to evaluate the effects of introducing bilingual computer-based material. Notable exceptions are the Fabula project (Edwards, Monaghan & Knight, 2000) which assessed perceived benefits from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with pupils and

representatives of the Hounslow Language Service (2005) who report pupil comments on factors such as enjoyment relating to the use of home language computer-based materials. Whilst these qualitative data collection approaches have provided worthwhile and valuable information, it was thought that for the purpose of this study, more quantifiable results were required alongside descriptive fieldwork data. This was considered particularly important if, as a result of the study, additional financial resources were to be invested in this type of material by the Local Education Authority and/ or the National Assembly for Wales. Indeed the particular research questions deriving from the aims of the study (see below) required specific kinds of data and of course approaches to data collection. Thus the research account provided here draws upon qualitative fieldwork data in one LEA and then progressively focuses upon a sample of 40 EAL pupils within two sampled schools who were the subjects of a 'CAL intervention'. The statistical analysis of their 'performances' generated important quantitative data. Together, these data are illuminative and provide a firm basis for policy and practice.

The Purposes and Intentions of the Study

The preceding section has identified the key concerns of the current study and these underpin the aims and principal research questions which have helped to ‘frame’ it. Across the life of the doctoral project the research questions have informed approaches to sampling, data collection strategies, the design of the CAL intervention and most importantly, helped to keep the research project in focus.

Aims of the study

The study has five main aims which are:

- 1) To examine how educational policy relating to the National Literacy Strategy is translated into practice for EAL learners within the mainstream classroom.

- 2) To explore the experiences and perceptions of EAL pupils, teachers and support staff in relation to the ‘Literacy Hour’.

- 3) To design and implement home language computer-based materials for the purpose of increasing ‘access’ to the Literacy Hour for EAL pupils.

- 4) To systematically evaluate the short term effectiveness of home language computer-based materials in assisting EAL pupils to identify unfamiliar English words.

- 5) To identify factors influencing the effectiveness of such materials.

These operating aims were then ‘sharpened’ somewhat into a set of more focussed research questions which are presented below.

Key research questions

There are four key research questions which 'frame' this project.

1) How does government policy relating to the National Literacy Strategy and in particular the 'Literacy Hour' translate into current educational practice within the classroom?

2) How do children for whom English is an additional language, experience the Literacy Hour and in particular, the 'carpet session?'

3) How do teachers mediate learning for children with English as an additional language within the 'literacy hour?'

- what strategies are employed by teachers?

- what language support exists?

- how do teachers explain and justify their approaches with EAL pupils?

4) To what extent does the introduction of the home language via the medium of ICT influence EAL pupils' ability to identify the meanings of unfamiliar words?

- are EAL pupils able to provide more detailed story retellings in English as a result of listening to the story in their home language?

These research questions and in particular, question four, reflect an enthusiasm on my part to conduct research which would do more than simply highlight existing problems. From the outset, I was committed to develop, trial and implement home language resources that might make a positive contribution to the literacy experiences of EAL pupils. To this effect both schools where the research was carried out

benefited from the installation of 'Clicker 4' software (described in Chapter 5) and a range of bilingual materials including copies of the CD-ROMs used within this study. This research then was not simply a 'raid for data', but a project in which something beneficial was given to the participating schools.

The structure of the thesis, its key sections and outline of ensuing chapters.

This thesis has been presented in three main sections to help organise the context, fieldwork and empirical material in a readable narrative which documents the doctoral learning journey.

Section One introduces the context for the study. Chapter One sets the scene by introducing the reader to the ‘facts and figures’ relating to the social exclusion of ethnic minority groups. The ‘official’ government response to ‘immigrant’ ethnic minority groups since World War II is highlighted, together with current issues relating to ‘inclusion’ and ‘access’ within mainstream education. The literature review presented in Chapters Two and Three is something of a ‘patchwork quilt’ whereby themes relevant to the current study are addressed. It is not exhaustive but orients the reader into diverse disciplines that are particularly relevant to the enquiry. For example, work on second language acquisition draws upon socio-linguistic, psychological and cognitive perspectives. Similarly, the ‘Literacy Hour’ is portrayed using historical, policy and sociology of education stances. Thus the thesis is theoretically eclectic and interdisciplinary in its approach.

Section Two presents two separate chapters which detail the doctoral research journey. Chapter Four is a reflexive, confessional account (Walford, 1991) and shares with readers false starts, blind alleys and thwarted interventions, all of which informed the subsequent research design and fieldwork approaches. This chapter provides an

honest narrative of sequences, their attendant problems and is a testimony to the research apprenticeship (Delamont, 2002). Chapter Five discusses the main strategies of data collection and the sampling of schools, classes and pupils. It concludes with a description of an exploratory pilot study which informed the subsequent CAL intervention. The latter involved the development of two computer-based stories with home language translations in Arabic, Somali and Sylheti. These were then used to examine the contribution of the home language to assist EAL pupils to identify unfamiliar English words and retell stories.

Section Three presents empirical material from the different stages of the study. Chapter Six draws upon observational fieldwork notes and semi-structured interviews with head teachers, class teachers and language support personnel, all of which reveals issues about the 'Literacy Hour'. The particular challenges for front line staff and EAL pupils are highlighted.

A stand-alone Chapter Seven contains discussions of procedures, findings and subsequent analysis deriving from the CAL intervention which was implemented to address research question four (see page 11). The concluding chapter of the thesis draws together key findings, their implications for policy and practice and identifies areas for future research.

CHAPTER 1

Chapter One

Historical context and overview

This opening chapter sets out to locate the present study within the context of ‘social inclusion’. There are eight main sections which together provide an overview of the challenges facing EAL pupils within mainstream education. The historical origins of our current-day diversity are explored, followed by a brief tour through education policy relating to EAL learners. An examination is then made of the terms ‘inclusion’ and ‘access’ in an attempt to ‘unpack’ what they mean in practice for EAL pupils. A comparison of funding levels between England and Wales for addressing social exclusion issues is also made. The scale of the risk of social exclusion is identified, providing facts and figures relating to the ethnic minority population in general and to school underachievement.

Ethnic and linguistic diversity within England and Wales

The heterogenous linguistic, religious, ethnic and cultural composition of present-day British society can largely be traced back to the migration patterns of particular groups during the ‘golden years’ of industrial expansion of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Substantial demographic changes in the post-Second World War period motivated by the need for economic growth continued the trend. Britain actively began to recruit workers from the Commonwealth, in particular the ‘New Commonwealth’ countries of India, Pakistan and the West Indies (Commission for Racial Equality, 2003). Due to high unemployment and pressures on the land in those countries, a ready supply of workers wishing to relocate was available. In addition,

other factors such as the tightening of control on immigration to the USA played a key role in increasing the profile of the UK (Edwards & Redfern, 1992; Fyfe & Figueroa, 1993). During the 1960s, more stringent immigration laws resulted in the restriction of new arrivals. From the 1970s and 1980s, the largest group of immigrants were political refugees, most notably, East African Asians, Vietnamese, Sri Lankan Tamils, Somalis and Eritreans (Edwards & Redfern, 1992). From the mid 1980s onwards, European and British asylum policy converged resulting in increasingly greater hurdles being set out in front of potential asylum seekers: 'fortress-Europe' emerged (Rutter, 2001).

Within Wales, in the early 1900s, Cardiff was Britain's largest coal exporter. 'The growth of Cardiff docklands attracted a kaleidoscope of immigrants to build the docks, to work aboard the tramp steamers and to otherwise service the new industrial and maritime city' (Evans, Dodsworth & Barnett, 1984, p. 6) Cardiff Bay, formerly known as Tiger Bay, became a cosmopolitan area, with residents from over fifty nations, including Greece, Spain, Italy, Somalia and the Indian and Arabic continents. The racial composition of Cardiff underwent a further change with the First World War, with the influx of large numbers of Arabic, Somali, West Indian and African men. 'During the First World War, ships trading with West and East Africa had been requisitioned by the government and their Arab and African crews used as labour in Cardiff and other seaports' (Evans, Dodsworth & Barnett, 1984, p. 11). Much of the Cardiff docklands disappeared with the redevelopment of the 1960s, resulting in high unemployment and poor living conditions for the multicultural community.

Indeed as Tomlinson (1992, p. 437) notes, migrant workers recruited to undertake less desirable jobs in post-war Britain have found themselves

‘...virtually at the bottom of the social structure of British cities and, although there is a small, growing minority middle class, minorities are still mostly defined, politically and economically, as part of an under-class inhabiting inner city areas.’

The ethnic minority population in Wales has continued to grow as a result of the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers. For example, the Somali population within Cardiff and Newport doubled to approximately 4,000 as a result of an influx of refugees following the outbreak of civil war in Somalia in May 1989 (EALAW, 2003).

Changes in the terms used to refer to pupils whose first language is not English have reflected how the demographic, educational and political ground has shifted over time (Beaumont, Coates & Jones, 2000). Early references were to ‘immigrants’ referring to the influx of families to Britain in response to post-war needs. By the late 1970s, educationalists had begun to refer to children of ‘ethnic origin’ to reflect the growing number of ‘second generation’ children, born in the UK. The term English as a Second Language (ESL) pupils then became prevalent and was superseded during the 1980s by the term ‘bilingual learners’ in acknowledgment of children’s existing language abilities. While the term ‘bilingual learners’ is still in use, the term English as an Additional Language (EAL) is now the generally accepted term. It acknowledges that for many children English may be acquired as at least a third language. It also reflects the notion of additive rather than subtractive bilingualism (Beaumont, Coates & Jones, 2000). Within this thesis the term English as an Additional Language (EAL) will be used. The terms ‘ethnic minority’ and ‘minority ethnic’ are also used. The

latter term highlights the fact that all groups in society have an ethnic origin, including the dominant majority group.

Whilst the UK has always housed a multilingual population, the diversity in language and dialects is increasing. There are no precise statistics regarding the number of people for whom English is an additional language. It is estimated however, that in England alone, over half a million school pupils have a home language other than English and many of these are in the process of learning English as an additional language (DfES, 2003a). The range of languages currently in use has not been confirmed. However, a census by the Inner London Education Authority (1982, cited by Linguistic Minorities Project, 1985) identified a total of 131 different languages in Inner London alone. Recent research carried out in Wales has identified a population of over 15,000 ethnic minority pupils from over 100 different ethnic minority backgrounds, that account for over 90 different languages (EALAW, 2003). This figure has risen by 2000 pupils within one year, reflecting the increasing numbers of ethnic minority pupils within Wales. Based on the 2001/2 figures, ethnic minority pupils are distributed between more than 840 schools (c.40% of schools in Wales) and constitute a total of 2.5 % of the total school population. Over 53% of these pupils attend schools in the centre of Cardiff, with over 17% in Newport and over 9% in Swansea, with the remaining population dispersed throughout more rural areas of North, West and Mid Wales (EALAW, 2003).

A number of different classroom compositions will therefore be evident within mainstream schools in Wales. For example, in some schools, one particular ethnic minority population may be dominant, whilst in others a range of ethnic minorities

may be present. In contrast, some schools may not have any ethnic minority pupils or just a small number in attendance. Whatever the classroom composition, specific measures need to be in place to provide pupils for whom English is an additional language with the language support that they require (Gregory, 1996).

Language support-policy and practice: changes over time.

During the post second world war period, there was no central policy in place and little in the way of a planned or systematic response to the educational needs of newly arrived ethnic minority children (Leung & Franson, 2001). Whilst there was no formal policy declaration, it became apparent that the tacit assumption was eventual cultural and social assimilation (Leung & Franson, 2001). The traditional emphasis for schooling 'immigrant children' therefore focused upon developing their English language skills as quickly as possible, to enable them to follow the classroom curriculum. This was reflected within the Plowden Report (DES, 1967) which considered 'immigrant' children as 'deprived' and 'handicapped' by their unfamiliarity with English language and culture. The solution was considered to lie in the assimilation of 'immigrants' by bussing children to other schools when the proportion of 'immigrants' reached 33% and through providing a 'compensating environment' by 'enriched intellectual nourishment'. In reality, this comprised intensive English lessons within withdrawal classes, where repetition by rote was common (Gregory, 1996). At this time, many schools actively discouraged the use of the mother tongue for fear of impeding progress in English (Houlton, 1985).

The 1970s, however, marked a distinct political shift from compensation and separation to recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity within schools (Gregory, 1996). A major turning point was the publication of the Bullock Report (DES, 1975) which acknowledged the cultural and linguistic breach between the home and school environments and recognised the importance of the home culture:

‘No child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he (sic) crosses the school threshold, nor to live and act as though school and home represent two totally separate and different cultures which have to be kept firmly apart. The curriculum should reflect many elements of that part of his (sic) life which a child lives outside school’
(Para.20.5).

The Bullock Report also highlighted the value of the home language and its potential role within school:

‘As a linguistically conscious nation in the modern world, we should see it as an asset, as something to be nurtured and one of the agencies that should nurture it is the school’
(Para 20.17).

Within the largely optimistic era of the late 1970s, The Department of Education and Science set up the Linguistic Minorities Project (findings published in 1983). The aims of this research project included providing an account of patterns of bilingualism in three different urban settings in England - in Bradford, Coventry and London - and investigating the attitudes of parents from linguistic minority groups towards the teaching of their home or community languages. A key feature was the development of appropriate policies and practices to foster EAL pupils’ bilingualism. Two supporting arguments were cited for this. First, that children’s existing rich linguistic resources should be maintained. Second, it was acknowledged that the school system should not impose disadvantages on certain pupils, primarily

‘...through a rigid imposition of English, which restricts non-English speakers’ opportunities to learn through the medium of their own language’
(DES, 1983, p. 13)

A monolingual English curriculum was considered to result in a

‘... general slowing down in the educational development of bilingual children due to a lack of recognition of existing social and linguistic skills’.

(DES, 1983, p. 13)

Home language use was therefore considered necessary to facilitate equal outcomes within the schooling process for EAL pupils and their monolingual peers. The study concluded that many ethnic minority languages were ignored or devalued as both individual and societal resources. The use of the home languages within school was considered to be a ‘...minimal investment’ which would ‘...offer the country an educational, economic and political resource of considerable value’ (DES, 1983, p. 162).

The DES also funded the Mother Tongue and English Teaching (MOTET) project which was set up to evaluate the value and feasibility of using the first language of EAL children within reception classes. A programme of bilingual education was implemented in two schools with an experimental group receiving half of their education through the medium of English and half through Panjabi. The control group received the same education through the medium of English only. The study concluded that a bilingual programme

‘... was likely to be of more benefit to bilingual children than a programme which demanded that children switch languages on entry to school’

(Fitzpatrick, 1987, p.111).

The children within the experimental group performed better in tasks with a higher conceptual content and improved significantly in their home language of Panjabi. The use of the home language therefore enabled EAL pupils to ‘access’ existing

knowledge and utilise it within their learning. The remit of the project was however criticised for being narrow, focusing primarily on how far mother-tongue teaching would speed up the acquisition of English. The research team was unable to demonstrate clearly that one curriculum was substantially more effective than the other and the project came to an end at the beginning of the 1980s (Gregory, 1996).

By the end of the 1980s, the positive developments of the 1970s had resulted in the bilingualism of minority children no longer being seen as a deficit. However, neither was it treated as an asset. Findings on the widespread bilingualism and multilingualism of linguistic minority children, as reported in the Linguistic Minorities Project, never attracted much political or educational interest in the planning of a multicultural curriculum (Gregory, 1996).

It is suggested that the potential cost of provision, together with the prevailing political ideology during the 1980s led to the official policy decision not to fund bilingual education within the state system. This decision was also communicated within the Swann Committee report titled '*Education for All*' (DES, 1985) which states that 'community languages' are best taken care of by local communities and taught outside of the school system. Consequently, community language teaching remains the responsibility of the local community and receives little or no government funding (Milbourne, 2002).

Whilst the Swann Report explicitly rejected the idea of bilingual education programmes, the benefits of individuals acting as 'bilingual resources' within mainstream classrooms to help with transitional needs were acknowledged. The form of bilingual support that has resulted consists of increasing numbers of unqualified

bilingual classroom assistants, occasionally employed as part of a centrally based team or more often based within a school under the direction of the head teacher. They tend to be timetabled to work in one or more classrooms, usually with their role negotiated individually with each teacher (Bourne, 2001). Bilingual support tends to be provided in the early years of primary education and is overtly transitional in its goals: to facilitate the development of English leading to monolingual English-medium education (Martin-Jones and Saxena, 2003).

To examine the considerable variations in bilingual support offered from one LEA to another and from one school to another, Martin-Jones and Saxena (2003) undertook a three-year research project in one LEA in the North West of England in the early 1990s. They highlighted the unique opportunities that bilingual classroom assistants have to scaffold learning for children who share a cultural heritage similar to their own. Such staff are able to build on existing funds of knowledge and the cultural capital that children bring from home, in ways that few monolingual teachers are able to do, and therefore provide valuable support to EAL pupils. However, they also acknowledge that in practice, bilingual classroom assistants are often restricted by classroom practices and have relatively few opportunities to act as mediators within the verbal and visual contexts that children encounter in school. In these instances, bilingual classroom assistants may be viewed as a ‘resource’ for the classroom teacher, teacher’s helper or ‘...as someone who is able to relieve the teacher of the burden of dealing with children who are at the relatively early stage in learning English’ (Martin-Jones and Saxena, 2003, p.280). Current bilingual support can therefore be described as ‘minimal’ both in terms of the amount of support provided and also the aims of such support.

The Education Reform Act of 1988 marked the beginning of a new era in which the proclamation that the National Curriculum would

‘... be taking account of ethnic and cultural diversity and ensuring that the curriculum provides equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of ethnic origin or gender’

(National Curriculum Council, 1988, p.4).

The assertion that schools should support equal opportunities was reiterated by the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC, 1989) with the claim that the Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) avoided race, culture and gender bias, were open to translation into another language other than English or Welsh and did not contain material likely to disadvantage ethnic minority pupils.

Yet in practice, little change appears to have taken place within the classroom. The mainstreaming of EAL pupils as an educational response to the needs of EAL pupils has enabled policy makers and educators to claim that equality of access to educational provision has been achieved (Leung & Franson, 2001). This has effectively removed the need to commit curriculum time and resources to explicitly address the specific language and learning needs of EAL pupils (Leung & Franson, 2001). Whilst the teaching of EAL pupils has been a cause of much educational and political debate among teachers, parents, educationalists and politicians for many years, little practical assistance has been provided within mainstream education (Verma, Corrigan & Firth, 1995).

Educational policies: Inclusion and Access.

The ultimate goal for any education system in a democratic society must be to facilitate the social, academic and personal development of the individuals within it. However, it is important to recognise that an education system does not exist in a historical or social vacuum. It functions within a framework of specific values, attitudes and norms as determined by the dominant culture (Verma, 1988).

As Young (1993, p. 133) argues, if particular groups

‘...have greater economic, political or social power, their group related experiences, points of view or cultural assumptions will tend to become the norm, biasing the standards or procedures of achievement and inclusion that govern social, political and economic institutions’.

According to Young (1993) the interactions between dominant and subordinate groups within wider society will therefore give rise to particular forms of educational structure. These will determine the organisation of schools, the curriculum content and pedagogy.

The British education system is no exception - its deeply monocultural orientation is evident in its aims, objectives, contents, methods and assessment procedures (Verma, 1988). Indeed, the National Curriculum has been attacked for a general failure to engage with the issues of cultural diversity and social inequality (Runnymede Trust, 2000). The officially stated view is that the National Curriculum as a whole is able to accommodate the learning needs of all pupils, including ethnic minority pupils.

Implicit within this view is the assumption that

‘... there is a universal language learning model or process for all pupils irrespective of their language background’

(Mohan, Leung & Davison, 2001, p.204).

The National Curriculum is therefore based upon a ‘set of idealised native speaker competencies and norms’ (Mohan, Leung & Davison, 2001, p.204). Whilst a raft of educational based initiatives have been introduced with the explicit aim of raising standards, these reforms have tended to focus upon improving educational attainment for *all* pupils. This ‘colour-blind’ approach has been criticised due to the tendency to subsume the needs and experiences of ethnic minority pupils within a broader and less

specific set of issues, for example, through talk of ‘disadvantage’ and ‘inner-city’ problems. As the Swann Report (DES, 1985, p. 213) argued, specific issues relating to discrimination need to be taken into consideration:

‘Whilst...ethnic minority communities can in general be seen to suffer from a considerable degree of deprivation in a number of fields such as employment and housing, the very particular circumstances which have exacerbated this situation, notably the influence of racism, must we feel be taken into account.’

Despite this, talk of ‘all pupils’ in ‘all schools’ is widely used, focusing on blanket ‘one size fits all’ policies without due regard for their particular impact on ethnic minority pupils. Consequently, existing policies have been promoted even when they have enforced and extended a series of reforms that have been demonstrated to operate to the disadvantage of ethnic minority pupils and their communities (Gillborn, 1997a). The failure within schools to address issues relating to ethnic diversity has proved counter-productive, enabling existing inequalities of opportunity to continue. (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996).

Indeed, primary schools that have reviewed and changed their teaching strategies following the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been criticised for their lack of ethnic focus (OFSTED, 1999). In a review of 48 ethnically diverse schools, OFSTED (1999) found that most schools did not systematically evaluate these initiatives to ensure that all groups benefited equally. None of the schools routinely monitored the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register to check whether any one ethnic group was represented disproportionately on it.

Alexander (2004, p.17) suggests that, rather than relying on their informed professional judgement when deciding upon the most beneficial forms of education for their pupils, educators acquiesce to what is expected and required by the government, consequently 'informed professional judgement' can be interpreted as 'political compliance'.

'Education for all' can therefore be viewed as a continuation of a long history of assimilation: with the emphasis on giving all pupils the same 'diet', designed by and for one cultural group (Bourne, 1989). Young (1993, p. 133) asserted

'...when oppressed or disadvantaged social groups are different from the dominant group, then an allegedly group-neutral assimilationist strategy of inclusion only tends to perpetuate inequality.'

Therefore whilst the physical inclusion of EAL pupils within mainstream schools may have been achieved, individuals are likely to continue to be excluded or marginalized in other ways, partly through the persistence of a culturally biased school curriculum but also through forms of pedagogy that render pupils and their existing cultural experiences 'invisible' (Moore, 1999). This 'symbolic exclusion' invalidates major 'non-standard' aspects of the individual's culture and linguistic heritage.

'Typically this includes the denial or marginalisation of minority students' first language: not just the words, sounds and visual appearances of those languages, but also their protocols, their styles and their genres'

(Moore, 1999, pp 33-34).

Even when encouraged to feel welcome within the classroom, EAL pupils are likely to find their own cultural practices, values and skills rendered largely invisible and invalid (Moore, 1999). The dominant culture's skills, values and practices are not presented as mere alternatives to their existing skills and practices but as the 'right and only' ones (Apple, 1990).

The main consequence of this for many ethnic minorities, both collectively and individually has been the enforced loss of their own ethnic, cultural and linguistic habitus as the necessary price of entry to the civic realm (May, 1999).

Later empirical chapters in this dissertation illustrate the ways in which some EAL children experience teacher 'rules' and have their home language 'talk' policed by what can only be termed as ethnocentric teachers. Within the 21st century, this does not offer an inclusive education.

What is inclusive education?

Lunt and Norwich (1999, p. 23) suggest that the term 'inclusion' within the educational system, originated within the context of a '...concern to educate pupils and students with disabilities and difficulties in learning in mainstream settings'.

More recently, the term has taken on a wider significance and popularity as the concept of inclusion or social inclusion has taken a broader social and political value.

'Inclusion within this wider sense is comparable to equality as a social value in relating to all aspects of social disadvantage, oppression and discrimination'

(Lunt & Norwich, 1999, p. 23).

By viewing social inclusion as a general political and social value, it can be argued that this leads to a certain level of abstractness, making it more difficult to define in specific terms. Fletcher-Campbell (2001) postulates that the negative features of exclusion are perhaps more readily identified than inclusion which often rests on a set of assumptions.

Barton (1997) views inclusive education as a response to diversity, empowering all members and celebrating difference. It stems from demands for an inclusive society which stands for 'social justice, equity and democratic participation'. By doing so, a school restructures its curriculum organisation and provision and allocates resources in response to individual needs to enable equality of opportunity. Barriers to inclusion are therefore identified, challenged and removed. It has been argued that the current educational system, whilst physically inclusive, is largely indifferent to cultural diversity (Bourne, 1989; Gillborn, 1997a; Moore, 1999).

The National Curriculum 2000 Statutory Statement on Inclusion defines inclusion as 'providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils'. There are three underlying principles, namely: setting suitable learning challenges, responding to pupils' diverse needs and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils (DfES, 2002a). Under the banner of 'setting suitable learning challenges', teachers are encouraged to offer every pupil the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. Teachers are advised to be flexible in their approach and to '...teach the knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that suit their pupils' abilities' (DfES, 2002a, p. 12). This may mean utilising earlier or later elements of the National Curriculum '...so that individuals can progress and show what they can achieve.' The inherent danger within this however is that EAL pupils may be taught at their current language level rather than their cognitive ability level (Cummins, 1984).

By 'responding to pupils' diverse learning needs,' teachers are reminded of the need to set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve, including

‘pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds ...and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds’ (DfES, 2003a, p.15). Teachers are told of the need to take specific action to respond to their pupils’ diverse needs by: creating effective learning environments, securing their motivation and concentration and providing equality of opportunity through their teaching approaches so that all pupils can take part in lessons fully and effectively (DfES, 2002a). The most effective schools are characterised as ensuring that

‘Lessons are planned and delivered as effectively as possible and teachers are equipped to reflect the diverse cultures and identities of the communities represented in their school through their lessons’

(DfES, 2003a, p. 15).

In addition, ‘Every pupil gets the personal support they need to overcome barriers to learning’ (DfES, 2003a, p.15) thereby placing the onus upon the teachers to modify and adapt the curriculum to provide all pupils with relevant and appropriately challenging work.

The DfES documents *‘The National Literacy Strategy: Supporting Pupil’s Learning English as an Additional Language’* (DfES, 2002a) and *‘Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils’* (DfES, 2003a) appear adept at providing prescriptive lists of characteristics of ‘good inclusive practice’ but as Alexander (2004, p. 20) notes, these amount to ‘...aspirations to the point of banality...’ They do not provide a profound and novel insight of lasting value for teachers; some teachers are, in general, already aware of what needs to be done. What they require is practical guidance concerning *how* to do it, particularly within the realities of large class sizes and diverse ability ranges. Indeed, fieldwork findings in the sampled primary schools

which are presented in later empirical chapters highlight the practical difficulties experienced by classroom teachers in providing appropriately differentiated learning experiences together with the intensive support required by individual EAL pupils.

For education to be fully 'inclusive' it must legitimise the cultures and languages of all children. For Barton (1997, p.234) it is about

'... listening to unfamiliar voices, being open, empowering all members and celebrating 'difference' in dignified ways...it is about how, where and why, and with what consequences we educate all pupils...[and] involves a serious commitment to the task of identifying, challenging and contributing to the removal of injustices'.

This can only be achieved by providing a curriculum that meets the educational needs of the full range of children (Lewis, 1995). This is considered dependent on an ability to

'...institute classroom management techniques, curriculum development and pedagogic practices which respond systematically to the diversity represented in their classrooms'.

(Lewis, 1995, p.20).

In doing so, inclusive schools need to provide the same basic conditions for ethnic minority pupils as the majority group experiences (Collier & Thomas, 1999). This therefore includes the use of culturally sensitive materials, teaching techniques and educational contents (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2004). For EAL pupils, this necessarily involves the use of the children's first languages within the curriculum.

Collier and Thomas (1999, p.1) explain what this means for students who come from a bilingual community:

‘... these interdependent processes - non-stop cognitive, academic and linguistic development - must occur in a supportive socio-cultural environment through their first language and their second language.’

This highlights the right of EAL children to ‘access’ the curriculum through their first language.

‘Access’: what is it?

It is widely acknowledged by the central UK government and Wales Assembly Government that all pupils should have ‘access to equal educational opportunity’ and that barriers to ‘access’ should be recognised and overcome (DfES, 2003a; ACCAC, 2001). It is difficult to determine however, what exactly is meant by the term ‘access’ and indeed what ‘equal educational opportunity’ actually means. From the Welsh perspective, it is acknowledged that individuals are different and therefore equal opportunities does not necessarily mean just treating everyone the same (ACCAC, 2001). The Government and the National Assembly for Wales both seem to favour a range of ‘broad brush’ statements without providing detailed quantifiable definitions of terms such as ‘access’ and ‘participation’. For example, the document *‘Equal Opportunities and Diversity in the School Curriculum in Wales’* (ACCAC, 2001, p.18), provides examples of ‘good practice’ within case study schools. Statements such as ‘... all children have equal access to all subjects and activities within the school, regardless of gender, disability or race’ and ‘We value all languages equally within the school and the community’ (p.21) provide little insight into what this actually means in practice.

In reality, equality of opportunity within the school system is considered as 'given' where all children have 'access' to the same monolingual curriculum (Cummins, 1984). This quite clearly does not constitute equality of opportunity for individuals whose first language is other than English. Participation, it is suggested, operates at different levels within the education system, the institution and teacher. The right to participate at one level may or may not be matched by participation at another level (Lunt & Norwich, 1999). Being physically present in the class teachers' 'Literacy Hour', as we shall see in later chapters, does not always mean access or inclusion.

'Access' as measured in terms of equality of outcome is considered a firmer or stronger measure. Collier & Thomas (1999, p. 1) provide a specific and measurable outcome for equality of opportunity for EAL pupils

'...the average test scores of English language learners and native English speakers, which are quite different at the beginning of the school years, should be equivalent by the end of their school years, as measured by on-grade-level tests of all school subjects administered in English.'

From this perspective, it is imperative to acknowledge that native English speakers are not 'sitting around waiting for ESL students to catch up with them' (Collier & Thomas, 1999, p. 2). Monolingual English pupils are continuing to progress year on year. The requirement for EAL pupils is therefore to catch up by improving at a much greater rate (on average 15 months progress within a 10 month school year) than their monolingual peers (Collier & Thomas, 1999).

There are therefore two critical factors for EAL pupils: Firstly, they need to be able to understand the curriculum - a challenge in itself when taught solely through the medium of English. Secondly, they have to acquire new knowledge whilst learning the

language. Yet, in reality the ability of any pupil to learn a new language and curriculum content at the same time needs to be questioned. 'Equal opportunity' and providing 'access' in this situation means more than providing EAL pupils with the same curriculum as monolingual learners. It is about positive discrimination to help EAL pupils overcome the barriers to learning and valid assessment of their attainments.

Inclusion is therefore a process - it is not just about providing 'access'. It encompasses the curriculum, teacher expectations and teaching styles, leadership roles and the removal of all exclusionary practice (Clough, 1998). Schools and teachers with a population of EAL pupils in their classrooms need to be self consciously pro-active and strategic in targeting and scaffolding the language and cognitive needs of such learners. Such inclusion work needs strong policy to drive forward practice and inevitably this needs funding to resource it. This is discussed below.

Equity and Funding Issues.

The Labour Government has adopted the term 'social inclusion' and developed it within its social policy, as evidenced by the establishment of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU). This was established in December 1997 by the prime minister, to improve government action to reduce social exclusion by producing 'joined-up solutions to joined-up problems'. The main focus of the SEU has been on: Truancy and School Exclusions, Rough Sleeping, Teenage Pregnancy, Training and Employment Opportunities for 16-18 year olds, and Deprived Neighbourhoods.

In an effort to reduce social exclusion in education the government has introduced a range of initiatives, including Excellence in Cities, Education Action Zones and breakfast and homework clubs (Majors, 2001). Whilst these steps should be welcomed, many of the policies are considered to be 'colour blind' and fail to address the specific needs of ethnic minority populations (Majors, 2001). As Gillborn and Youdell (1999) acknowledge, despite superficial acknowledgement of existing 'race' inequality the policies currently in place fail to address this inequality.

Funding Issues: A snapshot from England.

Within England, schools receive funding to address equality and diversity from general school funding and the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), which is currently worth £155 million a year and is distributed through the Standards Fund (DfES, 2003a). Changes in allocation of funding in 2003 have provided a basic per-pupil funding allowance with top-ups for additional educational needs and for the costs of recruiting and retaining staff. It is estimated that by 2005-6 the average increase in spending per pupil will exceed £1000 in real terms (DfES, 2003a).

In a review of provision, OFSTED found that EMAG was increasingly being used to meet the initial needs of newly-arrived asylum seekers, giving less flexibility to focus on raising achievement of British Born minority ethnic pupils (DfES, 2003a). The introduction of a Vulnerable Children's Grant from 2003 was intended to give LEAs and schools greater flexibility to respond to the immediate needs of children of asylum seekers, travellers and other vulnerable groups (DfES, 2003a).

Funding Issues in Wales.

Whilst the UK central government has set up a social inclusion unit, Wales established in 2001 a 'Community Regeneration and Social Inclusion Policy Board'. *The Third Annual Report on Social Inclusion in Wales* (WAG, 2003b) states that the aim is to 'take a strategic view of the effectiveness of a wide range of policies and programmes in tackling deprivation' (WAG, 2003b, p.9). A team of civil servants and policy makers with responsibility for social inclusion is in place.

The Welsh Assembly Government has announced provision of £49.43 million (gross) for 2005-6 for the Better Schools Fund. This funding is available for a number of key areas including: raising standards in literacy and numeracy with a specific focus on key stage 3, improving the transition from primary to secondary schools and

'...supporting improved educational outcomes for children and young people at risk of social exclusion including those from ethnic minorities...'

(WAG, 2003a, p.4).

Within this remit, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) is available to

'... improve equality of educational opportunity for all minority ethnic groups including, in particular, measures to assist pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and measures to improve standards of achievement and to tackle risk of under-achievement'

(WAG, 2003a, p.22).

The funding for 2003/4 was £3.82m with an additional £650,000 made available for 2005-6. A formula is used to allocate funding based on information such as the number of EAL pupils and their level of competence in English based on the

Assembly's five stage model of the acquisition of English as an additional language. This model details five stages of acquisition which range from Stage 'A' which is described as 'new to English' and characterises EAL learners who require a considerable amount of EAL support, to Stage 'E' which is described as 'fluent' and relates to learners who operate without EAL support across the curriculum (EALAW, 2003). Depending upon factors such as the age and background of the pupil, the average time for an EAL pupil to move from Stage A to Stage E is a minimum of 7 to 10 years (EALAW, 2003). This finding is consistent with that of Collier and Thomas (1999) whose research review on EAL pupils also suggests these broad descriptive stages.

The number of EAL pupils within Wales is increasing each year in excess of current funding levels. A representative from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) in the LEA where this study was carried out, advised that due to the increased number of ethnic minority pupils, the available funding was being spread more thinly. It was anticipated that cutbacks in provision, including a reduction in the number of EAL support teachers and bilingual assistants, would be necessary unless more funding was made available.

This level of funding can be contrasted with that of England where the EMAG fund is £155 million per year (DfES, 2003a). Additional government and private funding sources are also available in England. An example of the investment being made in some areas of the country is evidenced in Tower Hamlets where 64% of pupils have English as an additional language. The Guardian Education Supplement (Walker, 2003) detailed the 'Towering Success' of Tower Hamlets in becoming the fastest

improving LEA in England. In 1990 the pass rate for five GCSEs at grades A* to C was a mere 8% but by 2003 this had increased to 44%. The number of pupils leaving with no qualifications decreased from 20% to 4%. The Chief Executive, Christine Gilbert, was reported as attributing their success to increased expectations and the belief that deprivation and poor educational performance need not go together. The Guardian article also noted the very large sums of money being injected into the borough. A reported total of £345 million had been provided to put into place the initiatives that had helped to make a difference. These initiatives included bilingual support, crèches and facilities for local parents.

To date, Wales does not have a similar ‘positive case study’ to report and appears unlikely to generate focused funding. The recent establishment of PLASC (Pupil Level Annual Schools Census) data collection from 2004 across Wales is however a positive move forwards. Details such as nationality and languages spoken at home are now being collected by every school and returned for analysis initially to LEAs and then to the Welsh Assembly statistical department. PLASC data will greatly improve what is known about the ‘character’ of pupils and schools in Wales.

Social Exclusion and its effects on minority ethnic groups.

According to the report ‘*Minority Ethnic Issues in Social Exclusion and Neighbourhood Renewal*’ (Cabinet Office, 2000), individuals from minority ethnic communities are at a disproportionate risk of social exclusion. The document asserts quite correctly that there is a significant lack of information about minority ethnic groups in society, and about the impact of policies and practices upon them. Most research on race and ethnicity in Britain tends to concentrate on the largest non-white

communities - Indian, Pakistani, African Asian, Chinese, African-Caribbean and African (Cabinet Office, 2000). These groups account for approximately 80% of the total minority ethnic population in Britain (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996; Rutter, 2001). Minimal information is available regarding the smaller minority ethnic groups and this is, of course, problematic.

It is important to acknowledge that ethnic minority groups are not simple homogenous groups (Gillborn, 1999). There is much variation within and between different groups. Minority ethnic social exclusion is a complex issue. In addition to numerous historical, religious and political differences, there are important social class differences between and within minority communities. Existing research suggests that social class is strongly associated with average differences in educational achievement (Gillborn, 1999). Regardless of gender and ethnic background, students from middle-class households are more likely to succeed academically than their peers from less economically advantaged backgrounds (Gorard, Taylor & Fitz, 2003). However, inequalities of achievement between ethnic groups persist even when social class is taken into account. Whilst middle-class African-Caribbean young men achieve better average results than their counterparts from working-class homes, they do not achieve average results comparable with white young men from similarly advantaged class positions (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996; Gillborn, 1997b).

Social Exclusion: some facts and figures

Overall, people from minority ethnic communities are more likely than others to live in deprived areas and overcrowded housing (Cabinet Office, 2000). Individuals from minority ethnic communities tend to be located in urban areas, with 56% living in the

44 most deprived local authorities in the country. Over two-thirds live in London and the three large metropolitan areas of the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire (Cabinet Office, 2000). In Wales, they are located mainly in the urban areas of Cardiff, Newport and Swansea (EALAW, 2003). Whilst a concentration of minority ethnic individuals live in the larger urban areas, it is important not to neglect the issues, such as isolation, faced by the small minority populations living in predominantly white or more diverse areas (Scourfield, Evans, Shah & Beynon, 2002).

Minority ethnic individuals are also more likely to be poor and unemployed, regardless of their age, sex, qualifications and place of residence (Cabinet Office, 2000). Twenty eight percent of people in England and Wales live in households that have incomes that are less than half the national average. This figure increases to 34% of Chinese people, over 40% of African-Caribbean and Indian people and over 80% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi people (Berthoud, 1997). Two-fifths of 16 year olds from minority ethnic communities, who were not in full-time education, were out of work in 1997 compared to one-fifth of their white counterparts (Cabinet Office, 2000). As a group, they are as well qualified as white people, yet even when they have high levels of qualifications, they are still less likely to be employed than a white person with equivalent qualifications.

Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African Caribbean people are also more likely to report suffering ill-health than white people. Minority ethnic individuals are also over represented throughout the criminal justice system, ranging from the number of individuals 'stopped and searched' to detention in prison (Cabinet Office, 2000).

Racial harassment and racist crime are considered to be widespread and under-reported by minority ethnic groups, and not always treated as seriously as they should be by the police authorities (Cabinet Office, 2000). In *'Minority Ethnic Issues in Social Exclusion and Neighbourhood Renewal'* a list of disadvantages are presented; minority ethnic groups in general, it is argued experience overt and inadvertent racial discrimination both individual and institutional. The report acknowledges that

‘...racial discrimination plays an important role in the disproportionate social exclusion experienced by people from minority ethnic communities’

(Cabinet Office, 2000, p.17).

In many ways, ethnic minority communities experience a double disadvantage. They are disproportionately concentrated in deprived areas and experience all the problems that affect other people living in these areas. However, they also suffer the consequences of racial discrimination, services that fail to reach them, and language and cultural barriers in gaining access to information and services (Cabinet Office, 2000).

A changing ethnic composition

Individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds now represent approximately 6.5% of the population in Britain (Cabinet Office, 2000). Minority ethnic groups have a younger age structure than the white population, reflecting past immigration patterns and family size differences. Forty eight percent of the ethnic minority population is under 24 years old, compared to 31% of the white population. The Bangladeshi population has the youngest age structure with 43% of individuals under the age of 16 in 1998/9 compared with 20% of the white population. Consequently, the proportion of the total population that comes from a minority ethnic background will rise over

time. The 2001 Census has shown that nearly 1 in 8 pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and this figure is expected to rise to 1 in 5 by 2010 (DfES, 2003a). Today's generation and future generations are therefore more ethnically mixed than their predecessors.

Economic changes including the more open global economy have resulted in increased competition and the need to continually update skills. There has been a decline in the importance and scale of traditional industries such as manufacturing and mining and the growth of knowledge-based industries that require higher levels of qualifications (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001). These changes have placed a higher premium on acquiring skills and keeping them up to date. The risks are therefore greater that less well educated individuals will be left behind or excluded altogether. Poor skills leave adults vulnerable to social exclusion.

Therefore at the heart of the social exclusion process lies poor educational achievement, within which the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are the foundation (Parson & Bynner, 2002). Failure to acquire the basic skills places individuals at a distinct disadvantage in comparison with their peers (Parson & Bynner, 2002). As the population of ethnic minority individuals grows, it becomes increasingly more critical that they receive the quality and type of education that will enable them to develop their core skills.

School underachievement

In terms of official measures of school attainment, many minority ethnic groups do not do well in school. An early longitudinal study of 12,000 individuals from age 10 to age 30 using data from the British Cohort Study (1970 cited by Parson & Bynner) provides a striking picture of a social exclusion process that is clearly evident at age 10 becoming fully manifest during the teenage years and following the transition to adulthood. In particular, poor levels of reading have been identified as an important element of social exclusion. This clearly illustrates the need to address the risks of social exclusion from the earliest possible age to try to combat its long term effects.

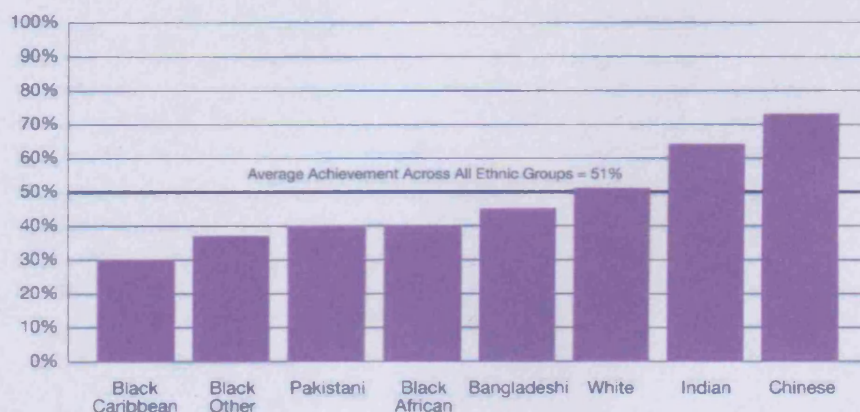
Pupils from certain ethnic minority backgrounds are over represented within special educational needs (SEN) groupings. The document *'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils'* (DfES, 2003a) found that 28% of Black Caribbean secondary school pupils were recorded as having special educational needs, 23% of Pakistani and 23% of Bangladeshi pupils compared with 18% of white pupils. One reason for this may be that teachers misinterpret pupils' developing language skills as indicative of deep-seated learning difficulties (Troyna & Siraj Blatchford, 1993; Gillborn, 1997b; Kea & Utley, 1998). Black Caribbean, black African, black other and other minority ethnic pupils (including mixed race pupils) are disproportionately represented amongst those who are permanently excluded from school relative to their representation in the total school population (Cabinet Office, 2000). *The Truancy and School Exclusion Report* (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998) acknowledges that between 1994/5 and 1997/8, African-Caribbean pupils were over four to six times more likely to be excluded than white pupils, although they were no more likely to truant than others, and many of those who were excluded tended to be

of higher or average ability, although the schools viewed them as underachieving (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998; Cabinet Office, 2000). These data have been problematised by sociologists of education such as Gillborn (1997a) and Ball (1997) both of whom maintain that the education reforms of the 1980s and 1990s have contributed to an increase in school exclusion.

Since 2004 all schools in Wales are required to collect key data for each of their pupils on roll. This generates large local, regional and national data sets which can inform planning and policy at the LEA, regional and national level. The Pupil Level Annual School Census (National Assembly for Wales, 2005) provides an accurate picture of the performance of young people from different backgrounds. The data generated in England to date have highlighted that pupils from Chinese and Indian backgrounds achieve significantly above average results at GCSE level, as evidenced in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1: Proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A* - C GCSE's (2002) by ethnic group

Chart One: PLASC 2002 characteristics: Proportion achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs for those entered for GCSEs in Maintained Schools in 2002



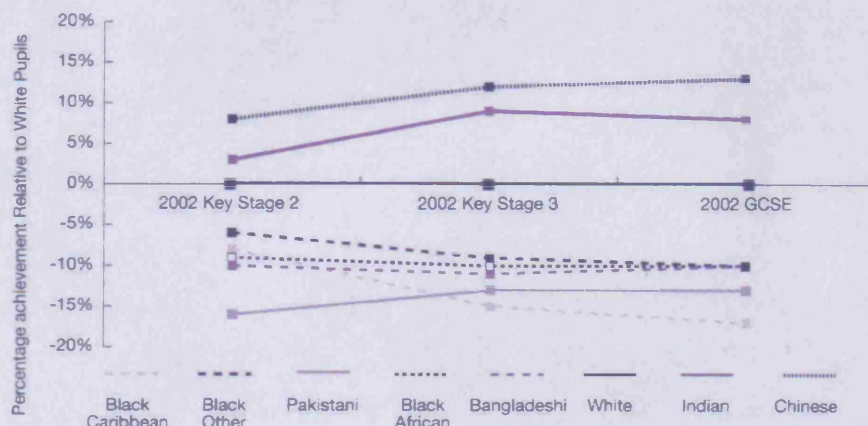
**Other, Unknown and New Code Pupils are included in the Average Achievement across All Ethnic Groups Figure but not represented in the chart. Source: NPD 2002

(Source: Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils, DfES, 2003, p.7)

But the results for other minority groups are very different. Black pupils and those from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds achieve poorer GCSE results than other ethnic groups. Gaps in attainment are also apparent at the end of Key Stage 2 and, for many groups, widen further during secondary education as exemplified in Figure 1.2 presented below.

Figure 1.2: Relative achievement of minority ethnic pupils at KS 2 & 3 in English and GCSE English A* - C in England.

Chart Three: Relative Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils compared to White Pupils in Maintained Schools in 2002 at Key Stage English 2 Level 4+, Key Stage English Level 5+ and GCSE English A*-C (those entered for GCSEs)



Source: NPD 2002
 This chart compares achievement of minority ethnic groups to that of the white group as the largest ethnic group.

(Source: Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils, DfES, 2003, p.9)

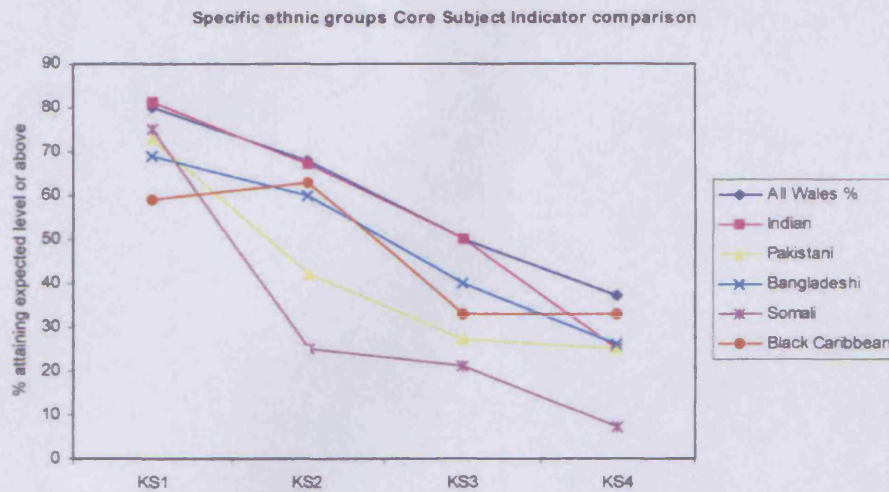
Ethnic Minority Pupils in Wales: A brief profile of 'facts and figures'.

Until quite recently, the existing data on the distribution of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds were partial and far from comprehensive. The monitoring of achievement and needs of such pupils was inadequate and bemoaned by educational researchers who were trying to capture accurate data to inform policy (Gorard et al, 2003). In January

2003). In January 2002, the Welsh Assembly Government commissioned the *English as an Additional Language Association of Wales* (EALAW) to carry out a one-year research study to gather data and information regarding the different factors impacting on ethnic minority achievement.

The main findings of the study were that ethnic minority pupils in Wales, taken together, have lower attainment targets at Key Stages 1-4 compared to national figures by margins ranging from 6% to 21% below all-Wales figures. There are wide variations in attainment between ethnic minority groups. Indian pupils have the highest and Yemeni and Somali pupils have the lowest attainment overall. Chinese, Mixed Race and Eastern European pupils tend to achieve well but their attainment varies between Key Stages. Bangladeshi pupils have higher attainment levels than Pakistani pupils but are still well below national averages. Black Caribbean pupils attain higher than the national average at Key Stage 1 and then suffer a marked decline to 28% below the national average for 5 or more A*-C grade GCSE grades at Key Stage 4. Nevertheless, high achieving and low achieving individuals are found within all ethnic groups. The comparative performance by ethnic group of pupils within Key Stages 1-4 is illustrated in Figure 1.3 overleaf.

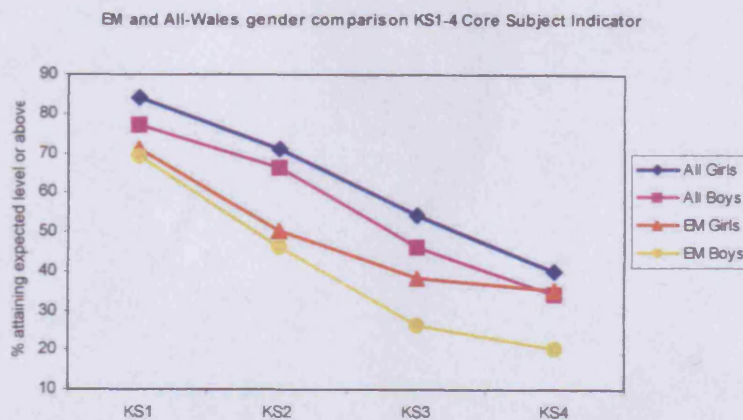
Figure 1.3: KS1 - 4 comparison by ethnic group of pupils attaining expected level (core subject indicator) or above in Wales



(Source: The achievement of ethnic minority pupils in Wales (EALAW, 2003, p.9)

In addition there are marked gender differences in performance, with ethnic minority boys under-performing most markedly, as illustrated in Figure 4 below.

Figure 1.4: Ethnic minority and all-Wales gender comparison of attainment on KS1 -4 core subject indicator



Secondary data analysis of the sample of 1005 pupils (519 boys and 486 girls from 93.4% ethnic minority backgrounds) (EALAW, 2003) identified that there are also differences between attainments in core subject areas. Averaged across the core subjects for Key Stages 1-3, the attainment gap between ethnic minority and all-Wales figures is 15%. The narrowest gap is in Mathematics 12% and the widest gap is in Science 17% with the attainment gap in English being 16%.

These official data are intriguing and of concern to policy makers and practitioners in Wales and more widely. The factors at play which determine pupils' attainments are indeed very complex and research evidence implicates structural inequalities and social processes within schools.

Some schools do and some schools don't: Factors underpinning the success of ethnic minority pupils

Nieto (1994) has noted that whilst factors such as poverty and relative disadvantage may be tremendous hardships, they do not in themselves doom children to academic failure. Other researchers have explored the underpinning factors which lie behind the success or otherwise of ethnic minority pupils. Sewell (2001) acknowledges the importance of teachers treating pupils as individuals rather than stereotyping them. He suggests that African Caribbean boys are often characterised as 'rebellious, phallogentric underachievers'. Mirza's (1992) work, positively titled 'Young, Female and Black', portrays the long term effects of teachers' low expectations for their pupils' occupational aspirations. She cites examples of black girls being impeded by teacher assessments of their abilities and their subsequent entry for lower level

qualifications, together with a paucity of advice and information concerning career opportunities.

Yet some schools educate pupils successfully despite seemingly overwhelming odds. This is attributed to the empowerment of pupils via the policies and procedures, behaviours and expectations of schools and the staff within them. Cummins (1984) has noted that ethnic minority pupils who are empowered by their school experiences tend to develop the ability, confidence and motivation to succeed academically. In contrast, pupils who are disempowered by their school experiences do not tend to develop the academic and emotional foundations necessary for school success.

Nieto (1994) undertook a detailed study of ten academically successful students from a range of ethnic and racial backgrounds in an attempt to identify specific factors that had contributed towards their success. In accordance with other reported research, a positive difference was associated with an enriched curriculum, respect for all pupils' languages and cultures, high expectations for all pupils and encouragement for parental involvement in their children's education (Nieto, 1994; Cummins, 1984; DfES, 2003a; Edwards, 2004). Nieto (1994, p.34) has acknowledged that '...it is too convenient to fall back on deficit theories and continue the practices of blaming students, their families, and their communities for educational failure'. Instead, it is suggested that schools need to focus on where they can make a difference, namely via their own instructional policies and practices. Whilst this is a necessary condition for whole-school transformation, it is important not to rely upon a 'methods fetish', a simplistic belief that particular methods will automatically resolve complex problems of underachievement (Bartolome, 1994). Educators must address the issue of why

some pupils succeed and others fail in school and the inequalities that lie at the heart of the educational system.

This opening chapter to ‘set the scene’ has mapped out some demographic details and provided an overview of important historical and more recent policies pertinent to the theme of social inclusion. It has attempted to orient the reader to issues relating to ‘social inclusion’ and ‘access’ within the education system. Indeed, current educational practices have been shown to render ethnic minority pupils and their existing cultural experiences ‘invisible’ (Moore, 1999). A small but significant step towards making the learning experiences of EAL pupils more ‘inclusive’ is considered to be the use of culturally relevant materials (John, 2003). The dearth of culturally relevant practical materials for such learners is a problem which needs a solution. The current study which focuses on EAL pupils and develops the use of computer-based home language materials is a modest contribution to an under researched and important area.

The various research literatures which have informed and underpinned this study are now drawn together in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER 2

Chapter Two

Multiculturalism and bilingualism in schools and classrooms

This second chapter draws upon several research and policy literatures and provides the reader with a ‘grand tour’ of the literature. It opens with a critical discussion of multiculturalism and schooling and draws upon the work of Giroux (1992) and May (1999) who identify the failings of current conceptions of multiculturalism and the ‘cosmetic’ modifications that result. The focus is then placed upon the practical use of home languages within the curriculum and the positive benefits for EAL pupils’ cultural identity are acknowledged. This is followed by a discussion of the underlying factors for the current apathy towards ethnic minority languages. The critical role of teaching staff in planning and delivering appropriate learning experiences for EAL pupils is highlighted. The training and development needs of teaching staff are also addressed. The importance of developing positive links with ethnic minority parents is acknowledged.

Chapter Three reviews the literature and draws the reader’s attention towards the theories underpinning second language acquisition and the importance of vocabulary development for EAL learners. The potential benefits of the home language to develop language skills are explored, drawing upon the work of Cummins (1984).

A later section introduces the role of ICT and traces the recent developments of ICT within mainstream education. It draws upon recent research evidence to examine the potential benefits and limitations of computer use. The final section focuses upon the

Literacy Hour and describes the format of the 'hour'. The impact of its implementation for EAL pupils is considered, together with recommendations for 'good practice,' including the use of the home language.

Multiculturalism

A continuum of responses to diversity

Schools are encouraged to recognise the knowledge, cultures and languages that ethnic minority pupils bring to the learning situation. However, whilst there has been a general trend towards acknowledging this diversity within the curriculum and school life, there has not been uniform progression, with different schools offering a diverse range of opinions and experiences. At one end of the continuum, there are teachers who expect ethnic minority children to abandon their own culture and languages in favour of the dominant group (Edwards & Redfern, 1992). At the other end of the continuum, there are teachers who actively address aspects of institutionalised racism (Edwards & Redfern, 1992). Teachers within the UK can be placed at varying points along this continuum.

‘...expressing enormous goodwill and genuine concern for the ethnic minority children they teach, but with varying levels of perception of their own ethnocentrism, of their low expectations or of the institutional aspects of school life which ensure that Black children do not have access to the same range of opportunities as their White peers.’

(Edwards & Redfern, 1992, p.23)

Indeed, in a study of 48 ethnically diverse Primary and Secondary schools, OFSTED (1999, p. 22) found that there is often hesitancy in many schools to select areas of work which would reflect the pupils’ cultural backgrounds, such as famous artists, music and famous people in history. Half of the schools studied felt that responding to ethnic and cultural diversity in this way was ‘unhelpful and patronising’ to the pupils

concerned. Schools concerned about divisive outcomes dealt with these issues by playing down differences of culture and ethnicity, believing that good relations would be achieved by not highlighting or celebrating the characteristics of minority cultures (OFSTED, 1999). Fine (1991, p. 33) refers to this as ‘silencing.’

‘Silencing is about who can speak, what can and cannot be spoken, and whose discourse must be controlled’.

A combination of factors may contribute towards a reluctance to acknowledge cultural and linguistic diversity. These include the individual discomfort of some teachers in addressing issues regarding bias and discrimination, pressures to cover curricula material and the tradition of presenting information as conflict or controversy free (Kohl, 1993).

Moore (1999, p. 71) suggests that one rationale is that

‘... existing student cultures *should* be marginalized: that there is neither the space nor the time, given curricular constraints and demands, to allow any deviations from the development of the ‘ultimate’ skills, knowledge and practice that students must endeavour to end up with by the time their compulsory schooling is done.’

Harmonious race relations are however most likely to occur in schools which use a wide range of purposeful and constructive strategies. These include regular and appropriate in-service teacher training, a multicultural and anti-racist curriculum, close parental and community links and the use of culturally diverse books and materials (Edwards & Redfern, 1992).

Multiculturalism has long been hailed as the mechanism for addressing and redressing the long-standing patterns of differential achievement between majority and minority pupils (Gillborn, 1997a). A central claim of multicultural education has been that it can foster 'greater cultural interaction, interchange and harmony both in schools and beyond' (May, 1999, p. 1). Within this conception of multicultural education however, schooling is taken for granted as basically sound and well structured. As a result it has changed little; it has

'had a largely negligible impact to date on the life *chances* of minority students, the racialized attitudes of majority students, the inherent monoculturalism of school practice and the wider processes of power relations and inequality which underpin these'

(May, 1999, p. 1)

As Giroux (1997, p. 32) notes

'A critical multiculturalism needs both to recognise and incorporate the differing cultural knowledges that children bring to school, *while at the same time*, address and contest the differential culture capital attributed to them as a result of wider hegemonic power relations.'

There is however no specific guidance, no pedagogy or 'manual of strategy' provided to show how it should or could be done. In reality, an approach based upon multiculturalism may lead to a shallow celebration of difference in a context where issues of power and racism are largely ignored or silenced (Majors, 2001).

Indeed, the formulation of 'multiculturalism' must in itself be called into question as it is formulated from a 'white' perspective. As Giroux (1992, p.117) cautions

'multiculturalism is generally about otherness, but it is written in ways in which the dominating aspects of white culture are not called into question... the norm of whiteness [becomes] an ethnic category that secures its dominance by appearing to be invisible.'

Schools where the majority of pupils are white, in particular, have been identified as not addressing the need for a multicultural curriculum. Hamilton, Rejtman and Roberts (1998) found that many teachers admitted that their pupils left school ill-equipped for life in a multicultural society. They found that many teachers themselves were unable to define racism and to say what characterises it and had little or no idea how to teach about it.

Racist attitudes have also been evident among trainee teachers. In one study 5 to 10% of trainee teachers were 'negative or hostile' towards minorities. They were also found to use racist rhetoric such as 'Black people are responsible for crime' (Barnard, 1999). The curricula of teacher training programmes have a dearth of material on such matters as Equal Opportunities, Multiculturalism and Inclusion, thus Barnard's findings are worrying indeed.

Race Relations Amendment Act (RRAA) (2000)

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report identified 'institutional racism' within public institutions. The Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) was introduced in response to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and provides public authorities with a statutory duty to promote race equality. The general requirement is that the body has 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups. In addition, there are specific duties for schools to prepare a written statement of the school's policy for promoting race equality, and to act upon it. They must also assess the impact of and monitor the operation of school policies on pupils, staff and parents of

different racial groups, including, in particular, the impact on attainment levels of these pupils. The intention is that barriers to the achievement of minority ethnic pupils should be identified and removed. OFSTED (in England) and Estyn (in Wales) will inspect schools' compliance with the Act as part of their regular inspections.

Prior to the introduction of the Act, OFSTED (1999) acknowledged that whilst the majority of primary schools had policies on equal opportunities, there was too much variation in the way they were implemented and influenced the life and work of the school. Whilst all schools may now have a sound equal opportunities policy, it is postulated that the level of 'conscious action' to translate it into effective day to day practice will vary between schools: with some being more proactive than others. Successful schools are characterised as those with '...a raft of interlocking initiatives which addresses all aspects of school life' (OFSTED, 1999, p. 13). It is perhaps easy to condemn schools for not being 'anti-racist' enough without attempting to consider the other things that they are expected or required to take seriously and which compete for time, effort and resources (Ball, 1997). This is not an attempt to excuse bad practice rather an acknowledgement of the complexities 'in practice'.

'Equal opportunities' is often relegated on the list of priorities due to externalised pressures

'...even schools that were previously making strong and significant headway on equal opportunities are finding it increasingly difficult to withstand the tide of league tables, selection and rising numbers of exclusions from school'

(Gillborn, 1997a, p.348).

Within England and Wales, the vehicle for transmission of ‘cultural diversity’ has become citizenship education. Within Wales, the *Personal and Social Education (PSE) Framework* identifies specific learning outcomes to promote equality of opportunity and to value and celebrate diversity throughout the Key Stages. In Key Stage 1 the stated objective is ‘to recognise and value cultural diversity’ and in Key Stage 2 ‘to respect others [and] value their achievements and their uniqueness and to value and celebrate cultural difference and diversity (ACCAC, 2001, p. 11). However, citizenship education with its traditional emphasis on formal notions of pluralism and ‘tolerance’ may not provide a sound home for ‘critical anti-racist developments’ (Gillborn, 1997a; Edwards, 2004). One significant difficulty with this approach is the tendency to simply add new materials and practices to an existing curriculum structure. This may result in existing policy and provision being repackaged with little or no new action (Gillborn, 1997a). By focusing on cosmetic modifications to surface structures, deeper structures that reflect the patterns of disempowerment in wider society are left intact (Cummins, 1996). Therefore, superficial gestures towards diversity may lead to cosmetic changes in schools rather than towards achieving equality for ethnic minority pupils.

Policy not practice: superficial responses to ethnic diversity.

There have been very few attempts to document educational responses to diversity at the level of central government, LEAs and schools. Case study material provided as examples of multiculturalism tend to focus on ‘special events’ such as ‘breakfast time’ where children sampled food from a variety of countries (ACCAC, 2001). They do not form a pervasive part of the curriculum: a truly multicultural approach would seek to

acknowledge diversity within classroom activities and teaching materials and also critically assess the underlying school structure.

Currently, the lack of rigorous evaluation of multicultural education is considered to derive

‘...in part from the traditionally decentralised nature of British education where government attempts to influence practice through a system of financial inducements and general advice in pamphlets and directives rather than through the formulation of explicit policy on multicultural education’

(Edwards & Redfern, 1992, p.2)

The current limited multicultural approach carries the danger of recognising only the majority cultures represented within the school. As Nieto (1994, p.401) reported, pupils from small minority cultures were ‘...invisible in the curriculum, even in supposedly multicultural curricular and extracurricular activities’.

Edwards and Redfern (1992, p. 50) acknowledge that a critical step forward is the move away from a tokenistic approach

‘... with the occasional assembly on Diwali, or the inclusion of a Caribbean dish in the cookery class, to the permeation of the curriculum, so that all aspects of school life reflect the diversity of the school and the wider community.’

The potentially superficial nature of change is illustrated by Carrim and Soudien (1999) with reference to South Africa and the metamorphosis from assimilation to multiculturalism following the official recognition of eleven languages within South Africa. It officially signalled that all peoples’ identities and cultures, social and linguistic backgrounds were equivalent (at least in theory). In practice, however, the researchers found a continuation of stereotypical, narrow depictions of ethnic minority

cultures, resulting in surface changes only, mainly through representation of cultural diversity within special celebrations, illustrated by 'Zulu girls performing a Zulu dance at the annual concert'. This resulted in the reinforcement rather than the erosion of differences. This 'policy not practice' outcome was also found by Solomon and Levine-Raskey (1994 cited by Moodley, 1999) who surveyed 1,000 teachers, multicultural and anti racist advisors across Canada. Whilst they found a good deal of support in principle for antiracist and multicultural education, it was not so evident within day-to-day practices.

The approach of 'New' Labour can perhaps be characterised as 'naïve multiculturalism' with a weak notion of equal opportunity (Majors, 2001). 'Racism' has been dressed up in a range of less confrontational terms or what Troyna termed as 'proxy concepts' such as 'culture', 'tradition', 'heritage' and 'language' (Troyna, 1993, p. 28). 'In this approach, a concern with *colour* is replaced with *culture*; and notions of *superiority*... replaced with a focus on *difference*' (Gillborn, 1997a, p. 352). This form of discourse constructs ethnic minority communities as 'outsiders' who present a direct challenge to 'our' traditions and faith (Gillborn, 1997a).

A truly multicultural curriculum therefore needs to address both individual and structural changes that confront the biases, attitudes and behaviours of educators as well as the policies and practices that emanate from them (Nieto, 1994). Clearly LEAs, schools and classroom teachers have a large task to achieve in these terms as fieldwork for the current study helped to discover.

Language is considered to be a critical element of cultural identity (Cummins, 1984). An important way of demonstrating respect and value for the home cultures of ethnic minority pupils is considered to be the use of the home language within mainstream education (Thomas & Collier, 1999). The following section highlights the practical implications of home language use and provides positive case studies to demonstrate the potential benefits.

Home Language use ‘in practice’

Barriers to learning: ensuring ‘access’ to the curriculum

The National Curriculum documentation acknowledges that a ‘minority’ of pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language may experience ‘barriers to learning’ if teachers do not take the requirements of specific individuals or groups into consideration. Teachers are reminded of the need to make suitable provision, to enable pupils to participate effectively in curriculum and assessment activities (DfEE, 1998).

Teachers are also reminded of the requirement, when planning, to take into consideration individual details including age, length of time in the UK, previous educational experience and skills in other languages for each EAL pupil. It is acknowledged that

‘...the ability of pupils for whom English is an additional language to take part in the National Curriculum may be ahead of their communication skills in English’. ‘Teachers should take specific action ... ensuring access to the curriculum and to assessment.’

(DfEE, 1998, p.106)

This would appear to be relatively straightforward in theory but less so in practice. Where teachers attempt to increase access to the curriculum through the medium of English, there is a danger that they may simplify the tasks in line with the individual’s current level of understanding in English. This is likely to result in feelings of frustration and boredom for the EAL pupil (Kea & Utley, 1998).

However, where teachers welcome and encourage the use of the pupils' first languages, the situation can be somewhat different. Bourne states that successful schools 'show they value all children's home languages; where possible, use home languages in teaching to support understanding; encourage and, where possible, build on children's literacy development in home languages as well as English' (Bourne, 2002, cited by DfES, 2002a, p. 73).

The role of the home language is acknowledged within the National Literacy Strategy guidance material for supporting EAL pupils (DfES, 2002a, p. 44) which states that the '...first language gives access to the curriculum for learners of English.' This is based upon the principle that the use of the home language supports the development of concepts and knowledge. Pupils who are able to understand the language 'input' are more able to utilise this information for cognitive development. Enhanced comprehension may lead to increased reflection and analysis within the learning situation (DfES, 2002a). It is acknowledged that pupils can transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding from one language to another. Therefore new information gained via the home language can 'transfer across' to the English language (Cummins, 1984; Krashen, 1982).

Additional adult support is considered an important resource to facilitate access and secure appropriate differentiation of core learning objectives (DfES, 2002a). However, where bilingual support is unavailable, the DfES (2002a) suggests that children can still operate in their first language even though the language is not shared by the adult teaching or supporting the group. Good practice is therefore considered to include the

planning of opportunities for pupils to communicate in their first language.

This information is provided within one particular guidance document - *The National Literacy Strategy: Supporting Pupils Learning English as an Additional Language* (DfES, 2002a, p. iv) which is intended to ‘...support schools with the development of strategies to promote inclusive teaching and to raise the attainment of pupils learning EAL’. The material is designed to be used as an INSET resource and as such, has no statutory significance. Whilst this document extols the use of the home language within the curriculum, home language use has not hitherto, become an integral part of educational policy.

This reluctance by educators to capitalise on home language use limits pupils’ opportunities to talk about abstract ideas and to use higher level cognitive skills (Nieto, 1994). Children are subjected to a form of ‘language discrimination’ that restricts their ability to fully participate within the classroom environment.

Enrichment Programmes

Research over many years by Collier and Thomas has found that typical educational programmes within the USA do not succeed in closing the achievement gap between EAL pupils and their monolingual peers. The progress required to do so would be dramatic (Collier & Thomas, 1999).

The least successful teaching method has been identified as ESL (English as Second Language) ‘pull out’ where EAL pupils are taught traditionally within mainstream classes and then withdrawn for additional support. This method is frequently used within the UK. The additional support tends to be provided by monolingual English

speaking EAL support teachers. Support teachers are likely to view their role as one of compensating for a perceived English language deficit. Attention therefore focuses on what children are considered to lack rather than on the range of skills and achievements that they bring with them to the classroom (Edwards & Redfern, 1992). Pupils are assessed to see ‘what’s missing’ so that lessons designed for remediation can be devised. Consequently, a diluted form of the curriculum is received (Collier & Thomas, 1999).

The most successful educational programmes appear to be those that emphasise and utilise the home language. It is not clear whether this success is a result of better promotion of the first-language cognitive and academic skills or the reinforcement of cultural identity. It is suggested that both factors are critical and go hand in hand (Cummins, 1984). Effective ‘enrichment’ programmes can provide the means for academic achievement for EAL pupils. Even so, it is likely to take EAL pupils a minimum of five to six years to close the achievement gap with monolingual pupils in a second language.

The typical ‘enrichment’ programme reported by Collier and Thomas provides bilingual education for a minimum of six years of instruction. The focus is on the core academic curriculum rather than a watered down version. There is use of the first language (L1) for at least 50 percent of the instructional time and as much as 90 percent in the early school years. Within this model, there is a balanced ratio of students who speak each language. The strengths that English language learners bring to the classroom, including knowledge and life experiences from other cultural contexts together with the native speakers’ knowledge of another language, are used

as resources for learning, as ‘essential building blocks’ (Collier & Thomas, 1999, p. 1). In enrichment classes, pupils know that they are being challenged and are deeply engaged in the learning process. They are encouraged to teach each other, and their language repertoire expands dramatically with rich language use, both oral and written. Materials and books present a cross-cultural perspective and lessons activate pupils’ prior knowledge for ‘bridging’ to new knowledge (Collier & Thomas, 1999). An additive bilingual environment is nurtured with the full support of the school management team, teachers and parents. There is a high-quality teaching staff, with a balance of L1 and L2 speaking staff members (Collier & Thomas, 1999).

Despite their success, enrichment classes are rare in the USA and non-existent in the UK. The question may therefore be asked as to why there are not more bilingual programmes available for EAL pupils. Cummins (1984) suggested that a major reason for resistance is that incorporation of minority languages and cultures into the school curriculum confers status and power to minority groups. This contravenes the preferred balance of power in favour of the dominant group. Perhaps this may explain why, despite the rhetoric concerning home language use, little practical guidance and funding has been provided to establish it in practice.

As Cummins (1984) noted, even where bilingual programmes are not available, every effort should be made to incorporate the home language within the curriculum. It is the *genuineness* of sustained reinforcement of the first language that is considered ultimately more important than the specific amount of instructional time within the home language. Therefore despite the absence of community language bilingual programmes within the UK, teachers still have a duty to provide as much support as

possible.

Edwards (2004) points out more recently that in the UK most educators ignore home language usage or view it as a ‘temporary crutch’ to assist children in acquiring English. Only in a relatively small number of schools do other languages play a meaningful role in content-based instruction (Edwards, 2004). In some instances however, progress is being made and this is described in the following section which draws upon ‘official’ sources which have ‘show-cased’ case study examples.

Home language use in action.

The DfES (2002a) in *‘The National Literacy Strategy: Supporting Pupils with English as an Additional Language’* provides an example of how the introduction of home language use has helped to address the issue of underachievement.

Regent’s Park Community Primary School is a multi-ethnic inner city school with a population of 92% EAL pupils. Prior to the introduction of the home language, observations of the children entering the Foundation Stage showed that for some children with little or no understanding of English, the teaching and learning environment was inhibiting and intimidating. This was particularly noticeable for children from the Bengali community, ‘...who often appeared isolated and reluctant to participate in learning activities’ (DfES, 2002a, p. 78). The school acknowledged that there was ‘no explicit or overt recognition or celebration of the children’s first language skills and no opportunities for children to show what they already knew from their wider learning experiences’ (DfES, 2002a, p. 78). The school has moved from an initial recognition of the need to value and celebrate diversity into the ‘...current context of an inclusive, embracing culture where children use their first language as a

resource for their learning' (DfES, 2002a, p. 78). The DfES attributes the value placed upon and the use of home languages as the main contributory factors to the improvement in school results and the invitation, following a very successful Inspection, to apply for Beacon school status in 2001.

Other initiatives with home language use exist in other areas of England and these were reported very positively. For example, an end of award report published by Birmingham City Council (1995) comments on five case studies. A GEST funded project by Birmingham City Council (1995) was set up with the specific aim of enhancing access to the curriculum. It was acknowledged that the most effective means of finding out what individuals know and then building upon it, necessarily involves the use of their first language. As one teacher acknowledged, '... I have never discouraged the use of the mother tongue, but neither have I consciously set up a situation to actively encourage its use' (Birmingham City Council, 1995, p.25). Whilst the aim of the project was not specifically to foster bilingualism, during the course of the project the teachers moved towards a position of greater conviction about the effectiveness of the use of home languages within the classroom. Home language usage was found to be beneficial for pupils acquiring the early stages of English as a means of increasing access to the curriculum. It was also valuable for more advanced English language learners to '...get beyond the plateau of basic communication' and develop pupils' academic language. The project was developed on the premise that discussion in any language helps to clarify thinking, and therefore first language talk was a valuable asset and should be welcomed as a natural part of classroom interaction (Birmingham City Council, 1995).

One of the Birmingham City Council case studies describes the strategies of a reception class teacher who decided to introduce bilingual 'carpet' sessions and follow up activities. This support was targeted at

'...children who would have previously switched off during these times because they could not understand a lot of what was being said.'

(Birmingham City Council, 1995, p.10)

After a few sessions it was the teacher's perception that 'children who had limited English and would normally switch off during 'mat' sessions, were more alert and interested, and participated more fully.' Cummins' (1984) earlier research has already acknowledged that where literacy materials reflect pupils' own language and experiences and enable them to share these experiences with interested others (e.g. peers and teachers), children's self-esteem is likely to be promoted and cultural mismatch reduced. It is suggested that by being able to understand what is being said, the 'cognitive load' is reduced and this enables children to relax and enjoy literacy experiences.

As part of the Birmingham GEST project, teachers were encouraged to discuss their concerns regarding home language use. This highlighted the concern of some monolingual teachers that they would not understand what the children were saying in the home languages and this was in itself acknowledged as a 'problem'. However, the benefits of home language use over the period of the project were seen to outweigh any concerns.

One teacher, of ethnic minority background herself, reflected upon her own earlier experiences as a pupil

‘Having been educated within the British educational system myself, and having realised the detrimental effects on a child if the home culture/ mother tongue is not used, recognised or even praised... I decided that I did not want my class to grow up with the same negative attitude towards their own culture as I had with mine.’

(Birmingham City Council, 1995, p. 30)

Recent curriculum guidance for supporting EAL pupils has identified good practice to include the use of visual aids and practical objects (DfES, 2002). However within the Birmingham GEST (1995) project, it was felt by teachers that using these techniques had failed to help the children sufficiently: ‘Although practical objects were being used to demonstrate take-away, the children only grasped the concept once it was accessed through their first language’ (Birmingham City Council, 1995, p.49). In this instance, the class teacher with no prior understanding of the home language asked children what the word for ‘take away’ was in the home language and then utilised it in her teaching. The teacher used this new means of communication ‘panj paisah jah doh?’ and found that ‘...the children who were reluctant to answer before, who had not grasped the concept in English...shot their hands up with the right answer - ‘tin’. (Birmingham City Council, 1995, p. 49). This example demonstrates how a change in teacher strategy to value and utilise the home language despite her own lack of home language knowledge was found to be of immediate benefit both to the pupils and the teacher.

The seemingly simple solution of home language input enabled children to understand, perhaps for the first time, what the teacher was trying to teach them. The home language input was found to be very valuable across age ranges ‘...the mother tongue input was essential in Year 1 to enable the boys to access the task’. ‘In year three it was very useful to assist in establishing clarity of meaning...’ (Birmingham City Council, 1995, p. 41).

The use of the home languages also highlighted a change in expectations among teachers, as they became more aware that the pupils were able to successfully complete tasks and understand concepts that they previously had failed to do through the medium of English. For example, pupils who only had a grasp of the numbers one to three in English were found to have a good understanding of numbers in Panjabi up to ten. They were also able to undertake tasks independently with accurate results following home language translation (Birmingham City Council, 1995).

Where bilingual assistants were not available to work in mainstream classroom settings, tape recorded versions of mother tongue stories were used as a way of helping comprehension and gaining the interest of the children (Birmingham City Council, 1995, p. 80). Whilst it was acknowledged that using tapes is less effective than a bilingual person, ‘...it does give access to the story when they might otherwise switch off or become disruptive’ (Birmingham City Council, 1995, p.116). Where bilingual support was available a teacher found that ‘...several children who I had assessed as being less able users of English were able to construct sentences in their first language, ask questions, and make more extensive comments upon the story’

(Birmingham City Council, 1995, p. 103). This had encouraged the teacher to revise her expectations of the pupils.

The Hounslow Language Service (2005) has also reported a positive response to the use of home language resources in mainstream classrooms. As a part of a multilingual ‘talking stories’ project, fables which were due to be used within class were made into ‘talking stories’ in a range of languages using ‘Clicker 4’ software. These resources were found to increase ‘access’ to the curriculum for beginner EAL pupils who were able to listen to the fables in their home languages prior to their use within class literacy lessons. The bilingual resources were also considered to offer a means of demonstrating value for the home languages within the classroom environment.

Thus the support for EAL pupils via various uses of their home languages has been reported positively with gains for pupils in terms of participation, inclusion and learning and for their teachers who came to appreciate their pupils’ potential more fully. It is against this backdrop that the current study is set.

Power relations and the organisation of schooling

The benefits of home language usage within mainstream schools are clear. However, its genuine use remains the exception rather than the norm. The following section explores possible underlying reasons behind the current reluctance to embrace linguistic diversity within mainstream education and focuses upon the underlying power relations within wider society.

Bilingualism is pervasive throughout the modern world. Published estimates suggest that between 60% and 75% of the world's population is bilingual (Baker, 2000). There appears however, to be considerable variation in the conditions under which individuals become bilingual, the uses they have for their various languages and the societal status awarded to each language. For example, in officially bilingual countries such as Switzerland, children use one language at home and school, but are expected to acquire competence in at least one other official language, such as French or German. For other individuals elsewhere, bilingualism will be attained from parental use of two native languages within the home. In other contexts, bilingualism is the product of migration. Here, individuals will frequently use their native language at home and in the community and learn the dominant language at school (Baker, 2000).

There is no evidence that one variety of language is inherently superior to another, with all languages and dialects being well formed and rule governed. As Edwards (1983) suggests, qualities such as logic or precision can be attributed more to individual differences among speakers than the particular language that they happen to speak. The traditionally held view of bilingualism was that it would confuse children both linguistically and cognitively. However, Peal and Lambert's (1962), pioneering work in the early 1960s, widely credited for introducing important controls in comparison studies of monolingual and bilingual children, describe a bilingual child as

‘... a youngster whose wider experiences in two cultures have given him (sic) advantages which a monolingual does not enjoy. Intellectually, his (sic) experience with two language systems seems to have left him (sic) with a mental flexibility, superiority in concept formation, a more diversified set of abilities.’

(Peal and Lambert, 1962, p.14).

The results of other studies have supported Peal and Lambert's claims that bilingual groups are superior on a variety of measures of cognitive skill, such as nonverbal reasoning and awareness of language structure (Edwards & Redfern, 1992; Baker, 2000). As well as benefits for the individual, bilingualism enables minority language communities to survive as a distinct entity, enabling communication across generations and providing access to the collective history, to which each individual can contribute. On a societal level, positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity can help combat racism by raising awareness of cultural diversity and by improving communication between different cultural groups (Edwards and Redfern 1992; Houlton, 1985).

Despite this, even in countries where bilingualism is the accepted 'norm', institutional support is often professed towards modern languages considered to be of economic benefit. Wiles (1985, p.36) notes that

'Most people would agree that the ability to speak French, Italian or Russian as well as English is admirable, whereas speaking a South Asian language and English seems less worthy of note'.

In this vein, EAL pupils in one of the schools included in this research were actively discouraged from utilising their home language in class. This 'devaluing' of the home language is explored further in Chapter 6.

Within the UK acquisition of Standard English continues to mark the route to educational success and social mobility (Edwards, 1983). In reality, Edwards and Redfern (1992, p. 76) note that

‘Dominant ethnic or linguistic groups are often quick to realise that support for minority languages and cultures is a potential threat to their power base. Of course, opposition to minority languages is not usually justified in terms of power relations. More often the need to assimilate is explained on economic grounds, or in terms of the socially divisive nature of promoting minority concerns, or as being in the best educational interests of newcomers.’

This was demonstrated by David Blunkett, the then Home Secretary, who called for ethnic minority parents to use English in their homes as opposed to their preferred language to ‘overcome the schizophrenia which bedevils generational relationships’ (Hinsliff, 2002). As Cummins (1996) has argued, power relations in broader society are inevitably reflected in the organisation of schooling and in the decisions that educators make regarding the teaching of culturally diverse pupils. As Baker (2000) notes, often an individual’s level of fluency, power of thinking, and literacy skills in the minority language are not recognised by the monolingual school. As such, individuals may feel that the language of their parents’ and their culture are being rejected by the school. Their self-esteem, self-confidence and belief in their learning ability may suffer as a result. As Baker (2000) warns, such a school is failing to build upon the individual’s existing level of understanding by not utilising his or her home language. Consequently, failure may breed failure rather than success breeding success.

Most ethnic minority pupils will therefore spend most of their time in a cultural world that the school knows little about, with different languages, different cultural rules and different social rules. They will be expected to adjust to novel school practices of language use, behavioural appropriateness and ways of learning (Grueon & Woods, 1990).

Schools and teachers and the curriculum have a vital role in ‘bridging the gap’ between school and home and the differing cultures, languages and rules. The teachers who mediate the National Curriculum and its Literacy and Numeracy Hours have perhaps a less well developed orientation to such ‘bridging’ work. Indeed in the current study, observational fieldwork in two schools (eight classrooms) revealed that this was not a central priority (see Chapter 6). Fieldwork findings within this study together with a review of the literature have highlighted the crucial role of the teaching staff in mediating learning for EAL pupils. The following section acknowledges the changing role of teachers within increasingly diverse multilingual classrooms.

The changing role of teaching staff.

Introduction

Over the last few decades, the traditional role and classroom practices of teachers have been challenged. A ‘command and control’ model (Ball, 1999) of change instigated by governments has resulted in a plethora of top-down reforms being introduced, most notably, the implementation of the National Curriculum in 1988 and the recent introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In addition the notion of ‘performativity’ in teaching and learning has placed teachers under increasing scrutiny from external indicators of success such as Standardised Assessment Test (SATs) results (Ball, 1999). Increased paperwork, large class sizes (Ball, 1999; See, 2004) and the increased ethno-linguistic diversity of pupils have challenged teachers’ further (Irvine, 1990). Indeed, recruitment into the teaching profession has been reported in the National Press to be problematic, with teacher vacancies reaching ‘crisis point’ in 2000/2001 (Dean, 2001). In addition, teachers are reportedly leaving the profession in larger numbers due to the added pressures following increased bureaucracy and ‘unmanageable parental demands,’ resulting in headlines such as ‘Stress in classroom is ‘killing teachers’ (Clare, 2000). See’s (2004) doctoral research on teacher shortages suggests that a more complex picture is evident, with shortages in specific subject areas and in certain regions of the country, with an overall under-representation of males and non-white teachers entering the profession. Findings from See’s (2004) survey of 1845 undergraduate students in four tertiary institutions identified that the majority of teachers entering the teaching profession were aware of

the challenges that they were likely to meet. This served to highlight the commitment and intrinsic desire of many teachers entering the profession and their commitment to working with young people.

For teachers working within ethnically diverse classrooms, additional challenges are likely to be encountered. These include varying levels of English language proficiency among pupils and a lack of culturally relevant materials. Despite a general acknowledgement of the challenges of ethnically-mixed classrooms, many teachers enter the profession with ‘a thin base of knowledge relating to their own and other cultural histories and value systems’ (Cockrell, Placier, Cockrell & Middleton, 1999, p. 352). Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes are required to ensure that all trainee teachers meet the minimum requirements of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). There is however no specific requirement for training providers to provide training related to cultural diversity or the needs of EAL pupils. The only requirement is for individuals to uphold the professional code of conduct of the General Teaching Council (GTC) of England or Wales. This includes a responsibility to demonstrate ‘... high expectations for all pupils, respecting their social, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds’ and ‘...a commitment to raising their educational achievements’ (DfES, 2002b, p. 9). Recent research has shown that the majority of mainstream classroom teachers receive limited training with respect to bilingual pupils and have limited collaborative interactions with parents and the community (Irvine, 1990; Yeh, Chen, Kwong, Chiang, Yu-Wei & Pu-Folkes, 2002). This finding is borne out to some degree in the present study as described in later empirical chapters.

In reality, despite living in a multicultural society, many teachers are inadequately trained to address the educational, psychological and socio-cultural needs of their ethnic minority pupils (Yeh et al, 2002). In particular, many teachers are considered to lack an understanding of cultural values (Gillborn, 1997a; Troyna, 1991). Cultural knowledge is considered to be of huge benefit to teachers when interpreting interactions with ethnic minority pupils. For example, Yeh et al (2002, p. 305) suggested that Asian pupils ‘...may delay or hesitate in response to questions, shift topics frequently, take fewer risks, participate less, and limit their eye contact with authority figures’. However few teachers appear to possess this depth of knowledge. This is compounded by a general lack of awareness regarding the out-of-school lives of ethnic minority pupils (Gregory, 1996).

Teachers as ‘critical reality definers’

Ada (1986) reported that ethnic minority pupils’ identification with their home culture is strongly linked to their adaptation to a second culture and to the learning of a second language. Cultural variables are powerful, yet often overlooked, explanatory factors in the school failure of minority children (Irvine, 1990). The culture or way of life of ethnic minority pupils is often not congruous with the predominantly white, middle class cultural norms and behaviours of the school. The resulting cultural discontinuity between the home and school can lead to miscommunication and confrontation between the pupil, teacher and home. Consequently feelings of hostility and alienation may develop, resulting in diminished self-esteem and eventual school failure for ethnic minority pupils (Irvine, 1990).

Teachers' lack of preparedness, their negative perceptions of minority group pupils and low expectations may therefore contribute to ethnic minority pupils' failure in school (DES, 1985; Gillborn & Gipps, 1996; Tomlinson 1981; Troyna 1991).

In contrast, 'successful' ethnic minority learners are considered to be those who are able to move confidently between the cultural and linguistic worlds of home and school. In effect they are functioning 'bi-culturally', positively supported by both teachers and parents. As Kea and Utley (1998, p. 45) concluded, '...what teachers perceive, believe, say and do can disable or empower multicultural students...'. Teachers are 'critical reality definers' (Kea and Utley, 1998) and their power to grade, assess and place students in different ability groupings, sets and streams is well exemplified in Troyna's research titled 'Underachievers or Underrated?'. In their discussion of pedagogy, Moyles, Adams and Musgrove (2002) define it as a complex combination of factors, especially in the initial years of schooling. Moyles et al (2002, p. 10) argue that pedagogy is both

'... the behaviour of teaching and being able to talk about and reflect on teaching. Pedagogy encompasses both what practitioners actually DO and THINK and the principles, theories, perceptions and challenges that inform and shape it. It connects the relatively self contained act of teaching and being an early years educator, with personal, cultural and community values (including care), curriculum structures and external influences. Pedagogy in the early years operates from a shared frame of reference (a mutual learning encounter) between the practitioner, the young child and his/ her family'.

A number of general characteristics of classroom pedagogy have been identified as effective with pupils for whom English is an additional language (Ada, 1986; Yeh, Chen, Kwong, Chiang, Yu-Wei & Pu-Folkes, 2002). These include a positive attitude

towards the pupils' culture and first language, an expectation that pupils have the ability to learn, and positive attitudes regarding the usefulness and importance of the home language within the classroom. This pedagogic approach is designed to encourage EAL pupils to utilise their first language in class, with information about ethnic minority cultures incorporated within classroom instruction (Bourne, 1989). Consequently, teachers must be '...thoroughly knowledgeable, sensitive and comfortable about minority children's language, style of presentation and community values' (Irvine, 1990, p. 19). Teachers then should be positively oriented towards the minority as well as the majority culture.

Whilst it is generally accepted that most teachers are caring and nurturing towards their pupils, there is a misconception that 'love is enough' (Garmon, 2004). For EAL pupils, however, the care and concern of their teachers is not considered sufficient to provide equal access to the curriculum (Garmon, 2004). The core of effective pedagogy for EAL pupils is not simply teaching them English but to find ways to incorporate the cultural experiences and knowledge of these children into their learning (Yeh et al, 2002). Niemi (2002, p. 763) maintains that

'...all pedagogical arrangements should improve the quality of learning, enhance the equality of opportunities for different learners and help combat social exclusion.'

Skilled practitioners '...recognise that outstanding learners can be crippled by the types of exposure they encounter, but they also realize (sic) that teaching is a power tool that when used appropriately can awaken the genius in children' (Hilliard, 1996, p. 21 cited by Kea & Utley, 1998).

A critical journey: from 'providers' to 'reflective and informed educators'

Ideally, teachers need to analyse their vision for education and what they want to achieve in their interactions with all pupils and, in particular EAL pupils, and then decide on how this can be done. This may involve a change in the role of teachers from one of 'providers' of activities for children to that of 'reflective and informed' educators, who analyse, evaluate and challenge their own and others' practices. Bowman, Donovan & Burns (2001, p. 319) conclude that, 'If there is a single critical component to quality, it rests in the relationship between the child and the teacher/caregiver and in the ability of the adult to be responsive to the child.' Being a teacher involves developing a personal understanding of important curriculum concepts such as inclusion and adapted instruction. It also entails individuals continuously renewing and expanding the content of these concepts in line with their personal and professional development in order to respond to the full range of pupil needs and to reassess this on a regular basis (Fotland, 2001).

Reflection on existing teaching strategies and practices is often described as a 'corner stone' of continued professional development (Moyles, Adams & Musgrove, 2002). It involves both affective and cognitive challenge. Teachers are likely to feel vulnerable when considering how their existing image of their professional self might be challenged, questioned and reshaped (Moyles, Adams & Musgrove, 2002). Teachers need to confront their existing knowledge and feelings before considering changes to currently held values, beliefs, understanding and practice (Moyles, Adams & Musgrove, 2002). Teachers' lack of awareness of their own ethnocentric views and their limited cultural competence regarding minority and diverse students inhibit the

use of effective practices with pupils and families from diverse backgrounds (Correa, Blanes-Reyes & Rapport, 1996, p. 545). It is difficult to reflect upon knowledge and skill gaps self-critically and for busy teachers concerned with the immediacy of classroom life, reflection can seem like an indulgence! (Salisbury, 1994; Rudduck, 1991).

However, it is questionable whether reflection is enough in itself. Teachers may wish to improve the learning experiences they offer to EAL pupils, only to find themselves constrained by a number of external factors. Apple (1986) suggests that reduction in professional status and an increase in workload, especially administrative tasks, results in teachers having less time and opportunity to develop the social and emotional bonds with pupils that are considered so important to the teaching process. With large class sizes, it is difficult for teachers to know all the children well and so provide the appropriate level of cognitive challenge (Bliss, Askew & Macrae, 1996).

Embracing diversity: organisational constraints

Whilst individual teachers may wish to embrace cultural diversity this may not reflect the norms and values of the educational setting. The organisational culture provides an identity for its members and regulates the ways that individuals treat one another and the nature of working relations (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2002). The environment may impose serious limits on teacher responses (Korthagen, 2004). The response of educational establishments to the need to re-evaluate existing practices is likely to be determined by the basic underlying assumptions concerning its role in the acculturation of ethnic minority pupils and the value placed upon cultural retention by EAL pupils. This, in turn, is likely to influence the actual strategies and practices of

teachers with regard to EAL pupils. Inevitably, resource levels and the capacity to increase resources (pupil-teacher ratios, language assistants, classroom materials, in-service training etc) also determine organisational cultures.

Consequently, the education of ethnic minority pupils can be viewed as a continuum ranging from an assimilationist to a multiculturalist orientation (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2002). From an assimilationist perspective, the task of integrating EAL pupils is usually viewed as marginal with no major structural or pedagogical changes considered necessary, and routine coping strategies are maintained (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2002). At the other extreme, schools which utilise a multiculturalist approach assign a central role to the education of EAL pupils and make qualitative changes and developments and implement new coping strategies (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2002). It is suggested that pluralistic schools will adapt teaching styles to the specific needs of EAL pupils, encouraging the use of their first language during all lessons. In addition, where possible, the staff of the school will include a reasonable number of teachers who share the same cultural backgrounds as the minority pupils (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2002).

According to Bourne (1989) in order to be successful, teachers' critical reflection on existing practices as well as any subsequent changes in teaching strategies must be pervasive throughout the entire school organisation. Practitioners who are willing to reflect on their values and beliefs require support from colleagues and management. The process of reflection and improvement needs to be promoted by strong, purposeful leadership.

The Teacher Training Agency (TTA, 1996, p. 9) acknowledges this:

‘We also know that effective teaching must be supported by high quality management and leadership at middle and senior levels in the profession. The subject co-coordinator, the head of department, the head teacher and senior management team...who need to offer leadership, set the tone, ethos, direction and purpose within a setting, translate that purpose into plans, implement those plans, check through monitoring and evaluation that progress is taking place.’

A ‘whole school’ commitment towards improving the learning experiences of EAL pupils is therefore required. Achieving such commitment is not likely to be easy and will need to be scaffolded by specified whole school targets, endorsed and supported by the LEA, Governors and teaching teams.

Whilst educational discourse may advocate a pluralistic approach to ethnic minority pupils, in reality, assimilatory practices remain (Gay, 1993). Horenczyk and Tatar (2002) suggest that the majority of teachers consider their primary objectives to be to facilitate second language acquisition and to help ethnic minority pupils to adapt their needs and expectations to the reality of the school. Multicultural discourse is itself

‘...generally phrased in terms of vague rhetoric, which allows it to be shared by both newcomers and hosts. But this discourse usually downplays deep-seated assimilationist ideologies and difficulties in implementing structural changes.’

(Horenczyk & Tatar, 2002, p.442).

For Horenczyk and Tatar (2002, p. 436), who examined actual educational practices in several countries, ‘...multiculturalist views have not fully permeated the layer of public and professional rhetoric’. Their comparative analysis reveals that there is a long way to go.

Teacher training: the way forward?

There is a rapidly growing imbalance between the racial and ethnic composition of the school-age population and that of the teaching workforce, which is predominantly white and female (See, 2004). It is therefore considered of paramount importance that individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds are recruited into the teaching profession to act as role models for ethnic minority pupils. However, it is likely that the current cultural mismatch is likely to continue as white, monolingual English speakers dominate intake to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses (Cockrell, Placier, Cockrell & Middleton, 1999). Two strategies in particular are recommended by Cockrell et al (1999) to address this issue. First, a pronounced recruitment drive of ethnic minority teachers (individuals who are likely to have first hand experience of the ‘assimilatory’ practices within the British education system). Second, the improved preparation of current recruits for working with diverse populations.

Teacher training, like in-service teaching, has been at the centre of reform in recent years. The identification of the essential qualities that determine a ‘good teacher’ is a difficult undertaking (Korthagen, 2004). However, policy makers are keen to attempt to describe such qualities by means of lists of competencies. The DfES in England and the Welsh Assembly Government provide comprehensive accounts of the range of skills, knowledge and values required by beginning teachers (TTA, 2003; GTCW, 2003). However doubts have been raised about such lists in terms of their validity, reliability and practicality (Korthagen, 2004). In fact, many researchers question whether it is possible to describe the qualities of good teachers in terms of competencies (Mahony, 2000). Whilst policy makers tend to focus upon the

importance of outcomes in terms of competencies, researchers emphasise the more personal characteristics of teachers, such as empathy, understanding, tolerance and a warm regard for children (Korthagen, 2004). These characteristics are considered particularly important for teachers working with ethnic minority children.

The competencies and attributes required for successful completion of teacher training courses within England and Wales make no reference to the need for prospective teachers to be familiar with the socio-political challenges facing ethnic minority pupils (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996). Yet, as Bennett (1995) acknowledges, teachers must be able to create an equitable learning environment for the diverse student population, work effectively with pupils with English as an additional language and develop skills in self reflection. To do this, teacher education programmes need to find effective ways of raising the multicultural awareness and sensitivity of trainee teachers. Short university-based courses on 'diversity' or field placements in culturally diverse schools have been offered as possible ways to change negative beliefs and attitudes. However, most courses cover the broad issues of diversity, including issues of race, class, gender, ethnicity, disability but with limited detail and little or no practical advice (Irvine, 1990). This was my personal experience on a recently completed PGCE course, where these important issues were dealt with in a very general way. It is suggested that even if short-term positive effects were obtained from such experiences, it is not clear whether they would persist over time and influence teaching practice (Olmedo, 1997).

Pre-existing beliefs: filters for learning

To date, multicultural education is not integrated into teacher training programmes in a thorough or persistent and overt way (Kea and Utley, 1998). It has been suggested that diversity or multicultural courses may have a limited effect on students' existing attitudes and beliefs (Cockrell et al, 1999). Garmon (2004) observed that students who began a diversity course favourably disposed towards racial and cultural diversity tended to become more favourably disposed during the course. In contrast, those who were unfavourably disposed tended to become less favourable. This is consistent with Kagan's (1992, p.154) finding that '...candidates tend to use the information provided in course work to confirm rather than to confront and correct their pre-existing beliefs'.

Prospective teachers' attitudes and beliefs on entering teacher training programmes have been documented as serving as filters for subsequent learning (Goodman, 1988). The beliefs that teachers hold about themselves and others are considered to determine their actions. The way that teachers see their role is therefore influenced by events and significant individuals within their lives (Korthagen, 2004). The in-depth study by Cockrell et al (1999) identified that prospective teachers held different, sometimes opposing positions on multiculturalism. These were based on personal experience, political ideologies and beliefs about the role of schools and teachers. As Hamachek (1999, p.209) notes, 'Consciously we teach what we know, unconsciously we teach who we are'.

‘Culturally competent’ individuals are considered to possess knowledge and skills that enable them to appreciate, value and celebrate similarities and differences within, between and among culturally diverse groups of people (Singh, 1996, p. 124). In contrast, individuals

...who bring strong biases and negative stereotypes about diverse groups will be less likely to develop the types of professional beliefs and behaviours most consistent with multicultural sensitivity and responsiveness’

(Garman, 2004, p. 202).

Prospective teachers and indeed practising teachers may therefore not necessarily favour multicultural based practices.

The personal and professional beliefs of individuals have been found to be related to their own cross-cultural experiences whilst growing up. Therefore it is postulated that individuals who have more cross cultural experiences are more likely to develop favourable personal and professional beliefs about culturally diverse learners (Brown, 2004; Garmon, 2004). Smith, Moallem and Sherrill (1997) identified that such exposure was possible in a number of different ways, including interpersonal contact through friendships or sports, the influences of education, travel, and personal experiences of discrimination as a child or adult. These findings lend further support to the idea that students’ experiences are critical in shaping their multicultural sensitivity. Garmon (2004) also identified a range of personal values that are highly instrumental in fostering changes in attitudes towards cultural diversity in a favourable way. These include receptiveness to other people’s ideas or arguments and the ability to engage in self reflection, together with ‘... a commitment to equity and equality for

all people in society' (Garmon, 2004, p. 206).

It should be noted that while multicultural courses and classroom experiences are important tools for developing trainee teachers' awareness of and sensitivity to diversity, these courses and experiences, by themselves, '...may be insufficient to counteract the power of students' pre-existing attitudes and beliefs' (Garmon, 2004, p. 211). Garmon argues that if students are not dispositionally 'ready' to receive the instruction and experiences presented to them, even the best-designed teacher preparation programmes may be ineffective in developing appropriate multicultural awareness and sensitivity. A demoralising prospect for those committed to racial equality.

It is postulated that a truly multicultural curriculum - not just tokenistic 'tapas days' (Cockrell et al, 1999) may provide more culturally diverse experiences during childhood. The teaching profession of the future would perhaps then be more likely to possess positive attitudes and beliefs towards cultural diversity. A move towards multicultural education is, however, likely to depend upon whether the rhetoric surrounding inclusion is transformed into actual educational practice.

Teachers: agents of transformation?

Indeed, the preparation of new teachers may be used by policy makers as an important mechanism through which policy agendas can be realised (Reid & Donoghue, 2004). Ada (1986, p. 388) suggests that many teacher training programmes are designed to train teachers to accept social realities rather than to question them. Teachers are trained to

'...conform to a mechanistic definition of their role rather than to

recognise it as involving a relationship between human beings, with a possibility of growth for both teachers and students.'

As a result, teachers frequently find themselves

'...trapped in a series of ritualistic activities - taking attendance, maintaining order, creating and following lesson plans, testing and reporting test results - with little opportunity to step back from the reality in which they are immersed in order to analyse it critically and become true agents of transformation.'

During their training, trainees may be subject to 'seminar syndrome'. Where relevant information is provided but without challenging prospective teachers to leave their 'comfort zone'. To do this, individuals need to identify their existing beliefs and values and critically evaluate them in response to the culturally diverse school population. As a teacher quoted by Ada (1986, p. 388) acknowledges 'All we were told was how to set goals and objectives and how to write lesson plans'. Some eighteen years later and my own personal experience of a post graduate teacher training programme shows that very little may have changed!

Prospective teachers' responses to multicultural education

Cockrell et al (1999) explored 128 prospective teachers' responses to multicultural education via a questionnaire, focus group and coursework. 'A significant number' of student teachers viewed transmission of the common culture as the primary purpose of schools. 'According to these students, multiculturalism separates, divides, and exacerbates hostility between groups of people' (Cockrell et al, 1999 p. 356). This group of students ... 'while not the majority, formed a significant core of opposition to many of the values and positions espoused in the [multicultural] curriculum' (Cockrell et al, 1999, p. 356). Even individuals identified as having positive views of cultural diversity considered multiculturalism to be 'false'. This highlights the view that there needs to be a deep-rooted change in the beliefs and values underpinning the entire

education system: making multiculturalism an integral part of the curriculum rather than a mere 'objective on a lesson plan'. Cockrell et al (1999) reported that some of the trainee teachers preferred a 'colour blind' approach - treating all individuals as 'the same', focusing on the similarities between individuals. This 'one-size-fits-all' approach does not allow for the consideration of cultural and linguistic differences of pupils when planning and implementing teaching and learning strategies and does not acknowledge the inherently discriminatory aspects of the curriculum (Irvine, 1990).

Cockrell et al (1999) suggest that the ideological divisions identified among trainee teachers are also likely to be found among the academic staff training these prospective teachers and also among teachers in our classrooms.

A culturally responsive pedagogy requires teaching staff to provide effective lessons for pupils from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Kea & Utley, 1998). Kea and Utley note that we must acknowledge that not only is the accomplishment of this goal currently out of reach, limited strategies and ideas currently exist which might change the position.

In an attempt to begin to address the situation, Irvine (1990) argues that teacher education must include a number of elements. Teachers must be trained as reflective practitioners with the observational, empirical and analytical skills necessary to monitor, evaluate and revise their own teaching practices on a continual basis. They must also be trained to understand and appreciate their pupils' cultural knowledge and to use this prior knowledge and culture in teaching. Training is required focusing on interpersonal skills, particularly in relation to minority students. 'Areas such as eye

contact, facial expressions, body posture, physical space and the use of silence and interpersonal touching' (Irvine, 1990, p. 19). Students also require an awareness of the different languages and dialects that may be present within their future classes. They need to be equipped to utilise the existing language skills of pupils within the classroom. This is of course an excellent agenda which could begin to foster new awareness in the population of new entrants.

To make this possible, Irvine (1990) recommends that student teachers should have the opportunity to experience cultural immersion via educational placements in non-school settings based in local community organisations such as community centres, after-school programmes and day-care settings. In addition, teaching experience in excellent minority schools with strong support networks should form an integral part of initial teacher training. Irvine's 'wish list' is a helpful diagnostic agenda and clearly identifies positive ways forward for enhancing trainee skills, knowledge and attitudes towards EAL learners. Until our educational practitioners acknowledge their critical role in the education of ethnic minority pupils and until funding levels to ITT and in-service programmes target monies to such areas, these pupils are likely to continue to experience serious forms of marginalisation within our educational system. In Irvine's (1990) ideal scenario, the student teacher would thereby witness a 'toolkit' of pedagogical strategies used by teachers working with EAL pupils.

EAL teaching: some issues around 'support'

There are therefore a number of important issues surrounding the education of ethnic minority pupils. For teachers working with pupils for whom English is an additional

language, there is only a limited amount of pedagogical advice available from official sources. The high level of generality of this advice is not particularly helpful when considering individual pupil needs (Leung & Franson, 2001). Little attempt is made to differentiate the applicability of advice, in terms of age, learning context, the learning task and the pupils' learning style. Often the guidance focuses on general practical information relating to issues such as classroom organisation and the importance of joint planning between the class teacher and EAL support teacher. There is minimal discussion of explicit language learning objectives for individual EAL pupils beyond the general notion of 'communication'. Leung and Franson (2001), in an in-depth study of the role of EAL teachers, found that in the absence of specific language objectives the success of activities was often judged in terms of enjoyment and interest. Whilst these are considered important factors they do not constitute by themselves satisfactory outcomes for mainstream lessons and therefore should not be considered satisfactory outcomes for EAL pupils either. It is therefore suggested that there is a need for more detailed guidance relating to pedagogically-specific and pupil-sensitive practice (Leung & Franson, 2001).

The different stages of second language development may require differing pedagogical responses. Three broad phases have been identified, namely the beginning stage, second stage and advanced stage. At the beginning stage a pupil is new to English; at the second stage a pupil has acquired spoken English for day-to-day communication and an emergent ability to read and write English; at the advanced stage a pupil is able to use English effectively in most social and school situations, but there is a further need for development in academic uses of English. The existing 'mainstreaming' approach does not attempt to respond to the different stages of

language development needs in a systematic way: the actual pedagogical response is left to the discretion of schools and individual teachers (Leung & Franson, 2001). The educational responses to the individual requirements of EAL pupils will therefore depend on the availability and level of expertise of staff on a local basis.

In the mainstream classroom, the teacher and pupils may be supported by an EAL support teacher. However, this additional support is not a statutory obligation for the school or LEA. In the past few years the funding for EAL work has been reduced repeatedly with the cuts attributed to financial reasons (Leung & Franson, 2001). This can be interpreted as an indication of the lack of value assigned to EAL provision. Gillborn and Gipps (1996) note that insecurity as a result of short term contracts and the threat of continued budgetary cuts has resulted in a drain of EAL teachers back to mainstream teaching, thereby reducing the available expertise. Indeed, the Local Education Authority in which the fieldwork for this study was conducted has seen a reduction in funding for EAL support teachers and bilingual classroom assistants over the last few years.

Building a positive relationship: the role of professional identity and expertise

A successful relationship between a class teacher and EAL support teacher needs to be built upon a mutually recognised sense of professional identity and expertise (Leung & Franson, 2001). However, a recent OFSTED report found that many teachers working as EAL specialists do not hold qualifications relevant to their specialism (DfES, 2003a). OFSTED (2002) found that in some LEAs, fewer than 30% of EAL teachers actually had a qualification in their specialist area. Whilst there are a range of certificates in English language teaching including City and Guilds qualifications as

well as some specialist PGCE and Certificates in Education in English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) (Basic Skills Agency, 2002) provision does not appear to be widely available. There are very few nationally recognised qualifications across the UK for EAL teachers. In some instances, this lack of a recognisable qualification has led to difficulties in establishing the credibility of EAL support staff. A lack of commonality of training and expertise does not mean that EAL support teachers will not be proficient at their job. It does mean however, that the support offered is likely to vary in terms of individual in-depth background knowledge relating to issues such as second language acquisition and pedagogy. Fieldwork findings from this study, which are reported in Chapter 6, illustrate this point.

Class teachers and EAL support teachers: a balanced partnership?

The English as an Additional Language Association of Wales Report (EALAW) (2003) revealed that partnerships between class teachers and support staff are considered most productive when working relationships are negotiated and well-balanced. In a survey of 38 EAL support teachers and 115 class teachers EALAW found that 63% of EAL support teachers and 48% of class teachers felt that their working partnerships could be improved. Estyn (2003a), in the document *The Survey Report: Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant: Effective Use of Resources*, acknowledged that there was not enough cooperation between mainstream and Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) support teachers in planning pupils' experiences. This was considered to result in a subsequent number of shortcomings in the quality of teaching of EAL pupils.

These included:

A lack of clear objectives for the learning of ethnic minority pupils in mainstream classes.

Lessons that were not planned and structured appropriately enough to pupils' progress and achievement in mainstream classes.

In withdrawal sessions, work was not matched closely enough to EAL pupils' progress and achievement in mainstream class.

Not enough attention was paid to ensuring that key terms in mainstream lessons were fully understood by pupils.

(Estyn, 2003a, p.6)

Basic requirements of teacher training and ongoing professional development- new recruits and beyond.

The current initial teacher education (ITE) programmes in England and Wales do not address adequately the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Knowledge about how to teach individuals with English as an additional language is not currently a specific requirement of ITE programmes. Leung and Franson (2001) recommend that, as a minimum, teacher training should include 'knowledge of the formal features and patterns of discourse of the English language in the curriculum or subject context ... and knowledge of second language acquisition in the school setting (Leung & Franson, 2001, p. 206). Beginning teachers will also require some practical 'recipe knowledge' (Hargreaves, 1994) that would enable them to take account of the learning needs of EAL learners. Furthermore they will need to develop their ability to collaborate with EAL support teachers within the same classroom and curriculum space (Leung & Franson, 2001).

Mohan, Leung and Davison (2001) argue that for experienced mainstream teachers, there is a need to provide long-term ongoing in-service training. Continuing

professional development (CPD) may enable teachers to build on their professional experiences and help to develop new knowledge and strategies to enhance their existing classrooms practices. As well as practical guidance for teaching EAL pupils, teachers may also need help to change their existing beliefs and low expectations of such pupils. In-service training cannot be regarded as a 'quick-fix' solution focused on behavioural changes only. It is a long term developmental process.

For EAL support teachers, more in-depth knowledge is required. They will need expert knowledge and skills to assess individual EAL pupils learning needs in terms of English language development and curriculum content and how to promote pupil learning in the mainstream classroom. To date there is a paucity of available specialist training and that which exists is ad hoc and unsystematic (Mohan, Leung & Davison, 2001).

The critical importance of teacher training and development to develop skills and strategies to assist EAL learners within the classroom has been highlighted. The relationship between teachers and pupils has been acknowledged as crucial to the learning process. It is also considered imperative that teachers develop positive relationships with the parents of ethnic minority pupils. The following section identifies the ways in which ethnic minority parents are 'excluded' from the communication and information giving processes of their children's schools.

Schools and communities

Ethnic minority parents: equal partners in their children's education?

Wong Fillmore (1983) acknowledges that most parents of ethnic minority pupils have high aspirations for their children and want to be involved in promoting academic progress. However, they are often excluded from participation in their children's education by the school. In particular, many ethnic minority parents consider the language barrier between home and school to be the key factor in their exclusion from the education process. Parental 'deficits' (such as an inability to speak English) are often viewed as a major contributory factor of pupil failure (Gillborn, 1997b). In particular, parents often feel that their inability to converse with teachers at school affects the efforts made by teachers to communicate (Milbourne, 2002). Yet, establishing positive links with parents is considered an essential element of improving the educational experiences of young children. The 'best' schools are considered to engage constructively with parents, treating them as equal partners in their children's education (DfES, 2003a). In doing so, they welcome parents and respond respectfully to their needs and concerns.

The energy with which schools foster supportive relationships with parents however, has been found to vary greatly (OFSTED, 1999). Some schools employ a wide range of strategies to bridge the language barrier and encourage high levels of parental participation in the life and work of the school. These include the celebration and sharing of cultural traditions, translation of formal communications into community

languages and the availability of interpreting services for parents evenings and important discussions such as SEN review meetings. Wider links with the community have also been established by some schools by maintaining good contact with local places of religious worship (OFSTED, 1999).

Home-school teaching approaches have also been highlighted as a way of including parents/families within the learning process. The Haringey project (reported by Tizard, Schofield & Hewison, 1982) illustrates how powerful simple interventions can be. The schools involved were all in multiethnic areas with many parents who did not read English and spoke little or no English. Parents were asked to hear their children read and complete a record card showing what they had read aloud in English. The researchers report that parental involvement had a pronounced effect on the pupils' success in school. Children who read with their parents made significantly greater progress than those who did not engage in this activity. Interestingly, small group instruction in reading, given by an experienced and qualified teacher, did not produce improvements comparable to those obtained from the collaboration with parents. This further highlights the potential value of home-school liaison. On conclusion of the initiative, the teachers involved in the home-school collaboration chose to continue with it. In addition, the teachers from the control classes also adopted the home-school collaboration programme. This illustrates how individual teacher practices can change as a result of positive experience.

Schools which have been successful in developing home-school links acknowledge the persistence that is required before success is experienced. In other instances, however, schools pay only limited attention to links with parents. Many schools have

reported difficulties in attracting ethnic minority parents onto the Governing Body, PTA or to attend parent evenings (OFSTED, 1999).

Cummins (1984), some twenty years ago, argued that the relationships between teachers and pupils and between schools and communities have remained essentially unchanged and rather formal. Governmental educational policy has more recently espoused visions of active partnerships between schools and parents. But in reality the mismatch between the 'openness and inclusivity' of the language of policy and the realities of practice reveal an '...implicit marginalizing and controlling of parents... parents are audience, volunteers, supporters from a distance, the roles are passive and narrowly defined' (Vincent & Tomlinson, 1997, p. 366). Whilst legislative and policy reforms are necessary for effective change, they are not on their own sufficient. Implementation of change is dependent upon the extent to which educators redefine their roles with respect to ethnic minority pupils and their communities.

Empowerment and the information process

Gillborn (1998) argues that we need to reject stereotyped notions of minority pupils and their communities as 'powerless victims'. Many ethnic minority communities wish to help themselves but are thwarted by a lack of investment in local resources.

In a study of 40 community organisations and groups representing 'hard to reach' communities together with interviews with local people, Milbourne (2002) found that attempts by ethnic minority individuals to help themselves to learn English and develop their own skills were frustrated by a lack of available schemes, especially with creche facilities. Most parents (in particular, mothers) were reliant on over-stretched community-run schemes which were often housed in substandard

accommodation with very limited resources. Commonplace experiences included the closure or curtailment of early years or supplementary education facilities; the withdrawal of financial resources due to changes in regulations and money diverted to support new initiatives. Many groups commented on the failure of local authorities to understand the needs of communities including the need to support children in developing their own languages and cultures (Milbourne, 2002). Where small community-run groups had looked into government funding, they found the rules and regulations of the schemes did not match their requirements. They therefore ‘...felt pressured to change the nature of projects to fit the shape of current new initiatives rather than being allowed to continue to meet locally identified needs with, necessarily, more open-ended and unpredictable outcomes’ (Milbourne, 2002, p. 296).

This refusal to accept the reality of linguistic diversity is apparent within the verbal and written life of the UK which is inherently monolingual (and to some extent bilingual in Wales) (Verma, Corrigan & Firth, 1995). Fundamental to the relationship between a school and its local community is the information process. Whilst most schools make a genuine effort to communicate information to parents, for example, by newsletter and parent’s evening and more recently school websites, these communications are usually conducted through the medium of English and so many parents and community organisations are excluded from the process. Consequently, ethnic minority parents tend not to have equal access, equal understanding and equal consultation: in other words equal power (Marland, 1987). To illustrate, on attending a talk given by the Welsh National Assembly regarding the proposed ‘Foundation Stage - a curriculum for 3-8 year olds,’ the speaker advised that a new core strand was

being added to the curriculum, namely multiculturalism. With the increasing ethnic diversity within Wales, this is in principle to be congratulated. The Assembly representatives also advised that all households in Wales would receive information outlining the proposed changes. This material was in the process of being translated, but on further questioning it transpired that this translation extended to Welsh only, despite the 90 other languages known to be prevalent in Wales. When questioned as to why this was the case, 'resource implications' was cited as the reason, yet surely a multicultural curriculum must also be a multilingual one? In such a curriculum everyone is given access to material in a language that they can understand. This might of course be restricted due to 'resource implications' to local libraries, mosques and synagogues for example.

This chapter has drawn together a discussion of research literature on bilingualism, multiculturalism and the use of home languages. It has highlighted a range of issues relating to the role of teachers and EAL support staff. The importance of developing links with parents and the wider community are also acknowledged. In the next chapter which continues to review thematically the relevant literatures, second language acquisition, the use of ICT and the role of the Literacy Hour are discussed. Hopefully, Chapters 2 and 3 will provide readers with a helpful overview of the pertinent research areas.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter Three

The home language and the classroom

This chapter continues to review research literature and is broadly organised into three distinct sections - Second language acquisition and vocabulary acquisition, ICT and the National Literacy Strategy. The reader's attention is drawn towards the theories underpinning second language acquisition and the importance of vocabulary development for EAL learners. The potential benefits of the home language to develop language skills are explored, drawing upon the work of Cummins (1984). The second section introduces the role of ICT and traces the recent developments of ICT within mainstream education. It draws upon recent research evidence to examine the potential benefits and limitations of computer use. The third section focuses upon the Literacy Hour and describes the format of the 'hour'. The impact of its implementation for EAL pupils is considered, together with recommendations for 'good practice,' including the use of the home language. The sections reflect key literatures deemed important for the current study and which underpin it theoretically and contextually.

Second Language Acquisition

The aim of this opening section is to summarise certain key frameworks and theories, derived from a range of differing perspectives on second language acquisition (SLA), including psychological, socio-linguistic, cultural and cognitive. It is not intended to provide an exhaustive account but to explore the theoretical foundations of current thinking. More detailed reviews can be found elsewhere (Ellis, 1985; Gass & Selinker, 2001). The theories described here have been developed from differing approaches: some are the result of a theory-then-research approach whilst others from a research-

then-theory approach. It is important to note that some theories focus upon the ‘how’ (i.e. the underlying cognitive processes) whilst others focus upon the ‘why’ (i.e. the initiating factors of second language acquisition). Baker (1996) notes that no one theory adequately addresses both the ‘how’ and the ‘why’. Indeed, Ellis (1985) warns that the reader seeking a tidy and exhaustive account of SLA is likely to be disappointed.

A tour through some pertinent theories.

Ellis (1985, p.5) defines second language acquisition (SLA) as ‘the study of how learners learn an additional language after they have acquired their mother tongue’. For SLA during childhood, a further distinction has been made between the sequential acquisition of two languages (i.e., where the first language has already been learned) and simultaneous acquisition (where both languages are being acquired at the same time) (Gass & Selinker, 2001). There has been a plethora of second language acquisition models, principles, laws and theories developed since the 1970s (Baker, 1996). Yet it is widely acknowledged that there is no single way in which learners acquire an additional language: different learners in different situations acquire a second language in different ways. Nevertheless, certain aspects of SLA have been found to be relatively stable and therefore generalisable to a larger group of learners.

A view from the 1950s and 1960s

During the 1950s and 1960s behaviourism dominated mainstream psychology. From this perspective, language learning was viewed as the formation of habits. It was believed that repeated reinforcement of a certain response in the presence of a stimulus would eventually elicit the required response on a recurring basis. It was

strongly believed that ‘practice makes perfect’, consequently much imitation and repetition was considered necessary for language learning to be successful. Within second language development, the first language of an individual was viewed as either a positive or negative factor depending on the similarities in structure between the two languages. Where differences in structure existed, it was suggested that well-established responses in the mother tongue may have to be relearned in the second language (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Educators therefore focused on structures considered to be ‘difficult’ due to first language interference and would require pupils to engage in many ‘drilling’ exercises (Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

Towards the end of the 1960s, the behaviourist theory of language and language learning was challenged. Learning began to be viewed not as imitation and the formation of habits but as active rule formation (Gass & Selinker, 2001). The recognition of the inadequacies of a behaviourist theory of language had important implications for second language acquisition. Researchers began to look at the errors that second language learners make. The data showed errors that went beyond those in the surrounding speech and beyond those in the native language. This indicated that other factors affect second language development and acted as a catalyst for further research in a range of areas, including the innate principles of language development and the role of intra-personal factors such as attitude, motivation and aptitude (Gass & Selinker, 2001).

Innate principles of language acquisition.

The pioneering linguist, Noam Chomsky, suggested that children have an innate ability to learn language. This innate core of knowledge about language form, for

example nouns, verbs and grammatical rules, is considered to act as a ‘genetic blueprint’ for all natural human language (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). This ‘universal grammar’ is considered to be ‘the system of principles, conditions, and rules that are elements or properties of all human languages’ (Chomsky, 1975, p. 29). The assumption that ‘universal grammar’ is the driving force of children’s language acquisition has long been maintained by many, but has only recently been applied to SLA (Gass & Selinker, 2001). The question posed for SLA is whether the innate language facility that children use in constructing their native language remains operative in second language acquisition. Two issues have been identified namely ‘transfer’, the availability of first language grammar, and ‘access’, the extent to which ‘universal grammar’ is available. While it is acknowledged that universal aspects of language acquisition play an important role in SLA, the exact nature of this role is not yet clear (Gass & Selinker, 2001; Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

Krashen’s five central hypotheses

Towards the end of the 1970s and into the 1980s Krashen published his SLA theory. The Monitor model is probably the most widely cited theory of second language acquisition and has dominated educational research and debate (Baker, 1996). The model comprises five central hypotheses. (For more detailed information see Krashen, 1985).

The Acquisition hypothesis

This hypothesis is based upon the premise that second language learners have two independent means of developing knowledge of a second language, termed ‘acquisition’ and ‘learning.’ Krashen (1985, p. 1) defined ‘acquisition’ as the

'subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language' or more simply, the 'picking-up' of language. Therefore unconscious feelings about what are correct and appropriate language structures occur in language acquisition. In contrast, 'learning' refers to the 'conscious process that results in 'knowing about' language' (Krashen, 1985, p.1). It is a conscious 'thinking about' rules. For language performance, acquired knowledge is considered to serve as the major source for initiating both composition and production of utterances. The learned system serves as an 'inspector' of the acquired system (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Krashen has been criticised for his vague definition of conscious and subconscious processes. The ability to differentiate in practice between language that is acquired and that which is learned and consequently, which a person is using, has been questioned (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). In addition, Krashen stipulates that acquired and learned knowledge of language cannot unify. This has been contested by other researchers who have suggested that learnt knowledge that is practised may reach a level of automatisisation that equates to acquired knowledge and may therefore be used within spontaneous 'unconscious' conversation (Baker, 1996).

The Monitor hypothesis

Krashen suggests that acquired language is responsible for utterances and fluency. Learned language is postulated to be there to monitor output and make changes to the utterance only after it is produced by the acquired system. It therefore acts as an editing device. Krashen uses the monitor hypothesis to explain individual differences in learners. He suggests that some individuals are 'over-users' and consequently their speech is halting and non-fluent, whilst others are 'under-users' and have speed and fluency but are more likely to make errors. Critics of this hypothesis have highlighted

the fact that the speed and demands of conversing in a second language are likely to mean that there is insufficient time to trigger this system. It is also considered impossible to test empirically whether a word has originated from an acquired or learned system (Baker, 1996; Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

The Natural Order hypothesis

This states that we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order irrespective of the language being learnt. Consequently, when a learner engages in natural communication the standard grammatical order will occur. This hypothesis has been criticised due to the lack of empirical evidence to support it. Krashen has also been criticised for not explaining the underlying processes (Ellis, 1985; Baker, 1996).

The Input hypothesis

It is claimed that we move along a developmental continuum by receiving 'comprehensible input.' This is defined as second language input just beyond the learner's current second language competence level, in terms of syntactic complexity. Input, which is either too simple or too complex, is not considered useful for acquisition. Input is made comprehensible as a result of the help provided by the context. Second language learning is said to emerge as a result of understanding the input rather than by direct teaching. If input is understood and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is provided automatically. Speaking is therefore viewed as the result of acquisition and emerges on its own as a result of building competence. Krashen's input hypothesis has been criticised for being vague and imprecise. Mitchell and Myles (2004) note that the theory becomes impossible to verify, as no independently testable definition is given of what 'comprehensible input' is and how

this may relate to acquisition.

The Affective Filter hypothesis

This hypothesis attempts to address variations in success at language learning. In Krashen's view, learners may not receive sufficient quantities of 'comprehensible input' to aid optimal language development. Alternatively, inappropriate affect may be to blame. Affect includes factors such as motivation, attitude, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen thus proposed that individuals have an Affective Filter. This determines how receptive to comprehensible input an individual will be. Learners with a positive attitude and self confidence may have a low filter, whilst those with a negative attitude and high anxiety levels are likely to have high filters.

Further criticisms of Krashen's model

The main limitation of Krashen's model is the presentation of hypotheses that remain to be tested as a comprehensive model (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Due to the formulation of acquisition as a subconscious process and learning as a more conscious process, it is difficult, if not impossible to test the hypotheses empirically and comprehensively (Ellis, 1985; Baker, 1996). The failure to explain the underlying cognitive processes that underlie acquisition and learning renders this a 'black box' theory of language acquisition (Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

The pedagogical value of Krashen's model.

Whilst Krashen's theory has been widely criticised on the above grounds, it has provided teachers with a set of general pedagogical guidelines for use with second language learners. Krashen considers a critical aspect of language development to be

the availability of 'comprehensible input'. The goal of education must therefore be to supply information in an understandable form. This can, in theory, be provided by ensuring a close match between the level of delivery and level of understanding. To ensure a low affective filter, pupils must not feel anxious or defensive in their language learning. Where a learner is feeling relaxed and confident, the 'input' is likely to be received more efficiently and effectively. For Krashen, the teaching of formal grammar is considered of limited value because it contributes to learning rather than acquisition. A 'natural approach' to learning is therefore favoured (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

A Cognitive perspective

Within a cognitive framework, SLA is viewed as the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill. Historically, it was assumed that the brain had a certain capacity for language learning that could not be extended. Therefore any increase in second language knowledge was considered to be detrimental to first language development. This was usually portrayed with a monolingual individual having one well-filled language balloon, whilst a bilingual had two less well-filled balloons. This viewpoint has since been discredited (McLaughlin, 1984; Baker, 1996). It is now widely accepted that knowledge about different languages is stored centrally within the brain, enabling knowledge in one language to be readily transferred to another language. As Baker (1996) illustrates, a Spanish-speaking child learning English does not have to be re-taught how to multiply numbers in English. Concepts can be easily and immediately accessed in either language provided each language is sufficiently well developed.

Cummins' Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) model

Cummins (1980, 1981) provides a vivid image of this process within his Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) model where knowledge of two languages is depicted as two icebergs. The two icebergs are separate above the surface illustrating that the two languages are visibly different in overt conversation. However, underneath the surface, the two icebergs are fused together, with both languages operating through the same central processing system. A 'central engine' is therefore considered to be responsible for the thoughts that accompany talking, reading, writing and listening irrespective of the language in which a person is operating. This central engine has the capacity to comfortably store two or more languages.

Cummins highlights however, the importance of both languages being sufficiently well developed for maximum performance. The language that the child is using within the classroom must be sufficiently well developed to deal with the cognitive challenges of the curriculum. Where children are obliged to operate in an undeveloped second language, the quality and quantity of their learning from complex curriculum materials may be relatively weak and impoverished (Baker, 1996).

Communication and academic language proficiency

The cognitive and language demands inherent within the education system require all pupils to have in-depth language skills (McWilliam, 1998). Basic communication skills - the ability to hold a simple conversation - may hide a child's relative inadequacy in the language proficiency necessary to meet the cognitive and academic

demands of the classroom. Cummins (1984, p. 32) makes a distinction between basic interpersonal skills (BICS) and cognitive/ academic language proficiency (CALP).

‘BICS, then, emerge after about two years of ‘immersion’ in a second language environment, because by then most children will have gained enough command of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar to explain to others what they wish to convey in ordinary social situations, and will have sufficiently tuned into paralinguistic features (e.g. tone, intonation, gesture, facial expression, body posture) and situational cues of social conversation to follow what others are trying to convey. Even if they have not followed, it is usually easy, by a single word or gesture, to get the other to explain, rephrase or elaborate the message. BICS, therefore, is concerned with the child’s *intentions*’.

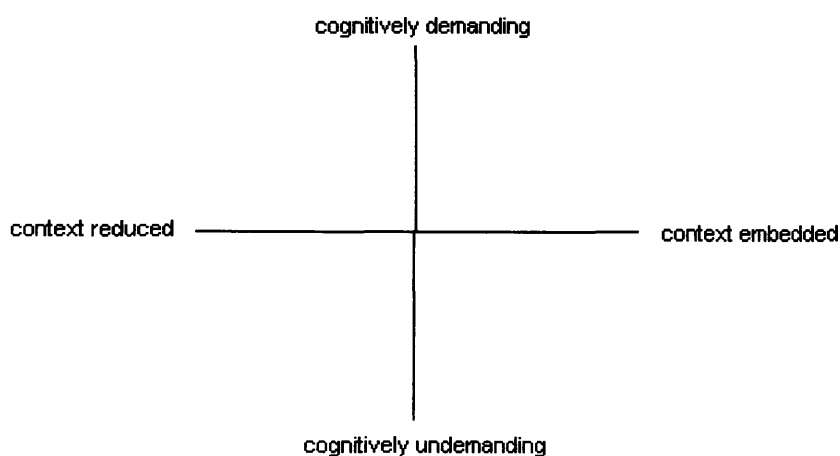
In contrast,

‘CALP is much more closely related to the kind of language proficiency necessary to interpret a complex, academic communication (when listening or reading), making sense of it by relating it to previous knowledge and experiences, and then creating ‘new’ knowledge (or rejecting it). It therefore not only involves the surface features of the language, but also the complex semantic and functional *meaning*’.

Within the mainstream classroom, EAL pupils are more likely to encounter learning situations which require cognitive/academic language skills rather than mere conversational skills. Cummins (1984) developed a theoretical framework to demonstrate the language demands of activities within the classroom. In this model, see Figure 3.1, the horizontal axis represents the continuum relating to the contextual support available to children to enable them to express and/ or understand meaning. At the ‘context embedded’ end of the continuum the language is supported by a wealth of situational and paralinguistic cues (such as pictures, objects and gestures) with which the children are familiar. At the ‘context reduced’ extreme however, children have to interpret meaning exclusively from linguistically subtle and complex communication. For example, story time with explicit reference to illustrations of

familiar scenes can offer children much contextual support to understand the verbal message, while listening to a story on tape is much more ‘context reduced’.

Figure 3.1: Cummins’ theoretical framework depicting the possible language demands of classroom activities.



On the vertical axis, the ‘cognitively undemanding’ end of the continuum refers to tasks and activities that the child is likely to be familiar with (from past experience), so that he or she does not need to do much ‘thinking’. At the opposite extreme, ‘cognitively demanding’ activities are generally unfamiliar and complex. Curriculum examples of this may include discussions based on historical events which have little relation to the pupils’ own experiences or PSE lessons where pupils are encouraged to talk about the feelings of others.

A common misapprehension is that when individuals have reached conversational

fluency that they will be able to perform on a par with native speakers on academic tasks (Edwards & Redfern, 1992). The BICS and CALP model of bilingual language development implies that for a number of years EAL pupils will be struggling to make sense of second language classroom instructions and discussions, even if their social language appears fluent. Language development is itself considered to be a dynamic and evolving process, therefore a clear dichotomy between BICS and CALPS may not exist in practice (Moore, 1999). However, the distinction between conversational and academic fluency does provide an important illustration of the language demands facing EAL pupils within mainstream education. It also highlights the important role that the first language can play in cognitively demanding and context reduced situations.

Language proficiency, however, relates to an individual's total circumstances and not just his/her cognitive skills (Baker, 1996). Hawkins (2004, p.15) suggests that language is 'constructed not in individual heads, but as between humans engaged in specific situated social interactions'. Language learning is therefore intricately bound up with the social identities that learners acquire in new social contexts (Vygotsky, 1978).

Acculturation: language as an expression of culture

Brown (1980, p.129) defines acculturation as '...the process of becoming adapted to a new culture'. Acculturation is considered to be an important aspect of SLA because language is one of the most observable expressions of culture. The acquisition of a new language is tied to the way in which the learner's community and the target

language community view each other. Schumann (1978, p. 34) details the link between the two ‘...second language acquisition is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language’. He therefore considers second language acquisition to be determined by the social and psychological distance between the learner and the target language culture. Social factors are considered primary and govern whether the overall learning situation is ‘good’ or ‘bad’. An example of a ‘good’ learning situation is where:

- The target language and the minority language groups view each other as socially equal.
- The target language and the home language group are both desirous that the home language group assimilate.
- Both language groups expect to share the same social facilities.
- The minority group is small and not very cohesive.
- The minority group culture is congruent with that of the majority group.
- Both groups have positive attitudes towards one another.
- The minority group intends to stay within the majority language area for an extended period of time.

The converse conditions are likely to provide a ‘bad’ learning situation. There are, of course, varying degrees of social distance possible.

There are also psychological factors affecting acculturation. ‘Language shock’ may occur when an individual experiences doubt and confusion regarding the second

language. The individual may feel frustration due to an inability to communicate effectively in the second language and may have concerns about making mistakes. This may be felt more deeply by adults and adolescents who may feel more restricted and self-conscious whilst learning an additional language than younger children (Schumann, 1978). The learner may also experience 'culture shock', anxiety or stress as a result of disorientation due to differences between cultures, such as new foods, social activities and expectations. Individuals will need to develop coping strategies to 'bridge the gap' between cultures. Where cultures are similar, integration is likely to be facilitated and social distance reduced. Where, however, the cultures have separate places of worship, social clubs and occupations, the degree of social distance is likely to be greater. Over a longer period, individuals may experience 'culture stress' as a result of cultural differences. A perceived rejection by the majority culture may lead to disorientation and difficulties in identifying with the new language. In extreme cases, individuals may reject the new culture and remain within the confines of their own cultural group and limit contacts with the target language group to a minimum.

Individual levels of motivation to learn an additional language are likely to vary. Overall, the social distance between the minority and majority groups politically, culturally and economically is likely to affect the perceived status between groups. There are therefore three possible outcomes. The minority group may assimilate in favour of the dominant group, that is they may give up their own life styles and values and take on those of the majority group. Alternatively, the minority group may decide to acculturate. They may adapt their life style and values in line with dominant group but maintain their own cultural value and intra-group relations. A third option is preservation - the rejection of the dominant culture and maintenance of own cultural

identity as much as possible. This is considered more likely where there is a large minority community (Schumann, 1978).

These social and psychological factors are considered to influence SLA by determining the amount of contact with the target language that the learner experiences, and also the degree to which the learner is 'open' to the input which is available. When the psychological distance is great, the learner may fail to convert available input into intake (Ellis, 1985).

Children are considered to be less culturally bound than adults are. They are considered to be highly motivated to be members of the first language community and to interact with peers, requiring a native-like accent to achieve this (Schumann, 1978). Fieldwork findings of this study (see Chapter 6) identified that parents were keen to teach their children their home language before they started school, acknowledging their children's likely enthusiasm to learn English as quickly as possible.

An overview of SLA

There is considerable evidence to suggest that second language learners follow a fairly well defined sequence of development irrespective of whether the language is being learned naturally or formally in the classroom. Individuals are considered universally to possess mental processes 'tuned in' for language learning. Typically an individual's

language develops from simple vocabulary and basic syntax, to the structure and shape of simple sentences and then to more complex sentences. Whilst there is a set developmental sequence, the order in which the vocabularies of a language are learnt may differ. For example, the order in which certain situation - specific vocabularies of a language are acquired may differ from person to person, classroom to classroom. The rate of development of the second language and the level of proficiency achieved may also vary greatly between individuals. Factors such as intelligence, motivation to learn and affective traits are likely to impact upon the success of a second language learner. The relationship between the individual and the social context for learning is dynamic, reflexive and constantly changing (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Learning an additional language is therefore considered to be a linguistic, social and psychological event.

A particularly important area of language development for all young children (monolingual and bilingual) is the acquisition of vocabulary (Wells, 1986). The following section examines the importance of listening to stories for young children's vocabulary gains. For EAL pupils, poor vocabulary (lexical) development is a major factor in educational underachievement (McWilliam, 1998). The potential benefit of home language use to facilitate vocabulary development is therefore discussed. The role of ICT as a medium for home language use is also outlined.

Vocabulary acquisition and monolingual pupils

A particularly important area of development for all young children is the acquisition of vocabulary (Wells, 1986). The size of vocabulary has been strongly correlated with children's overall school achievement (Wells, 1986). Vocabulary therefore plays an important role in both the communication effectiveness and academic success of young children (Robbins & Ehri, 1994). Clearly, the English vocabulary of pupils who arrive at school using other languages needs to be established and enriched as soon as possible in order for them to be able to access the curriculum.

The vocabulary growth of school-aged children is substantial and significant. Estimates of both vocabulary size and yearly growth vary considerably. However, it is widely acknowledged that children's vocabularies grow by thousands of words each year during the primary school years. Within the first six years of life, it is estimated that children will have acquired an average of 8000 root words of English (Templin, 1957 cited by Senechal, LeFevre, Hudson & Lawson, 1996) and are likely to continue to acquire up to 3000 words per annum (Nagy & Herman, 1984). More recent work by Wren and Wren (2002) confirms this and argues that large discrepancies exist in the size of individual children's vocabulary.

It is suggested that children learn the meanings of new words primarily through direct and explicit reference by adults and by incidental encounters with words in verbal contexts. Adults make direct and explicit reference to vocabulary when they name objects or define words. However, direct instruction is considered to account for only

a small proportion of the vocabulary growth displayed by school age children (Jenkins & Dixon, 1983). In a study of intensive vocabulary training, 27 9 and 10 year olds realised an average gain of only 85 targeted words in nineteen weeks (Beck, Perfetti & McKeown, 1982). It is therefore estimated that a maximum of 200-300 words per year are acquired from direct instruction (Jenkins & Dixon, 1983).

Nagy, Anderson & Herman (1987) concluded that after eight years of age, an average amount of reading accounts for one third of a child's annual vocabulary gain and that regular, wide reading can result in substantial and permanent vocabulary growth. Prior to this age however, it is unlikely that children increase their vocabularies substantially through reading because they encounter few unfamiliar words in the books that they read (Nagy et al, 1987). Young children must therefore learn the majority of new vocabulary through incidental encounters with words in verbal contexts such as conversations and listening to stories. For first and second language learners, incidental vocabulary learning takes place when learners focus on comprehending meaning rather than on the explicit goal of learning new words (Gass & Selinker, 2001).

Listening to stories is considered to be an influential aspect of vocabulary acquisition. Wells (1986) found that the frequency with which pupils listened to stories was positively associated with their teachers' assessment of vocabulary size at age ten. Elley (1989) reported that seven and eight year olds who heard the same story three times demonstrated gains when identifying the correct meanings of target words on a multiple choice test. These gains increased significantly when the teacher discussed the target words during the reading thereby utilising direct and indirect methods. In

addition Robbins and Ehri (1994) undertook a study of 33 native English-speaking five and six year old children who were all assessed as non-readers by their teachers. Their findings supported the findings of Elley (1989) and Nagy et al (1985, 1987) that young children expand their recognition vocabularies when they listen to stories at least twice. Wren and Wren (2002) attribute the large variations in vocabulary size among children primarily to their early exposure to words via listening to stories.

Story books frequently contain novel words which children are unlikely to encounter in spoken language. Researchers have argued that reading aloud to young children serves as an introduction to new and more complex syntactic and grammatical forms of language (Senechal et al, 1996). 'In every language, in every part of the world, story is the fundamental grammar of thought and communication' (Fisher, 1996, p. 2). It is through stories that we find out what happened to whom and why. Stories, whether personal narratives, traditional or contemporary tales, enable us to expand our thinking as well as learn about the structure, function and purposes of language (Fisher, 1996). Within Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government in association with The Basic Skills Agency (2002, p.2) has launched a national 'Read with Me' campaign. This is aimed at encouraging parents and carers to read with young children to develop '...an interest in books which will give them a strong foundation for their education'.

Story comprehension: a complex task

The task when encountering unfamiliar words in stories however is not a simple one. Children have to monitor their comprehension of the story, make inferences about the meanings of novel words using the story and pictorial context and store the new word in memory (Senechal, Thomas & Monker, 1995). The likelihood that a given word will be learned depends not only on the properties of the individual word but also on the properties of the text in which it is embedded. In such circumstances, the external context may be utilised in order to clarify the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary. Contextual cues are ‘...hints contained in a passage that facilitate (or, in theory facilitate and sometimes in practice impede) deciphering the meaning of an unknown word’ (Sternberg & Powell, 1983, p. 882). A range of contextual cues may be available such as stative cues (physical properties of the unknown word) or spatial cues (places where the unknown word may be found) (Sternberg & Powell, 1983). The strength of the contextual support will be determined by how informative it is (Nagy, Anderson & Herman, 1987). As well as the perceived helpfulness of the surrounding text, the ability to identify unfamiliar words is also likely to be affected by a number of mediating variables including the number of occurrences of the unknown word and its importance in understanding the overall context.

Individual differences: the utilisation of existing concepts or formation of new ones

In addition, individual differences may affect a child’s ability to differentiate relevant from irrelevant information. A critical dimension is whether or not the learner already knows the concept to which the word is associated and is able to integrate the new information with existing knowledge (Nagy, Anderson & Herman, 1987). Learning new vocabulary may therefore involve the utilisation of existing concepts or the

formation of new ones. This information also needs to be stored in a way that will be accessible later (Sternberg & Powell, 1983). As Pressley, Levin and McDaniel (1987) point out, the context may be effective for clarifying the meanings of unfamiliar words, but this clarification may do little to help subjects remember the meaning. It is important for children to retain associative connections between words and their meanings in their memories. Within the current study, during story retellings, pupils referred to ‘the big bad wolf,’ an associative connection between the presented story ‘*The Boy Who Cried Wolf*’ and previous story readings. The same or very similar contextual elements that facilitate or inhibit learning a new verbal concept are hypothesised to facilitate or inhibit later retrieval and transfer to new situations (Sternberg & Powell, 1983). Thus both the specific contexts of words and individual abilities are thought to contribute to the incidental learning of new words (Robbins & Ehri, 1994).

Vocabulary development for second language learners

Perhaps the most serious challenge facing any second language learner is the acquisition of vocabulary, acquiring in a short time sufficient knowledge about the many thousands of different words that will be encountered in both verbal and written contexts (Ordonez, Carlo, Snow & McLaughlin, 2002). Learning new vocabulary is central to acquiring language (McWilliam, 1998). Knowledge of vocabulary mediates both language production and comprehension. Vocabulary acquisition is however considered to be one of the most difficult areas for second language learners to achieve with any significant success (Meara, 1980; Ordonez et al, 2002). Children are ill equipped to handle the ‘ideas’ content of the curriculum if they do not have command of the words and phrases that different topics or subjects employ. Such

learners are likely to feel 'excluded' from much ongoing classroom activity and sometimes, the teacher may actually 'divert' them from mainstream activities. Children therefore need to acquire sufficient vocabulary to aid conversational fluency and academic development in a short period of time (Cummins, 1984).

Jiang (2004) considers vocabulary acquisition to be a complex developmental process which involves familiarisation with the meaning of a new word followed by the gradual modification and elaboration of the word meaning to provide a more detailed understanding of the word. The vocabulary acquisition process may therefore be viewed as a continuum ranging from the basic recognition of the meaning of a word to an understanding of a word and the ability to use it spontaneously (Ellis, 1997). Many researchers suggest that knowledge in the first language (L1) can ease the task of second language (L2) vocabulary acquisition (Ellis, 1997; Gass & Selinker, 2001; Jiang, 2004). This is based upon the premise that words in both languages are stored in a shared conceptual memory store. Hence '... in the first instance at least, the acquisition of L2 words usually involves a mapping of the new word form onto pre-existing conceptual meanings or onto L1 translation equivalents as approximations' (Ellis, 1997, pp. 133-134). Under these circumstances, acquisition of an L2 word is a process of acquiring new labels for information already held rather than constructing new concepts. Ellis (1997) suggests that only if no such concept is present in the home language is it likely that a new concept may emerge - provided the context is powerful enough to enable the individual to create a new concept. Therefore, the ability of an individual to use the L1 for language transfer will depend on the depth of vocabulary knowledge in the first language (Jiang, 2004).

To assist in the vocabulary acquisition process, the language learner requires first language input, whether in the form of a translation, picture, object or definition (Jiang, 2004). Within this study, it was postulated that the home language computer-based translations would facilitate English vocabulary acquisition by providing a link between existing knowledge in the pupils' first languages and the unfamiliar English words.

Stories and the Literacy Hour

Listening to the reading of a featured text is an integral part of what primary school pupils do during the Literacy Hour. (The National Literacy Strategy is discussed in a later section of this chapter.) Research has demonstrated that children actively engaged in the story listening process learn more vocabulary than those who listen passively (Senechal, Thomas & Monker, 1995). Medwell (1996) suggested that during story reading sessions teachers are likely to scaffold children's early interactions with new vocabulary by providing a level of support in line with their needs. However, the difficulties experienced by teachers in accommodating the diverse language needs of ethnic minority pupils within a whole class setting are well documented within my fieldwork findings. In particular, to anticipate findings reported in Chapter 6, discussions within shared book reading sessions often went beyond the current level of understanding of EAL pupils. Consequently, they were excluded from higher levels of discourse due to the reliance on English as the medium for communication. Story listening sessions conducted through the medium of English may therefore create a prescriptive and controlled learning context which renders EAL pupils as passive or limited responders (McWilliam, 1998). As Gregory (1996, p. 175) cautions, 'sometimes an inability to understand key words might prevent a child from grasping

the meaning of a whole text.’ Observational research in primary classrooms, informal interviews with class teachers and support staff in the current study confirm this. Indeed, Gregory’s warning and my preliminary fieldwork informed the study’s intervention and strategies.

Home language use as a means of facilitating understanding

While the use of English as the medium of communication for EAL pupils may inhibit English vocabulary development, the use of the home language may help to facilitate it. The presence of two languages in the learning context offers scaffolding for the learning of EAL children. As Tollefson (1995, p. 27) notes,

‘...individuals do not just start by thinking in the L2, allowing for the exploration of ideas in the L1 supports a gradual, developmental process.’

The availability of the home language enables individuals to compare and contrast utterances from both languages and use their preferred language to seek the meaning of unfamiliar words and sentences in their second language (Dodson, 1985). ‘A quick translation or explanation of these [unfamiliar] words will enable everything to fall in place’ (Gregory, 1996, p.175). Home language story materials can therefore assist EAL pupils by providing contextual cues in a coherent form. This provides the opportunity to combine new information with an existing store of knowledge accessed via the home language. A greater understanding of the surrounding text may therefore increase a child’s ability to comprehend unfamiliar word meanings.

In multilingual classrooms, the use of mother tongue stories is considered a natural extension of existing practice and a particularly valuable way of responding to the skills and experiences which children bring with them to school (Houlton, 1985).

Indeed teachers who consider particular stories to be too difficult for EAL pupils in English may be surprised at how well they are understood in the home language. As one teacher (cited by Houlton, 1985, p.74) commented, 'I have noticed that children who appear very withdrawn in class often blossom and talk exuberantly during a story in Gujarati, where they are using the language which comes most easily to them'. More challenging materials may therefore become more accessible to EAL pupils by facilitating connections between the text world and that of the child (McGill- Franzen, Lanford & Adams, 2002). This may enable teachers to match activities more closely with children's cognitive abilities rather than their current English language levels.

The opportunity to hear stories in their home languages may also provide EAL pupils with a 'voice' and ownership, enabling them to experience a sense of control within the literacy process (Cummins, 1984). Genuine appreciation and recognition of the benefits of home language usage within the classroom by teaching and support staff may provide additional status to the home languages within the school environment. This may result in increased 'cultural capital' for the minority languages. Multilingual signage in school foyers and other public areas is common and strives to welcome visitors from the local communities. However, real 'inclusion' is likely to involve much more than this.

ICT and the role of 'talking books'.

The 'live' story telling session is considered the ideal scenario for utilising children's home languages. This enables the meaning of the story to be supported and enriched by facial expressions, eye contact and gestures, and can be paced to meet the needs of the audience (Houlton, 1985). However, the practical implications are that a large

number of bilingual teachers or classroom assistants would be required to cover the range of languages present within mainstream classrooms. Consequently, Levine (1990), an ardent advocate of home language use within school, discounted its use within multilingual classrooms as ‘impractical.’ However, over the last decade, advancements in computer-based software have provided the opportunity to develop multilingual resources. Whitehead (1997, p. 79) acknowledges the benefits of using a range of languages within the classroom and advocates the development of bilingual resources using a full range of technology including ‘...computers and publishing software, ring-binding and laminating machines, photocopiers and fool proof cameras...’

Multimedia approaches have now become an important component of the educational process (Katz, 2002). ‘Multimedia packages attempt to provide a clear, consistent and attractive ICT platform, which contributes towards the ability of teachers and students to reach excellence through user-friendly instruction and learning approaches’ (Katz, 2002, p. 3).

Whilst computer-based materials cannot act as a substitute for human interaction, they can offer an alternative medium for utilising the home languages in an appropriately paced and engaging way. Medwell (1996) notes that CD-Rom based books can offer an alternative means of access to high quality children’s picture books. With a typical ‘talking book,’ the user can turn the pages and by clicking on screen objects gain the reward of sound or animation. BECTa (British Education Communications and Technology Agency) (2003) acknowledges that bilingual electronic books can be used for a range of purposes. They can be used for familiarisation, by listening to the story

in a known language and by looking at the pictures, pupils are likely to grasp the 'gist' of the story (BECTa, 2003). In addition, bilingual electronic books can provide home language support to enable pupils to answer comprehension-based questions, thereby increasing EAL pupils' access to the curriculum. Electronic 'talking books' can be used in the same way as Big Books for shared reading within the literacy hour (Medwell, 1998). Home language versions can be used to provide a 'scaffold' for the English version of the text. In particular, it is suggested that multilingual talking stories can act as a valuable tool by providing an introductory 'warm up' for stories covered within the literacy hour (DfES, 2002a). Electronic materials are therefore potentially valuable resources to complement existing classroom practices (Medwell, 1998).

Edwards, Monaghan and Knight (2000, p.145) note that multimedia resources offer certain advantages over paper-based ones '...the increased power when words, images, and sounds are deployed in dynamic combinations, and especially when the learner is in control and able to explore this potential in creative new ways.' By incorporating a home language translation, ICT can help EAL pupils by producing materials in a coherent form. It can enable pupils to demonstrate understanding, for example, by clicking on the correct grid square on the screen. It also provides immediate interaction with the written and spoken word and can provide novel ways of hearing and seeing their home language and English. As part of the current study materials were developed with home language oral translations. Examples of typical 'screens' are presented later in Chapter 5.

It is acknowledged that the appropriateness and interest-level of materials can impact upon an individual's desire to learn (Krashen, 1982). The most suitable strategies for language acquisition are those that supply comprehensible input in low anxiety situations, containing messages that pupils want to hear. The potential of computer based bilingual materials to meet these criteria has been acknowledged (Edwards, Monaghan & Knight, 2000).

Despite growing awareness of the benefits of bilingual or multilingual computer-based materials there remains a paucity of commercially available resources. Where bilingual resources are available, they tend to be in languages that are most widely spoken (BECTa, 2003). Edwards, Monaghan & Knight (2000, p. 136) note that commercially produced multilingual resources are relatively scarce for 'minority' languages. 'Because print runs for paper publications are small, the unit price is necessarily high and, the range and quality of material are far more limited than is the case for languages with larger numbers of speakers. Electronic resources are also subject to market forces'. Therefore whilst 'majority' languages such as English, French and German are readily available in commercial applications, 'minority' languages such as Arabic, Urdu and Gujarati are at present poorly served.

Where electronic resources are available in minority languages, they tend to be greeted with enthusiasm. To illustrate, Chana, Edwards and Walker (1998) describe how attendance at an Urdu club in a multilingual primary school increased from six to 22 (including six monolingual English pupils) when an Urdu word-processing programme was introduced. The high status associated with the new technology appeared to transfer to the minority language.

Despite a lack of commercially available resources, a small number of initiatives have been developed. The Fabula project is one example. The primary aim of the Fabula project was to develop easy-to-use software to enable teachers and primary school pupils (aged six to ten) to produce bilingual multimedia storybooks. As part of this project, a bilingual story in Welsh and English was created and used with primary school pupils. Pupils were reported to enjoy using the resources and found the availability of both languages very valuable when trying to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words in the second language. The researchers concluded that ‘...multimedia story books are a potentially powerful tool for learning’ (Edwards, Monaghan & Knight, 2000, p.136). Further developments within the Fabula project have resulted in a number of web-based bilingual resources being available in a range of minority languages including Welsh and Catalan.

In addition, Hounslow Language Service has developed multilingual talking stories using ‘Clicker 4’ software (BECTa, 2003). They report that the materials received a positive response from EAL pupils. One pupil Mohammed felt that he was ‘part of the class’, as the fables that he was accessing in Somali were also being studied by the rest of the class. This resource enabled him to participate within classroom activities and therefore increased his access to the curriculum. The multilingual talking stories were also popular with parents who were attending a multilingual reading club for parents and children at an early stage of acquiring English. The parents and children showed interest in using the materials which enabled them to discuss story structures and the morals of the stories. The multilingual resources were considered to form a ‘bridge’ between the parents and school, helping parents to become more involved with supporting their children’s literacy.

‘Parents felt welcomed, valued and pleased that their home language was valued in school’ (BECTa, 2003, p. 2). Teachers in a Manchester primary school, where over 85% of pupils spoke another language, used funding from the DfES to develop the literacy skills of EAL pupils and their reported impacts are discussed by Furlong, Salisbury and Coombes (2003). Briefly, they used Best Practice Research Scholarship (BPRS) funding to research existing software and to develop their own ICT materials with EAL pupils. The teachers in Furlong et al’s case studies each had a £3,000 scholarship from the DfES and used their funding to ‘buy time’, supply cover and materials. Their research and development work was time consuming and all agreed that the luxury of non-contact time in school provided by BPRS funding enabled them to engage in work they would not normally have time for.

Computer-based talking materials are considered a simple way of adding a multilingual dimension to the classroom. By using a software package such as ‘Clicker 4’, the teacher is able to produce materials matched to the needs of the learners. Although electronic books are unlikely to provide the sophisticated effects found on commercial games, this does not seem to reduce their appeal ‘...electronic books are enthusiastically received in the classroom’ (BECTa, 2003, p. 1). In fact a minimal number of additional interactive features may be considered a benefit to avoid any aimless ‘click happy’ behaviour that may arise if there are too many interactive features unrelated to the text.

The conception of literacy is itself changing to accommodate new forms of communication. This new dimension is referred to as ‘network literacy’. ‘Network literacy is the capacity to use computers to access resources, create resources and

communicate with others' (DfEE, 1997, p. 10) While the materials used within this study were designed externally, there are opportunities for children to develop their own multilingual resources using a multimedia authoring system such as 'Clicker 4.' Authoring technology can provide the opportunity for individuals to express themselves through multimedia, using their own voice to speak the text, with accompanying graphics and sound effects.

Enthusiasts and champions of ICT 'showcased' by BECTa suggest that pupils could develop multilingual resources for specific audiences such as younger children or classmates. The collaborative planning to develop resources may involve the children in deeper reflection about the narrative structure and presentation of the stories. While developing their ICT skills, children would become not just 'consumers' of software but also 'creators.' These specific gains are in addition to a greater sense of ownership and pride in creating multimedia bilingual stories rather than simply reading them (BECTa, 2003). Without doubt, there are potentially valuable gains for EAL pupils who will feel less 'excluded' and more 'included' in the ongoing curriculum if it is supported with bilingual CAL material. Teachers who have utilised CAL materials invariably report positive benefits and vocabulary and reading gains for EAL pupils (Furlong, Salisbury & Coombes, 2003). As Furlong et al (2003, p.13) conclude, teaching staff are often surprised by the children's ability to adjust to computer-based resources, as captured within the following case study example:

'Leila herself had been rather cynical about whether EAL children could use the computer effectively and also whether it would be beneficial to their reading and writing. However, much to her surprise, the pupils were able, once shown, to use 'Clicker 4' and 'Textease' and to navigate some simple 'Talking Books...'

This section has provided an insight into the stages of SLA acquisition and the importance of vocabulary development for EAL learners. It has also outlined the potential role of bilingual computer-based story resources to facilitate vocabulary development. The following section examines, in further detail, the role of ICT within mainstream education and identifies the benefits and limitations of its use.

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

Overview

The introduction of ICT into the educational system was hailed as a major catalyst for an educational revolution. It was intended to serve as a major vehicle for raising standards and improving the efficiency of the educational process (Katz, 2002). However, many policy makers, educational researchers and practitioners consider the adoption of computer technology within schools to be frustratingly slow (Zhao & Frank, 2003). Although the use of computer technology has spread to most areas of our lives, the use of computers within education has been less pronounced. Despite the massive investment in, and increased presence of computers in schools, they have been found to be unused or under-used in most schools (Loveless, 1996; Zhao & Frank, 2003). Selwyn (2003) identifies a modest shift from 'non users' to 'occasional users' for the majority of primary school teachers.

Between 1998 and 2002, the UK government committed over £700 million from the Standards Fund to enable schools to connect to the National Grid for Learning, enabling the update of ICT equipment and electronic connections (DfES, 2003b). A further £200 million was made available from the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) to enhance, through staff development, teachers' confidence, competence and effectiveness in delivering ICT to pupils in schools (DfES, 2003b). A pledge was made that by 2002 serving teachers should feel confident and be competent to teach, using ICT within the curriculum (DfEE, 1997).

In addition, the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) has invested £230 million in on-line teaching resources to further support the development of computer usage within schools (DfES, 2003b). This level of investment is set to continue for the foreseeable future.

In Wales, the National Assembly set aside £24 million for ICT facilities and training in schools for the period 2001-2004. In total £75 million has been made available for the development of ICT in schools and further and higher education settings (National Assembly for Wales, 2001).

The increasing importance placed upon ICT is evident by its inclusion as a core area of the National Curriculum. Schools are encouraged to view ICT as a subject in its own right and as a tool to support other curriculum areas. In addition, the Foundation Stage which supports the learning of three to five year olds, states that

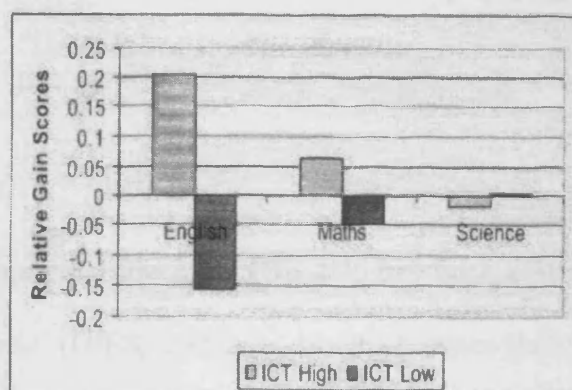
‘Children should find out about and identify the uses of everyday technology and use information and communications technology and programmable toys to support their learning.’

(QCA, 2000, p.6)

The role of ICT is therefore viewed by central Government as pervasive throughout the entire primary age range and beyond.

It is suggested that such a massive financial investment requires some form of pedagogic justification. Some evidence of this has been provided in an evaluation commissioned by the DfES. *'The Impact of ICT on Pupils' Learning and Attainment'* (ImpaCT2) (DfES, 2003b) evaluated the progress made over the three year period to 2002 by 60 schools at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. A positive association between ICT use and National Tests for Literacy was found at Key Stage 2. Literacy was also reported to have the highest level of ICT use for any subject at Key Stage 2. The following chart shows the relative gain scores of the group of pupils characterised as 'high users' of ICT compared with 'low users' in the core subject areas of English, Mathematics and Science.

Figure: 3.2: Relative gain at KS2 (standardised) for 'high users' versus 'low users' (ICT use data drawn from a total of 700 questionnaires administered during 2001).



(Source: ImpaCT2 Report, DfES, 2003b)

The pupils characterised as high ICT users outperformed, on average, low ICT users in English and Mathematics. A statistically significant positive impact for ICT use in English is evident. In Maths, there is a positive effect but it is not statistically significant. Computer use within Science was reported as minimal by the majority of respondents and the effect of its use is therefore negligible.

A survey by the Welsh Inspectorate, Estyn (2003b, p. 4) of ICT use in 50 sample schools from all phases of education within 22 LEAs reported that ICT use increases ‘...pupils’ motivation to learn and helps develop self-esteem and confidence’.

Research in the mid 1990s identified that the majority of teachers used ICT only occasionally and often under a sense of obligation rather than conviction of its value as an educational medium (Selwyn, 2003). Findings from the ImpaCT2 report revealed that little has changed over the last decade, with many teachers still lacking confidence in using technology in their classrooms. While valued as an educational tool, strategies for the effective use of ICT are still being developed. ICT is still considered by many as an ‘optional extra’ (DfES, 2003b) with few teachers yet at a stage where ICT is integrated within the curriculum. The ImpaCT2 study revealed that

‘The level of lessons involving ICT (excluding specialist ICT lessons and ICT skills development) was generally low over the period concerned’

(DfES, 2003b, p.9)

The minimal use of ICT to date has been acknowledged within *‘The School Reform Agenda’* (DfES, 2003c, p. 1) which states that ‘The potential for real transformation remains untapped’. The vision presented is

‘... one where schools are confidently and routinely exploiting ICT alongside other transformational measures. By doing so they will be delivering an education that equips learners for life in the Information Age of the 21st Century’.

(DfES, 2003c, p.1)

A direct link is made between raising standards in schools and increased ICT use. In particular, ICT is considered to be a ‘...hugely powerful medium for transforming teaching and learning’ (DfES, 2003c, p.3). The Government’s commitment towards ICT as an integral part of the curriculum is clear. The ESRC has also funded large-scale research projects which have explored ICT use across the phases and life course. Indeed, a recent study carried out by the University of Bristol examined the use of computers in 10 primary and 12 secondary schools. The researchers identified that the use of computers in these schools varied greatly. Where computers were used, it tended to be for word-processing tasks and the occasional use of the Internet. The majority of pupils reported never using a computer in school to make web pages, use e-mail or make music (BECTa, 2001).

Benefits of computer use: a magic cure?

ICT has the potential to make a unique contribution to the experiences of children in school. It can provide access to levels of communication, amounts of information and modes of expression previously unavailable to learners (Loveless, 1995). It is a powerful tool for learning, enabling the learning process to be enriched, enhanced and extended. It can be used to improve access to learning for pupils with a diverse range of needs by providing alternative or additional means of communicating within the learning process (BECTa, 2004). While the use of ICT cannot be considered a ‘magic cure’, it has been found to offer an individualised approach to learning within a non-threatening environment (Hope, 1986). Consequently, it is suggested that appropriate ICT support may help to increase an individual’s self confidence within the learning process. A central issue for all pupils and in particular, pupils with special educational needs (SEN), is considered to be the development of the learner’s

confidence and feelings of control over the material and means of learning (Hope, 1986). By being infinitely patient, the computer enables children to process information, decide on a response and then respond in a non-pressurised way (Hagen & Behrmann, 1985). Pupils increased sense of control over the learning process has been linked to increased motivation as well as to more positive attitudes towards school (Hawkrige & Vincent, 1992). The philosophy which underpins ICT usage is therefore one of empowerment and independence for both pupils and teachers.

In a study of teacher and pupil perceptions, Ward Schofield (1995) found that computer use increased student enjoyment of, interest in and attention to classroom activities. ICT was considered to enhance pupil motivation. Pupils were perceived as working harder and being more involved in the learning process when using computers than they were otherwise. This favourable response to computer use has also been found to be durable over time, after any initial 'novelty' factor has worn off. Ward Schofield (1995) found that over a two year period, pupils did not lose their enthusiasm for working on the computer. In fact, initial feelings of frustration experienced by many pupils due to poor mouse control and the inability to type efficiently, dissipated over time and enhanced pupil's motivation to use the technology available.

ICT offers a range of potential uses including the development of computing skills and access to the world outside the classroom. It provides the opportunity to enrich pupils' education by exposing them to environments that are not normally encountered due to safety, financial and logistical constraints.

‘Computers are interactive tools that can be used to accomplish extremely varied purposes, from editing text, to providing simulations of dangerous or prohibitively expensive laboratory experiments, to putting students in contact with others from around the world, to facilitating “virtual field trips” to far off locales.’

(Ward Schofield, 1995, p. 212)

ICT also offers the possibility of using a range of teaching and learning strategies. Effective teaching takes into consideration the different learning styles of the pupils. Riding and Watts (1997) suggest that individuals perceive and process information differently, and therefore, prefer different styles of learning dependent on cognitive style. Computer based instruction utilising verbal and animated representations can accommodate both ‘verbalising’ and ‘imagising’ learners (Pillay, 1998). ICT based multi-sensory activities can enable pupils to approach material from a range of different perspectives and to some extent tailor the path of their own learning through their choice of the way of working with the medium (Leask & Meadows, 2000).

To help maintain children’s attention, the materials can be presented in an interesting way via the use of sound and lively graphic effects. Though audio and animation features are likely to enhance the ‘attraction’ of computer materials, positive reactions from pupils to relatively straightforward programmes have been documented. Pupils are therefore not reliant on attention-getting graphics, sound or fantasy situations (Ward Schofield, 1995).

Revolutionary or evolutionary?

The government views ICT as an agent of change which can impact on education in a revolutionary way (DfEE, 1997). This entails ICT becoming an essential part of the curriculum, incorporated within the 'veins' of the education system (Ward Schofield, 1995). Though computers have the potential to make important changes in the classroom, the way in which they are received and used will depend on the perceived benefits of the technology by the teachers concerned. As Slaouti, Pennells and Weatherhead (2000) acknowledge, being provided with the relevant skills to use the computer and with ideas for classroom application may not result in effective implementation. Teachers need to find ways of making ICT work for them, within the context of their existing teaching practices. The use of computers within school is therefore more than the relatively straightforward placement of hardware and software in schools. To embrace its use, teachers need to understand and share the transformational goals. Otherwise, little or no effort may be made to integrate it within the existing curriculum (Ward Schofield, 1995).

Loveless (1996) notes that initiatives designed to alter teaching methods have met with continual disappointment. Often, the teacher is identified both as the problem and the solution - the factor that must be changed and as the agent of that change (Loveless, 1996). Teacher responses to new initiatives vary, some flatly refuse to 'change', whilst others may embrace reform but interpret the meaning of change through the 'prism' of their own teaching practices, reshaping new innovative ideas to fit with customary teaching practices. Consequently, computers are more likely to be accepted if they make the teacher's current work easier and more efficient rather than attempt to redefine the teaching process. Initiatives which seek to improve existing

practices rather than introduce new ones are more likely to be successful. The CAL materials developed within this study have been designed to enhance existing literacy practices. This is hardly revelatory but it may encourage the spread of innovations (Loveless, 1996). To rework existing teaching strategies and classroom resources requires time and effort. Teachers are more likely to adopt new ideas if they can be persuaded that change will produce educational gains for their pupils. The CAL intervention developed for EAL pupils within this study (see Chapter 7) was created with this goal in mind.

Currently, the demand for ICT use can be viewed as an external pressure designed to alter educational practices that is neither desired nor perceived necessary by many teachers. Consequently, the use of technology in education does not tend to contribute to teaching and learning in any meaningful sense and may be seen as ‘extracurricular’ (Earle, 2002; Fishman & Zhang, 2003) or as a ‘reward’ for finishing paper-based activities set by the teacher.

Change in teacher role: expert or collaborator?

The integration of computers within the curriculum demands a change in the teacher’s role. As pupils become more familiar with the functions of the computer, their dependence on the teacher will reduce. In some instances, the children will become the ‘experts’.

The teacher's role therefore requires a marked shift from 'expert' to collaborator.

'There is recognition among teachers that a more flexible approach is required if ICT is to be effective. Changes in lesson style to allow a less formal classroom atmosphere, greater pupil autonomy, differing modes of teacher/pupil interaction, and flexible study space are all recognised as key success factors for effective use of ICT.'

(DfES, 2003b, p.9)

Increased computer use may result in the classroom both looking and sounding different than before. Where pupils work in pairs or individually in close proximity, there is likely to be an increase in 'on-task' peer talk. Teachers therefore need to be aware of the benefits of peer talk and also be happy with the increased noise level. Both teachers and pupils will need time to adjust to these changes.

Prior to any attempt to integrate computer technology within their current practices, teachers may make a rational calculation of the perceived costs and benefits associated with its use. This may be based on their own personal history of computer use and how confident and knowledgeable they feel (Selwyn, 2003), as well as the perceived compatibility of the computer technology with their learning objectives. In addition, teachers will have differing styles of teaching and some may feel more at ease with a change in teaching role than others. It is suggested that newly qualified teachers who have received ICT training as a mandatory element of their initial teacher training (ITT) are likely to feel more confident about its use (Selwyn, 2003). My own personal experiences of a recent PGCE course however, highlighted the 'lip service' paid by the teacher training establishment to this part of the course.

Teacher training & ICT: the way forward

Teachers need encouragement to build their own confidence with ICT in order to be more informed of the possibilities for using it within the learning environment. Teachers' attitudes and expertise with technology are key factors associated with its use. Unless teachers hold a positive view towards technology, it is unlikely that they will use it. They need to have time to practise and keep up to date with developments (Loveless, 1995). Zhao and Frank (2003) provide evidence to suggest that short in-service training courses are likely to have a limited effect on computer use for the majority of teachers. It is suggested that teachers need more time to engage with the technology and to help one another. Play and experimentation by teachers during the breaks within the school day and outside the school context are considered critical to technology implementation (Zhao & Frank, 2003). Group-oriented activities such as 'technology play days' with LEA technical support and opportunities for teachers to try for themselves and help each other are recommended (Zhao & Frank, 2003). In particular, teachers require two forms of training and support. First, they require guidance regarding the types of software and hardware available to them. Equally important however, is training about how to integrate computer usage within their own personal style of teaching and the existing requirements of the curriculum.

A support structure for teachers using new technology within the school also needs to be provided. It requires the availability of a knowledgeable person who has the time to deal with any queries. Within the primary school setting, the ICT coordinator is likely to be a full time classroom teacher and will therefore have a limited amount of time available to devote to ICT.

Teachers' attitudes towards computer technology are strongly influenced by interactions with colleagues (Loveless, 1996). On a cautionary note, where the majority of teaching staff are against computer use, this social pressure may restrict access to help for a colleague who wishes to make fuller use of ICT. Thus teachers from different schools are likely to have different levels or types of technology use. The distribution of technology implementation is very much a function of the distribution of social relations within the school (Zhao & Frank, 2003). A positive 'whole school' response to ICT is therefore required, with 'leadership by example' from senior staff considered to be an important motivating factor. Senior teachers can sometimes 'take' junior staff along with them (on an initiative) or even insist via whole school targets that all staff will 'up skill'.

Organisational constraints.

The main constraints on computer usage within mainstream classrooms have been identified as inadequate hardware, software, time and trained personnel, all of which are affected by financial considerations (Zammit, 1992). Loveless (1995) notes that there are many examples of 'IT solutions' causing frustration and anxiety because of inappropriate resources or too much faith being put into ICT as a solution.

A range of organisational constraints are also likely to impact on the pattern of computer use (Zammit, 1992). The number of computers available and their physical location will impact upon their integration into classroom instruction. Often there is only one computer allocated for each classroom and this may be located in an outer area such as the corridor. If the computer is outside the classroom area, the teacher will be less able to monitor progress and offer any assistance to the pupil.

Where only one or a small number of computers are available at any one time, the practitioner must assess which form of classroom organisation will be most effective. Options available include individual, paired or small group work. A potential difficulty with small group work is that the pupils not using the keyboard are relegated to mere passive observers of the individual who commands the keyboard (Loveless, 1996). Where individual or paired work is utilised, it will take more time and organisation to ensure that all class members have an equal chance to use the computer and therefore it is likely that only a proportion of the class will be able to use the computer during each lesson. This may also create difficulties concerning missed material covered in class during computer use. With the demands of the National Curriculum, the school day is tightly timetabled.

Where computer suites are available, use is often limited by timetabling constraints. This restricts the flexibility of deciding when technology should be incorporated into instruction. It also unwittingly conveys to pupils that computers are not central to learning and to the activities undertaken within the classroom (Loveless, 1996). This architectural determinism shapes teachers' and pupils' participation with ICT.

There is a strong institutional demand at both governmental and societal level for the use of computers within the classroom (Zhao & Frank, 2003). It is suggested that transformative changes are required to enable ICT to realise its full potential within the classroom.

Despite the large sums already invested, the ImpaCT2 report recommends that

‘Schools and teachers need continuing support, including more funding for equipment which can be used flexibly, access to at least one technician on the premises and more training for teachers in how to integrate ICT with subject learning. This will ensure that they are able to achieve the necessary changes in school culture and teaching practices to reap the benefits of the Government’s investment.’

(DfES, 2003b, p. 8).

Teachers are however more likely to consider the goals of computer use to be to improve existing practices rather than to facilitate fundamental changes in the goals or methods used. However, incremental changes which help teachers and pupils to perform the work they already do more easily, efficiently or effectively benefits should not be underrated (Ward Schofield, 1995). Perhaps unsurprisingly, few studies have been able to point to wholesale advantages of using ICT systems in educational settings (Watts, Lloyd & Jackson, 2001). For ICT use to be effective, it must be incorporated within existing teaching strategies and matched carefully to the needs of the learner (Hawkrige & Vincent, 1992). In addition, teachers must feel confident and enthusiastic regarding ICT use. They must also have the time to plan and adapt resources as required. ICT therefore has tremendous potential to facilitate the learning process, provided that teachers perceive the benefits of its use and are prepared to invest the time and effort necessary for its successful integration. In addition, teachers require the relevant hardware and software and technical support to assist the process.

The CAL material prepared for EAL pupils in this study was developed, piloted and trialled with this ‘context’ in mind. I knew that teachers would need convincing that ICT/ ‘Clicker 4’ could be a potential ‘resource’. Chapter 5 describes the stages of the creation of home language computer-based materials in more detail.

Within this chapter the potential of ICT to act as a medium for home language materials and in particular, literacy based resources, has been outlined. In the following section, the vehicle for literacy teaching within England (and Wales), namely the Literacy Hour, is discussed. The reasons behind its inception together with the resulting evidence regarding its 'success' are examined. The key role of the teacher in providing 'inclusive' literacy learning experiences for EAL pupils is highlighted.

The Introduction of the National Literacy Strategy

Historical Context

During the mid to late 1980s a number of large-scale projects were instigated with the express aim of raising standards in the teaching of English. The National Writing Project (1985-1989) initiated by the School Curriculum Development Council, involved thousands of educators from across England and reported findings that many children equated writing with transcription skills rather than with composition. This led to calls for writing to have a more meaningful purpose within the classroom. The School Curriculum Development Council also initiated the National Oracy Project (1987-1991). The major achievement of this project was to secure recognition that ‘talk’ was in itself important and could be used effectively to enhance children’s learning (Wyse & Jones, 2001). The other major project was the Language in the National Curriculum (LINC) project (1989-1992 cited by Wyse & Jones, 2001). Its main aim was to familiarise teachers with the model of language presented in the Kingman Report (DES, 1980) and in particular the idea that children and teachers should have sufficient ‘knowledge about language’ to become successful users of it. The LINC project produced a range of literacy-based guidance materials, which were subsequently widely distributed (via LEAs to schools), independently of the government (Wyse & Jones, 2001). This explicit focus on ‘speaking and listening’ skills has to some extent been usurped by a return to a concentration on reading and writing within the National Literacy Strategy (NLS). Ironically, despite its overarching aim to raise literacy standards, Riley, Burrell and McCallum (2004) argue that the NLS does little to promote the development of spoken language skills.

Changes to the teaching of Literacy.

Considerable powers of direct intervention in curriculum matters were vested on the Secretary of State for Education under the 1988 Education Reform Act. Indeed, since the introduction of the National Curriculum the subject of English has been subject to a considerable amount of political intervention. The initial National Curriculum document prepared under the chairmanship of Brian Cox (DES, 1989) was substantially revised in Sir Ron Dearing's (1994) rewrite and again in 1998 when *The National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching* document (DfEE, 1998) was introduced. Primary school teachers therefore found themselves confronted by the third major change in eight years (Wyse & Jones, 2001).

The National Literacy Project.

Most political education initiatives are introduced following claims that standards are falling and the National Literacy Strategy is no exception (Wyse & Jones, 2001). Despite claims from a number of sources including the media, educators, business people and politicians, there is little evidence that standards of literacy have declined in England (Beard, 1999; Wyse & Jones, 2001). However, comparisons of the reading levels of samples of school pupils in different countries have placed England and Wales in a middle group of countries that are out-performed by countries such as Finland, France and New Zealand. This 'underperformance' of children in England and Wales as assessed by international comparisons of reading attainment has resulted in the recognition of what has been called a 'long tail of underachievement'. Politicians in particular have been quick to make links between current standards in education and future economic prosperity.

As a precursor to the National Literacy Strategy, a Literacy Task Force was set up by the Labour Party, while in opposition in 1996, to develop a strategy to raise standards of literacy, targeting both the quality of literacy teaching in the classroom and the management of literacy at a whole-school level. It is noted however, that none of the Literacy Task Force members had a national reputation for their academic expertise in the teaching of English (Wyse & Jones, 2001). The Literacy Task Force initiated the National Literacy Project (a trial run for the National Literacy Strategy and its 'Literacy Hour') in 255 schools, of which 55 schools were visited by the Inspectorate. The vast majority of schools in the cohort were identified on the basis of having existing weaknesses in reading and writing achievements and were entering the National Literacy Project with a low baseline of attainment in English. The Project findings noted a 'substantial improvement in some weak schools' due to the implementation of the Literacy Hour. However, it is postulated that any form of 'spotlight' or intervention may improve standards in such circumstances (the Hawthorne effect). The final report of the task force detailed how a National Literacy Strategy could be implemented. The recommendations heralded some profound changes to the way in which English is taught. Perhaps the most important driving force behind the strategy has been the setting of targets for achievement. The initial target was set that:

'By 2002 80% of eleven year olds should reach the standard expected for their age in English (i.e. Level 4) in Key Stage Two National Curriculum Tests'.

(Literacy Task Force, 1997, p. 5).

An initial sum of £50 million was committed in funding for training, support and resources during 1998-1999 with additional support pledged as the National Literacy Strategy developed (DfEE, 1998). This target setting resulted in LEAs negotiating targets with central government and then in turn negotiating specific targets with the individual schools in their regions. Whilst this may have provided the focus of a central goal, target setting has been long been recognised as creating its own set of problems, such as the narrowing of the curriculum as teachers ‘teach to the test’.

The National Literacy Strategy Framework: A Practical Tool.

As a result of the National Literacy Project, the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) was introduced in September 1998 with the aim of raising the literacy attainment of primary-aged pupils. It was an unprecedented intervention in classroom teaching methods within primary schools in England. *The National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching*, (DfEE, 1998) set out a number of recommendations and pedagogic approaches and introduced the idea of the teacher setting aside one hour per day to focus on the key skills of reading, writing and spelling. This ‘back to basics’ approach is underlined by the DfEE (1998, p. 14):

‘The Literacy Hour is intended to be a time for the explicit teaching of reading and writing’ and highlights the underlying aim of the strategy to produce ‘...fully literate citizens’.

The NLS Framework acts as a practical tool by providing a detailed scheme of work with term by term objectives that are further organised into text level, sentence level and word level objectives. As well as prescribing the objectives for the teaching of literacy for each year group, it also sets down how these objectives are to be delivered in terms of classroom management and organisation.

It is suggested that for reception aged pupils the Literacy Hour supports the goals for early literacy described within the ‘Desirable Outcomes for Children’s Learning’ (DfEE, 1998). John (2003), however, highlights the potential difficulties experienced by reception aged EAL pupils due to the language demands made by the Literacy Hour for children of this age. Tensions exist between the flexible, child-centred pedagogy in the ‘Foundation Stage’ curriculum guidance and the more ‘prescriptive’ approaches endorsed by the NLS (Wood, 2004).

According to the NLS Framework document (DfEE, 1998, p. 8), there are three main benefits of organising literacy teaching in this way. First, it provides an ‘explicit focus for literacy instruction’.

‘The objectives in the framework should give literacy teaching focus and direction, which should aim for high levels of motivation and active engagement for pupils’.

A Report by the National Association for Teachers of English (NATE) (Moss, 1998) considers the compartmentalisation of objectives into years and terms and subsequent rigid application of these as a major weakness of the Literacy Hour strategy. The lack of flexibility inherent within the Framework precludes opportunities for repetition and the revisiting of the curriculum for pupils who need it. This ‘prescriptiveness’ may also have a negative effect by breeding a ‘dependency culture and delivery curriculum’ (Moss, 1998).

The Framework places the onus upon teachers to deliver the objectives in a 'successful' way. 'Successful' teaching has been defined within the document (DfEE, 1998, p. 8) as:

- 'Discursive - characterised by high quality oral work.
- Interactive - pupil contributions are encouraged, expected and extended.
- Well-paced - there is a sense of urgency, driven by the need to make progress and succeed.
- Confident - teachers have a clear understanding of the objectives.
- Ambitious - there is optimism about and high expectations of success.'

However, as noted by Hardman, Smith and Wall (2003) in their analysis and critique of the DfEE documentation, contradictions are apparent between the aims for 'high quality oral work and interactive teaching' and 'well paced lessons with a sense of urgency driven by the need to make progress and succeed'. The rhetoric of the policy text has been noted by others (Gillborn, 1997a; Wood, 2004).

The second benefit identified within the Strategy is 'improved classroom organisation and management'. The structure of the literacy hour is designed to 'shift the balance' of teaching from individualised work, especially in the teaching of reading, towards more whole-class and group teaching. The rationale for this is that 'Where pupils are taught individually, the average time they spend being taught is five or six minutes per week'. (DfEE 1998 p. 10). Teaching on an 'individual' basis is associated in the document with less able pupils often receiving fragmentary attention while the more able are left to 'cruise'.

The focus upon whole class teaching may however leave little scope for the 'inclusion' of individual pupils. John (2003, p. 48) points out that there is, '...a sense of pupils being slotted into a pre-programmed agenda...'

The third identified benefit is ‘effective management of literacy’ at the school level. The literacy hour is designed to provide continuity of planning and teaching throughout the school. This is considered to have important consequences for pupils, teachers and head teachers. For pupils, it provides a familiar structure and daily classroom routine that is prevalent across year groups. For teachers, the common structure of the literacy hour enables planning to be shared more easily. It also provides a basis for in-service training and the opportunity for teachers from different schools to share good practice based on underlying common assumptions and a shared language about how literacy should be taught. For head teachers and school managers, the literacy hour provides continuity of practice and the framework for continuing professional development of school staff (DfEE, 1998). This format does not however, acknowledge that the construct of ‘effectiveness’ may be differentiated across phases of schooling (Wood, 2004).

The Structure of the Literacy Hour: Unpacking the ‘what and the how’

While the Framework provides details of what should be taught, the Literacy Hour provides the means of teaching it. The specification of one hour is in line with the time allocated to the teaching of English within the National Curriculum for primary schools of five hours per week (DfEE, 1998). The framework accepts that the timing and break up of the Literacy Hour is fairly rigid in order to ensure that the essential elements are incorporated on a daily basis. The officially laid down literacy hour is divided into four main sections: the first fifteen minutes is designated for shared text work, reading and/ or writing based on a common text for example, a ‘Big Book’. The next fifteen minutes is then used to focus on ‘word work’. For Key Stage One this includes phonological awareness, phonics and spelling. The first 30 minutes of the

session is therefore undertaken on a whole class basis. The subsequent 20 minutes is allocated to group and independent work. This includes independent reading, writing or word work, while the teacher works with at least one ability group each day on guided text work (reading or writing). The remaining ten minutes is then used as a plenary session where the whole class review, reflect on and consolidate the learning objectives for the session. Of course, this 'recipe' or 'format' is an 'ideal' and in reality many teachers and classrooms are likely to be creative in their interpretation and implementation.

The Welsh Perspective

In contrast to England, primary schools in Wales have been informed by guidelines from Estyn, the Welsh Inspectorate, that they need not follow England's National Literacy Strategy. Rather, it has been left to the discretion of Local Education Authorities (LEAs), head teachers and their staff to determine the most appropriate strategies for improving standards of literacy within individual schools. In practice, however, much of the NLS methodology has been advocated as 'good practice' and is widely adopted throughout Wales (Literacy Trust, 2003). The lecture schedule together with my experiences during teaching practice on a recent PGCE course confirm the centrality of the literacy hour within the LEA involved in this study and indeed across Wales.

Within the LEA involved in this study, measures had already been instigated in an attempt to raise attainment levels prior to the introduction of the NLS. A specific literacy programme had been developed and was set up in April 1997 with the aim of raising standards in reading and writing, initially at Key Stage 1. This model of an

‘Enhanced Literacy Hour’ (ELH) was developed to incorporate some of the good practice evidenced in the LEA and also some aspects of the well established Reading Recovery programme developed by Marie Clay in New Zealand (Clay, 1979). Following the introduction of the NLS, the ELH guidelines (CASE, 2002) were updated and now refer directly to the English NLS Framework document. The Enhanced Literacy Hour shares the same key elements as the Literacy Hour, including shared reading and writing of texts, direct teaching of phonic and other language skills, guided group reading and writing, independent literacy activities and a review session. The ELH documentation also refers to exemplar teaching objectives taken directly from the NLS documentation. There are however certain key differences between the ELH and the NLS. First, the time apportioned to whole class rather than group/independent work differs. Within the NLS, the first 30 minutes is spent in whole class teaching whereas in the ELH this is reduced to 20 minutes, with the subsequent 10 minutes utilised for group or independent activities. Another key difference is that the activities carried out on a daily basis within the ELH are all designed to build towards a longer piece of writing for a ‘writers workshop’, usually (but not always) on the last day of the featured text i.e. the Friday. This is in contrast to the NLS, which makes no specific mention of the production of a longer piece of writing. The ELH guidelines also provide suggested activities that may help deliver the objectives of the lesson. For example, under the heading ‘reading,’ activities such as cloze procedures, crosswords and taped versions of the story are listed. There is no specific mention of the activities that can be used within the English NLS Framework documentation. Clearly, these differences in official documentation are likely to result in potential differences in the actual enactment of the literacy hour by teachers in England and Wales.

Evaluation of the NLS by OFSTED

OFSTED (2002) carried out an evaluation of *'The National Literacy Strategy: the first four years 1998-2002'* to ascertain whether the Government's initiative had resulted in the expected improvements. The OFSTED methodology included classroom observations of the Literacy Hour 'in action.'

The Government's intention on introducing the National Literacy Strategy was to bring about a 'dramatic improvement in literacy standards' so that by 2002, 80 % of eleven year olds should have reached level 4 in English at the end of Key Stage 2 as measured by National Curriculum Tests. However, the findings of the OFSTED report (2002, p. 9) are not wholly positive:

'The attainment in English at the end of Key Stage Two, as measured by National Curriculum Test results has not changed since 2000. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 or above in English remains at 75%. Test results in writing show a rise of three percentage points since 2001, continuing the steady upward trend since 1999. There has been a decline in results for reading, however, which have now fallen for the second year running, albeit by one or two percentage points respectively. Despite the continued improvements in writing, pupil's attainment in this area is still too low and lags behind attainment in reading'.

Although they had not been specifically targeted, Key Stage 1 results in England show no improvement either.

'In addition at Key Stage One, the attainment level two or above in reading and writing, as measured by National Curriculum test results in 2002, has not changed since 2001. There were no improvements in reading, where attainment remains at 84% or in writing (86%) for those pupils attaining level two or above.'

(OFSTED, 2002, p. 9).

These findings highlight the reality that quantitative measures show no ‘grass root’ improvement in attainment levels despite the huge amount of time, effort and money invested in the National Literacy Strategy by teachers and LEAs. Despite this evidence on pupil performance, OFSTED (2002, p. 35) claim that the NLS has made tangible improvements in teaching:

‘In the first four years since the NLS was introduced, it has brought about substantial improvements in the teaching of literacy in English primary school.’

OFSTED identify these improvements as being derived as a result of a number of approaches and factors. These are listed as follows:

- Widespread use of the NLS framework for teaching
- Greater use of direct teaching with more precise teaching objectives
- A clearer structure to lessons
- Raising teachers’ expectations of pupils
- Improved progression in pupils’ learning and better continuity in teaching
- Increased pace of teaching
- An entitlement for all pupils to a daily, concentrated period of teaching focused on reading and writing
- Effective use of consultants as catalysts for changing practice in schools and the quality of teaching.

It is claimed that the introduction of the strategy has encouraged a number of teachers to review their delivery of ‘literacy’ and in some instances has provided the means by which improvements have been made. The NLS then is perceived officially as a catalyst for ongoing improvements to literacy teaching.

Despite these perceived improvements, the OFSTED (2002) evaluation described a number of weaknesses in the design and implementation of the strategy. Some of these have been inherent from the beginning. The particular weaknesses highlighted by OFSTED (2002) include what they termed as a ‘one-size-fits-all approach to

reading' which at the earliest stages of learning to read relied on the use of a broad range of decoding strategies and not enough on phonics. The Inspectorate also noted that day-to day assessment was not built into the strategy to enable teachers to adapt their teaching to changes in pupils' progress.

Other problems became apparent to the Inspectorate which drew attention to the utility of newly produced materials and guidance but identified how schools have found it difficult to take an overview of all the elements and this has adversely affected the coherence of teaching (OFSTED, 2002). Perhaps most telling of all, is the questioning by OFSTED of the value of the literacy 'hour' format and whether in fact a shorter or longer lesson may be more appropriate depending on the age of the pupils. The adherence to the 'hour' format and its constituent parts is at the very heart of the Literacy Hour strategy and this temporal dimension was problematised in the evaluation document.

The final comments of the OFSTED evaluation report (2002, p. 36) are that:

'To tackle the deepest and most intractable of these problems will require further development of the strategy as well as better and more challenging teaching across the board... Schools have reached the stage where they need to make the strategy work for them - and that includes being critical of things that are not effective enough.'

Officially then, schools in England are being encouraged to evaluate and reflect and adapt the literacy hour and NLS and not to simply endorse a template for delivery that is not always appropriate.

Evaluation of the key element of the Literacy Hour- interactive teaching.

Interpreting curricular requirements and trying to ensure access for all learners continue to be central concerns for educational professionals. A central 'weapon' in raising standards within the NLS is considered to be the use of whole class interactive teaching. The DfEE (1998) recommended that teachers use a range of discourse strategies in addition to teacher questioning to encourage sustained pupil contributions. These included asking for clarification of a pupil's answer, encouraging pupils to elaborate further and giving pupil's time to gather their thoughts before answering a teacher's question (Hardman, Smith and Wall, 2003). However, teachers were cautioned against allowing increased pupils' contributions to interfere with the meeting of the short-term objectives for the lesson or with the pace of the lesson. English, Hargreaves and Hislam (2002, p. 10) quote the words of a teacher which capture the tensions around time and interaction: 'In an ideal world interaction is good but I don't always have the time'.

The findings of Hardman, Smith and Wall (2003) also support the findings of English et al (2002) that pupil contributions were rarely 'extended' with pupils providing answers which were three words or less for 90% of the time. Both studies (which analysed classroom interactions), also highlighted that teachers generally, exercise close control over the nature and direction of classroom talk within the literacy hour. This Initiation-Response-Feedback form of discourse or 'verbal ping-pong' does not provide opportunities for learners to make sense of knowledge for themselves (Wray & Medwell, 1998). It is also in direct contrast to research that shows that the most important learning takes place when learners relate new information, new experiences

and new ways of understanding to their existing understanding of the matter in hand (Hardman, Smith & Wall, 2003).

Effective lessons characterised in the NLS were described by OFSTED (1998, p. 6) in the following ways:

‘conducted at a good pace, the work was challenging and the teachers made use of a range of teaching techniques and were particularly skilful in questioning the whole class’.

The features of effective lessons within the literacy hour are therefore considered to be largely reliant on a good understanding of English language and an ability to ‘keep up’ with the pace of the lesson. In ‘mixed’ classes where language competence is diverse teachers will be seriously challenged to be ‘inclusive’ in their delivery. This difficulty was captured by Grugeon and Woods (1990) in detailed observations of a reception aged beginner bilingual pupil who was noted as looking bewildered and ‘simply switched off’ in whole class discussions yet in one to one situations he made an effort to listen and respond.

It is probable therefore, that for EAL pupils, the pace of classroom talk does not necessarily equate with the pace of their learning. These pupils have to comply with and tolerate their teacher’s implementation of the Literacy Hour and yet it may be one of the least productive hours of their individual school day. While the NLS enables pupils to be catered for under the same Literacy Hour format, offering to some extent social ‘inclusivity,’ it may also result in the particular needs of certain pupils not being met. In particular, whilst EAL pupils may be physically ‘included’ within the Literacy Hour, they are likely to be ‘excluded’ from much of the classroom discourse (John, 2003).

The Literacy Hour and EAL pupils

'Inclusion does not just happen, it has to be planned for'

In *'The National Literacy Strategy: Supporting Pupils Learning English as an Additional Language'* guidance document the DfES (2002a) acknowledges that individual children's experiences of language learning and of schooling vary and that this will affect their ability to participate within the Literacy Hour. It is suggested that 'beginner bilinguals' in particular are at risk of exclusion during the Literacy Hour unless additional measures are taken to prevent it. Indeed the importance of identifying and addressing the needs of EAL pupils within the Literacy Hour was a key finding within the OFSTED (1998, p. 5) evaluation of the National Literacy Project.

'All EAL pupils made progress over the life of the Project, but those who were just becoming familiar with English made less progress and needed more oral work within and outside the Hour: the needs of this group of pupils should be considered carefully when planning the Literacy Hour.'

The document highlights the finding that the 'fine-tuning' of the organisation of the Literacy Hour was of benefit to EAL pupils. However a cautionary note is added that 'These adaptations worked well because the principles of the Project were not compromised, particularly the Framework of teaching objectives' (OFSTED, 1998, p. 10) This underlines the central importance being placed upon the short term objectives of the Literacy Hour session and highlights the potential conflict between meeting the stated lesson objectives whilst also meeting the needs of the individual pupils. The perennial problem of sensitive differentiation is evident here.

Despite a general acknowledgement of the possible need to ‘fine-tune’ the Literacy Hour for EAL pupils, the Literacy Hour is itself considered an intrinsically good thing and beneficial to EAL learners.

‘The Literacy Hour benefits new learners of English, when teaching is well matched to their needs because it promotes attention to language learning. Whole class sessions can give many opportunities for pupils to hear English spoken often and distinctly, to speak to the teacher and to each other, and to develop their knowledge about language in a shared and familiar context. Whole class sessions give helpful adult models of spoken English and group work provides opportunities for intensive and focused teaching’ (DfES, 2002a, p. 106).

EAL pupils can therefore be exposed to a large amount of English language ‘talk’ within the Literacy Hour format. However, I suggest and use interview and observational evidence to argue that the pace of such talk may make it difficult for EAL pupils to ‘keep up’ with the discourse. Fieldwork findings in the two schools that are discussed in Chapter 6 draw attention to the ways in which pupils ‘get lost’ in the flow of the lesson. Detailed classroom observations by John (2003) identified the inability of EAL pupils to follow longer periods of ‘teacher talk’ or discursive interactions.

Therefore, perhaps the critical element for making the literacy hour beneficial for EAL pupils is to ensure that teaching is well matched to their needs. This draws attention to the need for a range of practical strategies that teachers can employ on a day-to-day basis. In an attempt to address the need for practical guidance, the DfES (2002a) published its guidance material ‘*The National Literacy Strategy: Supporting Pupils Learning English as an Additional Language*’ already mentioned above. The specific aim of this document was to increase awareness of ‘good practice’. Included within the ‘ring binder’ was a video containing excerpts of good practice ‘in action’.

The material provided was intended to act as a catalyst for discussion and to be adapted to local circumstances.

DfES (2002a) acknowledges that inclusion does not just happen - it has to be planned for. The NLS Framework document acknowledges that the starting point for EAL pupils relates to their existing knowledge and experiences. 'It is important that teachers have information about pupils' educational history and their literacy skills in another language, as this may be a significant factor in their success in learning English. It will be needed in planning how best to teach these pupils and in assessing their progress' (DfEE, 1998, p. 106). The NLS documents and guidance materials have been produced with an audience of In-service and Pre-service teachers in mind and clearly there are possible uses for whole school staff development.

The DfES (2002a) guidance document focuses on a range of strategies that can be used to make the literacy hour more inclusive for EAL pupils. These may be considered on a continuum, with certain strategies considered to be 'commonplace' within many primary school classrooms. These include the use of visual aids and props such as puppets to provide more visual cues for pupils. Teachers are encouraged to select materials with repetitive text to reinforce word and sentence level work. In addition, adults (support teachers, helpers etc) are counselled to consider carefully their choice of language and complexity of instruction during teaching interactions to ensure clarity of meaning for the bilingual learner and to allow thinking time for reading, responses and composition.

In reality, however, the ability of teachers to build ‘linguistic bridges’ (Gibbons, 2000) to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences within the whole class context is questioned (John, 2003). In particular, extended ‘teacher-talk’ and discursive interactions between teachers and pupils are considered inappropriate for EAL pupils due to the decontextualised nature of such episodes (Cummins, 1984; John, 2003). Anderson, Digings and Urquhart (2000) report teacher concerns that the pressure to keep up with an externally imposed regime left them with little opportunity to provide coherence to literacy learning or time for reflection and consolidation.

Teachers also report difficulties in providing cognitively challenging work that can be tackled independently (Anderson et al, 2000). Consequently, work sheets are often employed to enable pupils to work without supervision, resulting in a ‘task for ticks’ approach (McWilliam, 1998). As detailed classroom observations undertaken by John (2003) show, there is a tendency to group all beginner EAL pupils together for these paper-based activities, serving to segregate EAL learners within the class itself. This grouping format is also likely to confine EAL pupils to impoverished models of literacy (Bourne, 1989; Gibbons, 2000; John, 2003). The NLS Framework document acknowledges the need for careful placing of EAL pupils within ability based groups.

‘EAL learners should not automatically be placed in the lowest ability groups. Some may have conceptual understanding on a par with pupils in the highest ability group.’

(DfEE, 1998, p. 110).

The use of support staff is highlighted as an effective Literacy Hour strategy, particularly for providing additional ‘warm-up’ sessions to introduce a new shared

text. Support staff can lead a brief discussion of key themes and ideas relating to the text to prepare EAL learners for the whole class shared reading. It is suggested that the warm-up itself will depend on the nature of the text and the needs of the pupils, but could include a discussion of key themes, or introducing key concepts in the home language. This will ensure they have 'access' to the text and gain maximum benefit from the shared reading time.

The use of pupils' home languages is recommended by the DfES (2002a, p. 44) which identifies key principles underlying its use:

The first language gives access to the curriculum.

What is learned in one language is easily transferred to another.

Supporting the first language enhances children's cognitive and language development.

Time spent on first language does not damage the development of proficiency in English.

Positive effects on a learner's identity, self concept and self-esteem increase the chances of successful learning.

Bilingual approaches enhance meta-linguistic awareness of all children in a class.

While home language use is likely to be very beneficial for EAL pupils, there are serious resource implications attached to its use in practice. These include the availability of a large number of bilingual assistants, the range of languages to be covered and the costs of such provision. It is unlikely that schools will have sufficient resources available to make this suggestion feasible in practice. Although the 'live' storytelling session is considered the ideal scenario for home language use, the use of computer-based resources provides a cost effective alternative. Indeed, computer-based home language materials, such as those developed within this study, are considered to offer a practical way of providing home language support for the

traditional Literacy Hour format, thereby enhancing existing support for EAL pupils.

Where bilingual support staff are available, they can provide support to EAL pupils in a number of ways. The DfES (2002a, p. 76) provides the following list of suggestions for involving bilingual support staff in day to day school life:

- Explaining instructions, tasks and curriculum content.
- Redefining words and phrases critical to a child's understanding.
- Encouraging children to articulate ideas in their preferred language.
- Developing children's confidence in expressing themselves in English.
- Assess understanding through follow-up questions and encourage responses in first language.
- Promote participation through prompting and translating during whole-class sessions, including plenaries.
- Presenting themselves (as workers) as role models.
- Promoting home-school liaison.

The role of the home language within the classroom is given prominence within the '*National Literacy Strategy: Supporting Pupils Learning English as an Additional Language*' document. Indeed, a complete module is devoted to the use of the first language in the Literacy Hour and where it is acknowledged that the benefits of the targeted use of first language for teaching and learning is essential in order to enhance access for EAL pupils (DfES, 2002a).

Interestingly, specific reference is made to the importance of *not* considering whether or not home language usage is beneficial:

'Do not get drawn into a discussion about whether the use of first language is beneficial: the research base confirms this...'

(DfES, 2002a, p. 73)

This firm assertion to the readers (teachers, advisors) is bold and serves to underline potential gains of using the home language in the classroom.

In addition to bilingual support, teachers are encouraged to utilise first language-based groupings, via paired peer talk and collaborative group work. Furthermore, specific reference is made to the encouragement of first language usage by pupils even if the teacher or support staff do not speak the same language.

‘ The use of the pupils’ first language in exploring meaning and response and creating ideas for writing is an important teaching strategy- and can be used with pupils who speak a range of languages which may not necessarily be shared by the adult’.

(DfES, 2002a, p. 73)

Clearly the emphasis in this document is for schools to draw upon and utilise the languages that their learners bring into the classroom. A bold message to teachers (in England) which appears to have had limited impact in England (OFSTED, 2002) and in the fieldwork settings of the current study.

Conclusion

This review of the literature presented across Chapters 2 and 3 has oriented the reader towards a range of issues connected with ‘inclusion,’ highlighting in particular the key role of the class teacher in providing appropriate learning experiences for EAL pupils. The following chapter charts the ‘highs and lows’ experienced within the research process. It introduces the reader to the two sampled primary schools and outlines the research methods used within the study. Chapter 4 provides a reflexive account of the research process and in particular the progressive focusing during the initial stages of the project. Chapter 5 describes in detail the two schools participating in the research

and provides details of the research strategies used in the study. A pilot study carried out within a neighbouring LEA is also described.

CHAPTER 4

Section Two

Chapter Four

Shifts in project focus - finding a 'real exclusion issue' in the primary setting

In the Autumn of 2002, I came upon what struck me as a very 'real exclusion issue' when undertaking some orientation fieldwork in primary schools. I discovered the classroom lives of ethnic minority children who, though fully conversant in their home language, had no or very limited experience of the English language on entering school. Indeed, a serendipitous encounter in an inner city nursery unit became a significant incident that resulted in a sharper focus for the research project. I was standing in the playground of an inner city nursery school when a 'significant event' occurred. The literature refers to significant events or critical incidents which shape 'lived realities' for researchers and subjects. Children aged between three and four were playing on a range of play equipment. The teacher was explaining to me that about 80% of her nursery pupils were from ethnic minority backgrounds when the following incident, captured within my field notes, occurred:

... the teacher keen to tell me about the children in her care, had momentarily taken her eyes off the children playing in front of her. A loud pitiful wailing sound drew our attention towards a three year old boy - he was crying inconsolably. 'Oh dear, I wasn't looking so I don't know what has happened and he can't tell me.' The teacher wiped away the tears and tried to converse with the pupil, but the teacher's inability to speak Sylheti and the boy's unfamiliarity with English meant that the tears kept on flowing. With help from some of the other children and a bit of guesswork, the teacher realised that the little boy's bike had been snatched from him and immediately righted the situation. The boy returned to riding his bike, the tears stopped and all that could be heard were the squeaky wheels and the occasional heavy-hearted sob. 'It's so hard when they don't understand our language- you have to have eyes in the back of your head,' the teacher confided. (Extract from Fieldwork Notes 10.9.2002)

And that is how this current project began. The literature refers to significant events or critical incidents and how these ‘foreshadow problems’ which need researching (Malinowski, 1967). I started to try and imagine how it might feel to suddenly find yourself in a different world, where a different language is spoken, different rules apply and where after spending the first three years of life at your mother’s side, you are suddenly on your own - in ‘big school’. The first day at school for most monolingual English children who are already familiar with the sights and sounds of a nursery is often difficult (Fontana, 1995). For many of these ethnic minority pupils, it is quite traumatic. At Bluebank nursery, there were eight different languages spoken by the pupils and one bilingual assistant who spoke two of these. The middle-aged teacher was very experienced and appeared to be a very warm and caring person. Yet no additional steps were taken to try and accommodate pupils for whom English is an additional language. The responsibility appeared to be placed upon three year old children to ‘cross the language barrier’- as one nursery teacher told me;

‘It would be nice if they knew ‘mummy’s coming soon’ in English so that I could comfort them when they are distressed.’

I felt startled by the lack of support for these children’s transition into formal schooling. Surely there was more that could be done? Could, for example, nursery teachers themselves learn a few helpful phrases and expressions to reassure pupils in their home languages?

Further fieldwork and opportunistic interviews in three primary schools made it apparent that the schools did not have the financial resources available to provide bilingual assistants to cater for each language present in a nursery class.

As one head teacher explained:

“In theory yes it would be great, but in practice it’s just not going to happen. I’m having trouble finding enough money for basic stationery items as it is. We do try to encourage links with the community but it’s just too big a gap to fill”.

An alternative solution to the ‘ideal’ of bilingual support, used within every school that I visited, was to have an English as an additional language ‘support teacher.’ The role of these EAL support staff was to move between classes, to help small groups of children. This help tended to take place in withdrawal groups, outside the mainstream classroom, usually in short sessions of around 20 to 30 minutes. The teachers were monolingual English speakers who considered their role to be to help children develop their English language skills. None of the EAL teachers interviewed used the home languages of the children at any time in their teaching. As one of them put it,

‘My job is to teach them English as quickly as possible... That’s what EAL support teachers do’.

In fact, the inclusion or referencing of the home cultures of the children did not seem to rate highly within any of the lessons observed. For example, a discussion on the topic of ‘food’ involved an EAL teacher asking the pupils whether they liked tomato ketchup with their sausages and burgers! This can only be interpreted as naive ethnocentrism on her part. Within class, on another occasion, children were encouraged to write to Santa by their teacher, but as one EAL pupil remarked to me ‘Santa, he don’t come to Muslim children.’ The fieldwork in the late Autumn Term when UK primary schools are suffused with activities for traditional Christmas-

friezes, decorations, cards etc... threw into sharp relief the ways in which the National Curriculum can be anglo-centric. I was reminded of Coard's (1971) research and the sociological analysis of the 'hidden curriculum' of schooling.

Whether intentionally or not, the message that seems to be sent to pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is that English is the only language that counts at school. Yet experienced researchers within this field have consistently argued that by valuing the use of the home language within class, pupils are likely to experience higher self-esteem and in addition, their English language development will be accelerated. To *not* use the home language within the classroom then, would therefore appear short-sighted, on the part of both teachers and LEA strategic planners.

However, a review of the literature highlights the constraints of cost and availability of bilingual support. The budget for language support can never adequately match the real needs of learners. As Martin-Jones and Saxena (2003, p. 108) note, bilingual classroom assistants often occupy low status positions '...that have become increasingly precarious as funding has been cut back'. Indeed, within the sampled LEA, budgetary cuts to the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) posed real concerns among key personnel that existing provision may have to be reduced, with existing services 'spread more thinly' as the number of pupils with English as an additional language continued to increase (Fieldwork notes, July 2004).

Though there was no ‘magic wand’ available to alleviate the situation, a possible option that eventually materialised was to utilise computer technology to introduce the home languages into the classroom. With both the central and Welsh governments’ determination to introduce computers into the classroom, it also seemed to be in line with current policy on ICT and learning (DfES, 2003b&c; National Assembly for Wales, 2001). I realised that a PhD project which not only designed, devised and implemented an ICT intervention and which evaluated its gains would be a worthwhile endeavour. I felt committed to researching something that might help EAL children be less ‘excluded’ within mainstream school.

Having undertaken forays within the nursery setting, I envisaged carrying out research which might benefit pupils such as the boy mentioned above. A key concern was to find a way of ‘measuring’ the effects of the introduction of the computer-based home language material. To make claims for effectiveness or to demonstrate enhanced competence or even pupil engagement, I would need a rigorous research design for the ‘ICT intervention’. A review of the literature revealed only one study which utilised computer-based home language material. The Fabula project (Edwards, Monaghan & Knight, 2000) had focused upon using English and Welsh translations of stories within class. The effects of this on Welsh language acquisition were quantified by means of classroom observations and interviews with pupils. Both of these research methods were considered to be useful tools for my research, though a more specific and carefully controlled measure was also considered appropriate.

Before devising specific measures and a research strategy it was necessary to read up on second language acquisition. This involved revisiting my undergraduate bibliographies and undertaking a review of the literature. Further reading re-alerted me to the fact that language development is highly dependent upon vocabulary acquisition (Meara, 1983; McWilliam, 1998). As Gass and Selinker (2001) acknowledge the lexicon may be the most important language component for learners. It therefore seemed pertinent to focus my ICT intervention on assisting young children to recognise the meaning of a specific number of English words. The choice of vocabulary was not a straightforward matter and involved discussions with teachers, bilingual assistants, support teachers, as well as scrutiny of prior research studies (Nagy, Anderson & Herman, 1987; Elley, 1989; Medwell, 1996).

Creating, trialling, talking books and a rigorous measure

Preliminary fieldwork was carried out in three inner city primary schools, namely Bluebank, Redbridge and Brownbrook. However, it was decided to concentrate on two schools; Redbridge and Brownbrook for Phase One and Phase Two of the research (details of phases are provided in Chapter 5). This decision was based upon the greater availability of EAL pupils from within these two schools to form the required sample. Following consultation with the two nursery teachers at Redbridge and Brownbrook schools it was decided to focus upon two topic areas, namely modes of transport and wild animals. Both topics played an important role within the nursery setting and were considered to be of interest to nursery-aged pupils. Eight target items for each topic were chosen and incorporated within two existing stories. The stories and their accompanying graphics were placed onto Authorware computer software (at this time I was not aware of Clicker 4 and was utilising a more challenging computer

programme obtained from the University) to form 'talking books' with both English and home language translations. Practical classroom activities were also planned to reinforce the topic areas. Pictorial grids featuring the target item and three similar items were devised to assess recognition of the target item. It was anticipated that the bilingual assistant would check pupils' recognition of the target items at both pre-test and post-test stages, by asking the individual pupil to point to the specific item. The participants for the study were to be identified by the class teacher based on their perceived need for additional language support. Consequently, three main languages, namely Sylheti, Somali and Arabic, were chosen due to the number of children available and, crucially for this study, the availability of bilingual assistants to act as translators.

Naive notions of 'other' languages- the first 'false start'

During the pilot/ pre-test visit to Brownbrook school it became apparent that I had acted rather naively. Following the design of the computer software, which was put onto CD-Rom, I visited the school to undertake a pre-test assessment of eight pupils in liaison with the EMAS coordinator and Arabic and Sylheti speaking bilingual assistants. The intention was to assess the children's existing ability to identify the target words in both their home language and in English. At this stage, I also requested translations of each item into the home language by the bilingual assistants. I entered the school optimistically and rather proudly clutching my software and materials. Indeed on reflection, I was quite excited at the prospect of piloting my software and of collecting some real data. However, it immediately became obvious that the translations were not going to be as straightforward as I had originally thought!

The EMAS coordinator (who had learned Sylheti), on scrutinising my pictorial material and grid expressed concern and explained that there would not be direct translations available in Sylheti for some of the items. I was shocked, having expected a one-for-one word equivalent. It was explained that Sylheti is an oral language with a restricted range of vocabulary. It was suggested by the EMAS coordinator that we ask older children (seven to nine years) for the translations required, prior to approaching the nursery-aged pupils. This sound advice was taken and proved very helpful indeed.

It was found that the Sylheti speaking children:

- Referred to *all* vehicles as ‘gobi’ (transliteration into Roman script): differentiating them only in terms of size i.e. small ‘gobi,’ large ‘gobi.’
- In some cases, they used the English equivalent, e.g. rocket
- Were unable to provide direct translations for camel, giraffe, zebra or hippo.

(Fieldnotes: March, 2002)

Informal interviews with the various language assistants were hugely informative at this important stage of the research. The insights gleaned at this stage taught me the real value of fieldwork and piloting in ways no methods textbook ever could! The Gujarati and Arabic speaking bilingual assistants had more equivalents available in their home languages, but sometimes used the English word: this they put down to being the third generation in the UK and had creatively filled in the gaps with English words. An example provided by the Gujarati speaking assistant was that ‘potato’ was referred to as ‘potatoa’. It was apparent however, that a greater number of direct translations from English to Arabic and Gujarati could be made than for Sylheti. These languages (Gujarati and Arabic) also have written scripts. The bilingual assistants who spoke Gujarati and Arabic reported having many books in both English

and the home language at home and of 'switching in and out' of the languages quite unproblematically (Fieldnotes: March, 2002).

The Sylheti speaking bilingual assistant found it difficult to find exact translations for many of the transport and animal items, instead referring to them using descriptors. For example, a zebra was described as a 'stripy donkey'. Clearly there was a 'creativity' and 'inventiveness' which characterised the assistant's translation.

It therefore became apparent that the originally conceived rigid pre-test/post-test design based on identification of the target items by name was quite inappropriate for this type of research. At this stage (some six months on) having invested a considerable amount of time developing materials I was crestfallen. More importantly, I was disappointed with the nursery staff from both schools who had been consulted at length. In the early fieldwork I had consulted them regarding the topic areas and specific items to be used. Both nursery teachers had advised that the children spoke 'Bengali', when in fact they spoke the dialect Sylheti. Neither of the teachers seemed to be aware that there were no direct translations from Sylheti or of the narrowness of the vocabulary (Fieldnotes: February, 2002). This was a powerful finding and served to re-motivate me in pursuing the development of materials that could help EAL children who, as my pilot fieldwork had revealed, were often incorrectly identified by their teachers.

Unfortunately, the research was then interrupted by a period of sick leave. During this time letters were sent to both schools advising of my illness, together with some toys (initially intended for use in the research) for both nursery units. Taking the advice of

Delamont (2002) and my supervisors, it was considered important to 'leave the door open' and maintain communication. It was therefore some time before I was in a position to contact the schools again. By which time, my focus in terms of age group had been revised. This revision was based upon the decision to focus upon the 'Literacy Hour'. Further reading of the literature had highlighted the particular difficulties experienced by EAL pupils within predominantly verbal, decontextualised learning environments (Hancock & Mansfield, 2001) such as the 'Literacy Hour' format. This identified a perceived 'need' within the classroom setting for resources such as my computer-based home language software. In the two schools however, the Literacy Hour was not utilised until reception/ year one (age range between four to six years) and therefore my focus changed from nursery aged pupils to EAL pupils within reception and year one classes.

On re-establishing contact, I found that my main contact at Brownbrook school, the EMAS coordinator, had subsequently moved elsewhere. However, I was able to 'link up' with the two year one teachers and subsequently the two reception class teachers, by speaking to the EAL support worker whom I had met previously. In Redbridge school, I spoke with the head teacher, who identified a year two teacher as my next point of contact, who also introduced me to the year one and reception class teachers. Relationships with busy teachers were 'worked at' in ways well documented in confessional fieldwork narratives (Burgess 1984; Walford 1991).

I therefore returned to the schools to meet these new contacts. At these meetings, the research aims were broadly outlined; none of the teachers requested any detailed information. One of them commented that it was 'always nice to have an extra pair of

hands', indicating to me that I would have an active role to play within the classroom. Indeed following my visits to observe the Literacy Hour I was expected to remain in class and help with the paper-based activities, which always followed. This "fieldwork" role is not unusual for educational researchers as is commonly reported in the research literature (see Salisbury, 1994; Coffey, 1999; Delamont, 2002).

'U-turns' and the quest for 'comparability'

My attention had now shifted to the Literacy Hour and possible ways of making the featured 'Big Book' texts more accessible to EAL learners via computer-based home language translations. During my discussions with the class teachers in Redbridge school, I identified that the text '*Can't you sleep, Little Bear?*' by Martin Waddel was shortly to be used as the featured text within the Literacy Hour. This book is the first in a series of four. The second text '*Let's go home, Little Bear*' was considered comparable in terms of word length, main characters and story line and had not been used within the class. I therefore decided to undertake a pilot study whereby the second book was translated into Arabic and English in a computer-based format. Six year two Arabic speaking pupils and four monolingual pupils were identified from teachers' lists. The monolingual pupils were designed to act as a form of 'control.' If the stories were indeed comparable, I surmised that the retellings of both stories by monolingual English pupils should be similar in terms of content and length. The text '*Can't you sleep, Little Bear?*' was presented by the class teacher in the usual Literacy Hour format on four consecutive days. On Day Four, the sampled pupils were asked to retell the story. The story '*Let's go home, Little Bear*' was presented in the following week, as a computer-based story with an Arabic translation (listened to in English by the monolingual pupils). This story was listened to on four consecutive days, in line

with the Literacy Hour format. On Day Four, the pupils were then asked to retell the story. The children were able to access the individual pictures of the book as they retold the story. In hindsight, this was an error of judgement, as one of the stories (*Can't you sleep, Little Bear?*) had more informative pictures than the other - as a result the pupils had far more visual information available to them when retelling this story. The availability of the pictorial images also enabled the children to describe the scene in the pictures rather than actually 'retell' the story. All of the pupils, including the monolingual pupils, were able to provide more detailed retellings of this story as a result of the pictorial prompts. Consequently, it was not possible to accurately determine how much additional information/ 'understanding' the EAL pupils had received as a result of the home language translation.

Even though I was keen to use materials featured within the existing Literacy Hour framework, it became apparent that the type of materials used each week often differed, and included factual, fictional and poetry-based material. Therefore it was unlikely that the materials would be consistently comparable in terms of word difficulty/ length and the specific learning objectives of the sessions. Another valuable but frustrating lesson had been learned! This initial piloting stage did however provide information in terms of the pupils' comments on using the home language material. The pupils showed their delight in this novel experience and were enthusiastic and engaged.

Again, it was back to the drawing board to try and find material to use which could be readily quantified in terms of results. I was very much aware at this point that time was running out but I was anxious not to jeopardise the whole project by rushing

ahead with an unacceptable design. Further delves into the literature regarding vocabulary acquisition led me to a series of journal articles professing the vocabulary gains of monolingual pupils as a result of listening to stories (Wells, 1986; Elley, 1989; Senechal, Thomas & Monker, 1995). One article in particular caught my eye. Robbins and Ehri (1994) had carried out an investigation based upon two comparable stories. Immediately, the benefits of using two stories which had already undergone scrutiny from the research community became apparent. By using these stories (with some minor adjustments), I was able to avoid the problems encountered previously concerning comparability.

The Robbins and Ehri (1994) study '*Reading storybooks to kindergartners helps them learn new vocabulary words*' was designed to assess the effects of listening to stories upon children's vocabulary growth. The findings of Robbins and Ehri (1994) demonstrated that young children expand their recognition vocabularies when they listen to stories at least twice. These gains had been demonstrated for monolingual English pupils utilising their first language of English. I therefore wondered whether similar gains would be demonstrated by EAL pupils from the use of their first languages. This journal article therefore acted as a catalyst for the quantitative research methods and research design employed within this study.

The CAL intervention using the home languages is fully documented in Chapter 7 which discusses the chronology, the participants in the single case design and of course the outcomes and results. The following chapter describes the two multi-ethnic schools, participating in the study together with the research methods used. The procedure for making the 'talking books' via 'Clicker 4' software is outlined. A pilot

study which provided valuable insight prior to the intervention is also detailed.

CHAPTER 5

Chapter Five

Scenes and Settings

Localities of the Schools

Both schools are situated within two miles of the city centre. The city itself continues to expand and develop in a number of ways. It boasts excellent shopping facilities and has a host of historical, art related and sports based attractions. There has been a substantial increase in new housing developments within and around the city centre. The population is in the region of 330,000 which represents approximately 11% of the population of Wales (Estyn, 2002). Over the last decade, the population has grown at a substantial rate of over 1% per annum (Estyn, 2002).

Unemployment in this area is currently lower than the Wales and United Kingdom averages at 2.7% (Estyn, 2002). However, it contains markedly contrasting socio-economic conditions. Parts of the area enjoy some of Wales' least disadvantaged conditions whilst other areas face some of the country's most acute social and economic challenges (Estyn, 2002).

The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) in January 2001 was the sixth highest of the 22 LEA's in Wales, at a figure of 22.2% compared with the Wales figure of 19.5%. The FSM indicator is a helpful proxy for social disadvantage and is used by numerous researchers in comparative analysis (Gorard, 2003).

Funding for pupils

In 2001-2002, the average primary pupil in the sampled LEA was funded at £2018 compared with the Wales average of £2038 (Estyn, 2002). Within England, the lowest level of funding per pupil within an LEA was £2260 and the highest level of funding per pupil within an LEA was £3858 for the same period (DfES, 2001/2).

The EMAS language support service was established in 2002 following re-organisation of the EAL Service, to comply with National Assembly for Wales guidance on funding for the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) (CCC, 2002). The following table shows the increase in ethnic minority pupils within the LEA over a five year period and the subsequent expansion of the EMAS service during this time.

Table: 5.1: EMAS pupils, teacher posts and budgets (1995/6-2000/1)

	1995/6	2000/1
Number of ethnic minority pupils	2558	7238
Full-time equivalent posts within EAL/EMAS	40.15	85.2
EAL/EMAS annual expenditure	£1,146k (1997/8)	£ 1,503k

(Source: Best Value Review of the English as an Additional Language Service, CCC, 2002)

In 2000/1, 7238 ethnic minority pupils were eligible for EAL support (CCC, 2002). However, as the table illustrates there were only 85.2 full-time equivalent staff working within the EMAS service.

A comparison of grant funding levels with four other LEAs highlights the low level of funding within the sampled LEA.

Table 5.2: Grant funding levels: a comparison with other LEAs.

Sampled LEA £ per pupil support	£ 89.51
LEA A (nearest neighbour to the East)	£285.45
LEA B (big city)	£167.07
LEA C (equivalent city in England)	£149.00
LEA D (nearest neighbour to the West)	£476.45

(Source: Appendix A Committee of the Council Cabinet Proposal, CCC, 2002)

The challenges facing the EMAS service due to low funding levels and inadequate staffing levels is apparent.

The Schools

Both schools are LEA controlled primary schools. They are situated in the outskirts of the city centre and both describe themselves as being in economically disadvantaged areas. Each school has a high proportion of ethnic minority pupils on their school roll. The catchment areas of both schools can be described as predominantly working class. The following sections which introduce 'Redbridge' and 'Brownbrook' primary schools, draw upon Inspection Reports, LEA documentation and field notes. The intention is to describe the two key settings of the research.

Redbridge Primary School

This school was established in 1973 and re-housed in 1996 into a purpose built two-storey building with a separate annexe which houses the early years unit. It is situated in the midst of an area of the city which is currently undergoing major regeneration and housing redevelopment. However, the population of the school has remained largely unchanged. Approximately 52% of pupils receive free school meals in comparison with the Wales average of 19.5 %. The rich ethnic diversity of the local community is reflected within the intake, with approximately 44% of pupils speaking English as an additional language. The main ethnic groups which constitute the school population are: Black African, Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and Chinese. The main languages spoken at home, other than English are Arabic and Somali. The school head teacher also suggested that a number of other 'language backgrounds' exist including Sylheti and Urdu. There are currently 230 pupils on the school roll.

In the most recent inspection report (Estyn, 2001, p.19), the progress of EAL pupils was considered 'good.' Very good links were considered to exist between class teachers and EAL teachers, which '...impacts very well on standards.' EAL teaching was assessed as '...effective to secure pupils' progress at the earlier stages of their learning'.

In Wales, Inspection Reports always identify a minimum of five action points for schools to address. (Appendix 2 provides details of the Inspection Framework in relation to EAL pupils). The seven 'Key Issues for Action' designated in the Inspection Report (Estyn, 2001, p.29) specified that the school needed to:

- take appropriate steps to improve standards further in all subjects which are currently judged to be satisfactory;
- continue rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching to raise the proportion of good teaching further, and re-evaluate the management of support staff, particularly at the beginning of lessons;
- monitor the consistency and effectiveness of differentiation, particularly within setted groups, in order to improve both the quality of the curriculum and pupils' achievement.
- provide a greater degree of challenge for the more able pupils at the upper end of KS2;
- re-evaluate provision for EAL, especially with regard to KS2 pupils who are designated as achieving fluency, but would yet benefit from support in order to undertake more challenging tasks and, as a result, achieve higher standards.
- re-appraise the provision for daily collective worship with particular reference to an atmosphere of reverence;
- continue to take appropriate action to reduce and minimise the percentage of unauthorised absences.

School Buildings: External features

Redbridge school is a modern brick-built building which benefits from large windows facing onto the playground which make the lower level classrooms light and airy. The annexe is joined to the main school via a covered walkway. The school is positioned in a built-up area with a main road at the front. There is a zebra crossing which is patrolled at the beginning and end of the school day. There is also a side road leading to the main school entrance.

Playing Areas

There are three hard surface playgrounds and a large playing field. The early years unit has an undercover play area with specialist floor covering so that a range of climbing apparatus and slides can be accommodated. There is currently no seating area available for use by the Key Stage One or Two pupils. Pupils do, however, have ready access to a range of small games equipment including footballs and skipping ropes.

Internal features

The reception and Key Stage One classrooms are situated on the ground floor. They are light, spacious and airy. The year one and two classrooms benefit from a shared art resource room which is located between the two classrooms. This area provides a 'wet' area for water and sand based activities, as well as a sink and storage units.

Each classroom has a designated area for hanging coats and bags. The toilets are located a short distance away on an adjoining corridor. There is an open plan library area which also doubles up as a venue for 'wet play time' activities such as watching video films. Each classroom has a 'carpet area'- a designated area for pupils to sit

close to the teacher. In each classroom this carpet is identified by the presence of a teacher's comfy chair and adjacent whiteboard (see page 205 for an example of a typical classroom layout).

During my research, an impending visit from a member of the Royal Family resulted in the reception area and corridors receiving a fresh coat of paint and new carpet tiles. New wall displays including craft friezes, photographs and mounted pictures were positioned on the corridor walls and foyer.

The reception area has 'potted plants' and a welcoming feel. Large displays capturing the art work of the pupils are prominently displayed. A welcome sign on the head teacher's door is multilingual in eight different languages.

Mrs Anwar's Reception Class

This reception classroom is located within the early years unit. It is an 'L shape' design with specific areas for 'wet' and creative play such as water, sand and painting activities. There is a sink close to the wet area. There is a 'home corner' area which at the time of the research was being used as a 'cafe'. The class has its own toilet which is located at the far end alongside some storage cupboards. There is a separate area outside the classroom where bags and coats are stored. The tables are grouped in small rectangular shapes. Walls are adorned with brightly coloured displays. There is a designated 'carpet area' with teacher's chair and whiteboard. This class benefits from a full time learning support assistant, Mrs Brown. There is one computer which is located next to the 'home corner' area.

The teacher

Mrs Anwar was a mature entrant into teaching having entered the profession following a period of time spent raising her family. This post is her second teaching job and she has been teaching for approximately three years. Mrs Anwar is very enthusiastic in her role as teacher. She uses a number of very effective teaching strategies and enjoys her job. She is keen to develop her knowledge and is currently following and funding a Masters programme on a part time basis at a local university. Mrs Anwar is herself from an ethnic minority background. She is very interested in ways of helping EAL pupils and as part of her university studies had undertaken a small-scale research project exploring the effects of bilingual support for EAL pupils learning to read. Mrs Anwar was very obliging and helpful throughout the fieldwork at Redbridge school. She held firm views about the role that the home language ought to play in the mainstream classroom.

The learning support assistant

Mrs Brown is an experienced learning support assistant and has worked at this school for a number of years. She is confident in her role and has developed positive working relationships with other staff members. She is very friendly and caring towards the pupils. Mrs Brown was kind and helpful throughout the duration of my stay.

The children

There were 23 pupils (14 females and 9 males) within this reception class. The pupils were of the younger age range of four and five year olds - as some of the older reception pupils were located in Mrs Black's mixed reception/ year one class. Thirteen of the pupils (56%) were from ethnic minority backgrounds. These included seven

Somali, one Sylheti and three Arabic speaking pupils who all formed part of the sample along with one Urdu speaking pupil and one Somali pupil (who spoke only in English) who were not included in the sample.

Mrs Black's Class

This mixed reception and year one class is located within the main building. It is also L-shaped in design. There is an area designated for wet and creative activities and a home corner (which was being used as a home) where 'dressing up' outfits are also kept. The tables are grouped in rectangular and square shapes. The main wall in the classroom has large glass windows and faces out onto the playground. The remaining walls have a range of brightly coloured displays. There is a designated 'carpet area' with a comfy teacher's chair and whiteboard. There is one computer station within the class and one further computer work station within the adjoining library area. The class benefits from a full time learning support assistant, Mrs Gwyn.

The teacher

Mrs Black has been teaching for over twenty years. She is a warm and caring teacher. She does have a tendency to use a raised voice which I found a little unnerving at first, but soon came to realise that this was 'just her way'. Mrs Black was identified as my main point of contact for this research and I liaised with her on a regular basis. She was always extremely helpful and friendly.

The learning support assistant

Mrs Gwyn is relatively new to her role. She decided to enter this occupation following a period of time spent raising her own family. She is 'learning on the job' and will

shortly be undertaking relevant part-time training at a local college. Mrs Gwyn has developed a positive working relationship with the Key Stage One teachers and support staff. She cooperated fully and was very amiable throughout my stay.

The children

This class consisted of 28 pupils (17 females and 11 males). Sixteen pupils (57%) were from ethnic minority backgrounds. All 16 ethnic minority pupils: five Arabic, five Sylheti and six Somali speaking pupils, formed part of the sample. (One Sylheti speaking pupil was subsequently omitted from the study due to long term sick leave).

Head teacher

Mrs Bridge was helpful at the outset of access negotiations and facilitated my path into the classroom of other teachers including Miss Pink who became my first point of contact, a year two teacher. She was appointed head teacher in 1999 and led the school through its most recent inspection report (Estyn, 2001). All members of staff were polite and helpful.

Brownbrook Primary School

This long established school is housed within two large Victorian buildings. It serves a local community of council owned and private housing. There has been an increase in the number of new housing developments in the locality over the last few years. Approximately 33% of the school population receive free school meals (Wales average 19.5%) - although the school believes that this figure should be higher as some families do not claim their entitlement. The rich mosaic of the local population is reflected within the school population with some 70% of the pupils coming from ethnic minority backgrounds. Approximately 63% of pupils speak English as an additional language. In total there are 25 language backgrounds represented within the school. The main languages spoken at home are Sylheti, Somali and Arabic.

There are 328 pupils on the school roll (2004) with an additional 52 nursery pupils attending for morning or afternoon sessions. Thirteen pupils attend a special educational needs class.

Within the last inspection report (Estyn, 2004, p.26), it was acknowledged that 'Provision for pupils who speak EAL is good' and that 'Pupils at all stages, make good progress'. The provision for pupils with EAL was assessed as well managed with sound procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision. In addition, the teaching of pupils with EAL was considered '...very effective and impacts substantially on standards'.

The five 'Key Issues for Action' specified within the Inspection Report (p.40) identified that the school needed to:

- address shortcomings to raise standards in:

Knowledge and understanding of the world in reception classes;

Handwriting and presentation in KS1 and KS2;

The key skill of writing across the curriculum in KS1 and KS2;

Geography, history and IT in KS2;

- comply with statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship;

- plan for the progressive development of key skills and offer clear guidelines for implementation by staff;

- ensure consistent implementation of the school's marking policy so that pupils know how to improve their work;

- further develop the subject leader's role in the monitoring and exemplifying standards.

External features

This school consists of two quite austere Victorian red brick buildings; the main building faces onto a busy exit road from the city centre, whilst the other building is adjacent. The main reception area is housed within the main building which also caters for Key Stage Two pupils. The second building incorporates the Key Stage One and reception and nursery classes. The buildings are separated from the road by a small concrete area and brick walls topped with traditional wrought iron fencing.

Play Areas

The playground is located to the back of the school and consists of a rectangular hard surface area. There is also an attractive 'garden area' consisting of wooden seating and planted areas. A separate play area with specialist flooring exists for use by pupils in the nursery unit. Due to the location of the school, there are no large grassed areas available for the children. However, a local park about 200 metres away, is available for special events such as sports day.

Internal features

The inside of the school has a very 'traditional feel' with high ceilings and high windows. The impression was that it was well maintained. The classrooms were of a reasonable size. The toilets were located within the same building with access via the open plan nursery unit. There was a designated area for the storage of coats and bags. The layout of the building meant that access to the year one class was via the reception class and this on occasion, caused a minor disturbance during 'carpet time'. Each class had a designated 'carpet area' within Key Stage One.

Mrs Hill's class

This classroom was located within the second building which houses the early years and Key Stage One classrooms. It was square in shape with a 'wet area' including a sink for art and craft activities. It also contained a dressing up / 'home' corner and a computer area, housing a single workstation. The available space was fully utilised. A separate area in the adjoining corridor was used to store coats and bags. The tables were grouped in small rectangular arrangements. There were brightly coloured displays on the classroom walls. There was a designated 'carpet area' to the front of

the class which comprised of teachers chair and whiteboard. This class benefited from a full time learning support assistant, Miss Tree.

The teacher

Mrs Hill was an experienced classroom teacher with over ten years of service. She was very warm and caring towards the pupils in her care. She appeared confident and in control of her class at all times. She was very helpful and friendly towards me.

The learning support assistant

Miss Tree is very experienced and confident in her role. She is very familiar with the pupils and their families, having worked at the school for a number of years. She has a very close working relationship with the classroom teacher. She was very amicable and supportive throughout the period of my research.

The children

There were 16 pupils (9 females and 7 males) in this reception class. Thirteen (81 %) were from ethnic minority backgrounds. Eight of the ethnic minority pupils formed part of the sample, namely three Arabic, four Sylheti and one Somali speaking pupils (two pupils were subsequently omitted due to illness and holiday absence). Five further pupils were identified from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds.

Miss Field's class

This classroom was located next to the reception class and was accessed from the nursery or reception class. It was square in shape with a 'wet area' incorporating a sand tray and painting area. There was also a computer area, housing a single

workstation. Bags and coats were stored in a corridor located outside of the classroom. Tables were arranged in small rectangular groupings. There were brightly coloured displays on the classroom walls. There was a designated 'carpet area' with a teacher's chair and whiteboard. This class benefited from a full-time learning support assistant, Mrs Wells who was omnipresent for all curriculum activities.

The teacher

Miss Field was a confident classroom teacher with over fifteen years of experience. She appeared very warm and caring in her manner. She used a consistently calm voice and a very organised approach to the school day. She was welcoming and helpful throughout my stay.

The learning support assistant

Mrs Wells is a very experienced learning support assistant. She works closely with the class teacher. Her quiet and calm approach is well suited to that of the teacher. She shows genuine warmth and consideration towards the pupils. She was friendly and accommodating during the period of my research.

The children

There were 22 pupils (10 females and 12 males). Seventeen (77 %) of the pupils were from ethnic minority backgrounds. Ten pupils formed part of the initial sample, namely five Somali, four Sylheti and one Arabic pupil (two pupils were subsequently omitted due to holiday absence and refusal to participate). There were a further seven pupils identified from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds.

Head teacher

Mrs Brook was very welcoming and helpful when approached regarding this research. She had been head since 1996 and had led the school through its most recent Estyn inspection in 2004. She was happy to answer my questions and facilitated my access into the other classrooms. She introduced me to the EAL co-ordinator as my future point of reference. All members of staff within this school were accommodating. The staff room atmosphere was relaxed and friendly and inclusive. A collaborative atmosphere existed and the sense that staff shared materials and ideas.

The following table provides details of the classroom compositions of the four sampled classrooms.

Table: 5.3: Details of the staff members and classroom compositions of the four classrooms participating within this study.

	Redbridge school		Brownbrook school	
Teacher	Mrs Anwar	Mrs Black	Mrs Hill	Miss Field
Year group	Reception	Mixed reception/ year one	Reception	Reception
Total number of pupils:	23	28	16	22
Number of EAL pupils:	13	16	13	17
Full time learning support assistant	Mrs Brown	Mrs Gwyn	Miss Tree	Mrs Wells
EAL support teacher	Occasional	Occasional	Occasional	Occasional
Bilingual learning support assistant	Occasional	Occasional	Occasional	Occasional

Interview and field note data were also gathered from the following staff members:

Table: 5.4: Details of additional school-based informants.

Head teachers	Mrs Bridge Mrs Brook	(Redbridge School) (Brownbrook School)
Class teachers	Mrs Silver Miss White Miss Pink Mr Grey Mr Malik	(Redbridge School) (Redbridge School) (Redbridge School) (Redbridge School) (Brownbrook School)
EAL support teachers	Mrs Green Mrs Ridge Mrs Bush	(Redbridge School) (Redbridge School) (Brownbrook School)
Bilingual Assistants	Mrs Ahmed Mrs Hanif Miss Patel Miss Hassan	(Redbridge School) (Redbridge School) (Brownbrook School) (Brownbrook School)
Adult helper	Abdul	(Redbridge School)
Tower Hamlets LEA Primary Advisor	Ms.Jones	

Language and literacy repertoires of the bilingual assistants and their educational histories

Mrs Ahmed was in her early twenties and lived within the local neighbourhood. She had attended a local school and knew many of the local Somali families. She spoke Somali as her first language and English as an additional language and could read and write in both languages. She worked within the school on a part time basis. She had no formal qualifications for her role but hoped to attend a course at a local college for learning support assistants in due course. She had worked within the school for just over a year.

Mrs Hanif was in her late thirties and had received part of her education in Britain. She spoke Arabic as her first language and English as an additional language. She could also read and write both Arabic and English. She lived in a nearby neighbourhood and was known within the local Arabic community. She acted as a translator for initial fieldwork translations. She had worked in the school on a part time basis for a few years, since her own children had become of school age. She had no formal qualifications for her role.

Miss Patel was in her early twenties and spoke Sylheti fluently. She also spoke some Bengali and Urdu. She was fluent in English and had herself attended a local school. She was able to read and write in English but was unable to read or write Bengali or Urdu. Miss Patel lived within the local community and knew many of the families within the Sylheti community. She had worked within the school on a part time basis for a few years. She had no formal qualifications for her role.

Miss Hassan was also in her early twenties and had spent most of her life living in the local area and had attended a local school. She spoke Somali and English and could read and write in both languages. She had worked on a part time basis within the school for a few years. She also had no formal qualifications for her role.

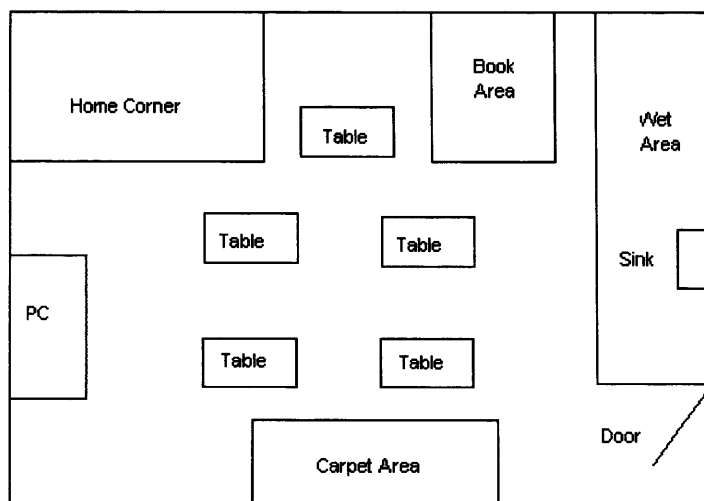
The classroom features were considered ‘typical’ of many reception classrooms

Table: 5.5: Comparing classroom features in the sampled classrooms

	Redbridge School		Brownbrook School	
Class teacher	Mrs Anwar	Mrs Black	Mrs Hill	Miss Tree
Shape of classroom	L-shaped	L-shaped	Square	Square. Access via adjoining classroom
Classroom table organisation	Rectangular	Rectangular and square	Rectangular	Rectangular
Number of computers in classroom	One	One. A further computer available in adjoining corridor	One	One
Designated ‘carpet area’	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wet area	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Home corner	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Topic-based wall displays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Multicultural displays in foyer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The figure below illustrates a 'typical' classroom layout.

Figure: 5.1: A typical classroom layout.



The architectural layouts and table configurations of each of the four classrooms were somewhat different in size yet all had 'key zones', including wet craft areas and the 'carpet area'. The following photographic image from a similar school helps to illustrate the learning space designated as the 'carpet area', with the familiar 'comfy' chair for the teacher and a whiteboard together with the carpeted area for pupils to sit.

Figure:5.2. Digital image of a 'carpet area'.



Having introduced the settings, 'spaces' and personnel involved in the study, the next section describes the selected research approaches which were deemed suitable to generate data addressing the research questions.

Research Methods.

The key research questions for the study began with the following four questions:

- 1) How does government policy relating to the National Literacy Strategy translate into current educational practice within the classroom?
- 2) How do children for whom English is an additional language, experience the National Literacy Strategy?
- 3) How do teachers mediate learning for children with English as an additional language within the 'Literacy Hour'?
- 4) To what extent does the introduction of the home language via the medium of ICT influence EAL pupils' ability to identify the meanings of unfamiliar words?

It was clear that these research questions required a diversity of research methods but also that they would be refined and elaborated upon. The initial literature review and orientation fieldwork enabled the original four research questions to be 'progressively focused' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) and expanded.

The research was carried out in two phases. Phase One was designed to elicit a greater understanding of the literacy hour from the perspectives of EAL pupils, their class teachers and support staff. This information was then used to inform the second phase

of the research, which consisted of a qualitative and quantitative investigation into the effects of introducing the home language to support the literacy hour. It comprised a computer-based intervention, which focused upon the influence of home language story translations on pupils' ability to correctly identify a number of unfamiliar English words. This was designed to demonstrate one possible effect of introducing home language versions of the featured text to support the traditional Literacy Hour format. This chapter describes in greater detail the research design and addresses the questions of 'what', 'when', 'how' and 'why'.

Research strategy

It was considered appropriate to utilise a case study strategy for this research. The case study provides an illustration of 'real people in real situations' providing a rich and vivid description of the lived experiences, thoughts and feelings of the participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Thus each participating school was considered as a descriptive case study incorporating each EAL pupil, their class teachers and support staff. This approach can provide a portrait of what is going on in a particular setting (Nunan, 1992) as it '... illuminates the general by looking at the particular' (Denscombe, 1998, p. 30). The case study approach enables in-depth investigation based on each individual school whilst also enabling comparisons to be drawn between them. As such, the case study is ideally suited for studying education (Bassey, 1999). As Yin (1994) stresses, the case study is a 'naturally occurring' phenomenon. As such, it enables the researcher to use a variety of sources, types of data and research methods as part of the investigation.

Research Methods: 'An eclectic mix'

When deciding upon the research methods to be used, the researcher is faced with a variety of options and alternatives. Each method brings with it its own set of advantages and disadvantages. There are, however, some strategies better suited than others for tackling specific issues. This 'fitness for purpose' can be argued as justification for selecting particular data collection methods (Silverman, 1993). For this study, an eclectic blend of qualitative and quantitative methods was considered appropriate. As Robson (2002, p. 47) suggests 'The differences between the two traditions can therefore best be viewed as technical rather than epistemological, enabling the enquirer to 'mix and match' both methodologies and methods- according to what best fits the particular study'. Qualitative and quantitative methods can therefore be seen as complementary (Gorard, 2003). Within the current study, qualitative methods provided rich in-depth information, whilst more quantitative methods offered numerical 'evidence' about the effectiveness of the home language intervention in Phase Two. Documentary analysis was an important feature within both phases of the research. Table 5.6 and Table 5.7 below capture at a glance the various research strategies in each of the two phases.

Table: 5.6: The Research Design: A Multi-Method Framework: Phase One.

Research in two inner city primary schools in one LEA.

Semi-structured interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head teachers - Class teachers - EAL support teachers - Bilingual assistants - EAL pupils
Fieldwork notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comments of EAL pupils in a range of settings - Comments of class teachers and support staff
Participant and non-participant observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observational data collected during the literacy hour
Documentary analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Estyn Inspection Reports - School prospectuses - Policy documents - Statistical reports and bulletins
Research Diary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical reflections and analytic memos to self.

Table: 5.7: The Research design: A Multi-Method Framework: Phase Two

<p>Investigation of the effects of ICT based home language materials:</p>	<p>Development and piloting of ICT materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Two comparable stories: one presented in English, the other with home language translation. - Three languages: Arabic, Somali and Sylheti. - 40 EAL pupils and 10 monolingual English pupils: each acting as own control. <p>Story Component Test: implemented on day one and day four of the intervention.</p> <p>Pictorial Grid Test: implemented on day four of the intervention and again two weeks later.</p>
<p>Semi - structured interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Class teachers - EAL support teachers - Bilingual Assistants
<p>Fieldwork notes:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comments of EAL pupils and staff - Observational data re ICT based intervention.
<p>Ongoing documentary analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Estyn Inspection reports - School prospectuses - Policy documents - Statistical reports and bulletins.
<p>Research Diary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical reflections and analytic memos to self.

Across both phases, eighteen in-depth semi-structured interviews with staff members and ten semi-structured interviews with EAL pupils, together with classroom observations of the literacy hour ‘in-action’ and a copious amount of fieldwork notes formed the core of the qualitative data collection. These data were complemented by and triangulated with documentary analysis. The investigative trial of home language materials and the subsequent analysis of results provided quantitative evidence to further substantiate the claims and thoughts represented within the qualitative data. The key research questions which ‘frame’ this study, outlined in Chapter One, helped me to identify appropriate research methods and strategies for data collection across both phases of the research. These are discussed in the sections which follow.

The Data Collection Methods

Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interview format is considered appropriate for exploring individual subjectivity in greater depth. It offers the opportunity to gain an insight into an individual's thoughts, feelings and experiences. A semi-structured approach enables flexibility to be combined with a degree of structure. The interview situation therefore provides the opportunity for 'talk to some purpose' (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). The data gained from these interviews were, in part, drawn upon to inform and enrich the investigatory process of Phase Two.

The interview schedules were designed to address the main focus of the research. They were therefore informed by the central research questions which were identified from a review of the literature and as a result of initial forays into the 'field.'

Interviews with class teachers, EAL support teachers and bilingual assistants.

Interview schedules were designed specifically for use with class teachers, EAL support teachers and bilingual assistants. During the interviews, the schedules provided a useful basis for discussion. The open-ended nature of the questioning provided a general 'frame of reference' without imposing any constraints upon the range of answers that were acceptable (Salisbury, 1994).

The first questions focused on biographical information which aimed to put the interviewee at ease and also to provide some contextual information for the interview.

The interview schedule was wide ranging, encompassing a range of topics, including: the existing support provided to EAL pupils, the implementation of the 'Literacy Hour' format with EAL pupils, the challenges associated with teaching a multilingual class and the teacher's views on home language use in class and ICT . The interview format was similar for EAL teachers with exploratory questions on a range of issues including their perceptions of their role and their links with class teachers. The interviews with the bilingual assistants focused primarily upon the training and support that they had received, their role within the classroom and the strategies that they used. (Please refer to appendix 2 for transcripts of the interview schedules).

Interviews with young children

All of the informants within this study were pupils aged between four and eight years of age who were speaking and learning English as an additional language. The potential value of listening to children's thoughts and experiences is highlighted by Butler and Williamson (1994, p. 94). 'Only by listening to the meaning imputed to such experiences by the young people concerned, can those seeking to support them secure a measure of understanding of how they are affecting them'. Therefore, if we are to improve the experiences of EAL pupils within the Literacy Hour, we first need to know what those experiences are and how they affect the individuals concerned. It was considered important to adopt a 'credulous listening' approach, which entails taking seriously the viewpoint of each child and giving it the respect it deserves (Kelly, 1955; Greig & Taylor, 1998). It was hoped that a conversational approach to asking questions followed by gentle probes using developmentally appropriate

language would promote the communication process. However, due to my inability to speak more than a few words in any of the children's home languages, I was heavily reliant on their English language skills. In some instances, the verbal demands of the situation were too great and I was unable to elicit the depth of information that I would have hoped for.

'My interview with Dipak was frustrating for both him and me. I was keen to hear what he had to say and he was keen to tell me but the language difference made this impossible.'

(Field note extract, January 2003).

Due to the time constraints imposed on bilingual assistants within each school, I was unfortunately unable to involve them for translation purposes. On occasion, however, 'fluent' English speaking children with the same first language would voluntarily translate for me and in so doing provided valuable data from pupils who were only just beginning to learn English.

Today Aneela, a friendly Arabic speaking pupil joined in my conversation as a volunteer translator for Ameena (who had only been in the UK for six months). She translated my questions into Arabic and then translated the responses back to English with prowess. She was a resourceful 'co-researcher'.

(Field note extract, November 2002).

Participant and non participant observations

Observation enables the collection of direct evidence, it 'provides the opportunity to actually witness what is happening, rather than relying on what people say they do or what they say they think' (Denscombe, 1998, p.139). It can therefore enable similarities and differences to be identified between information obtained from interview and observational based sources.

Previous research (Birmingham County Council, 1995; Grugeon & Woods, 1998) together with teacher comments made during this study (see fieldwork findings Chapter 6) have highlighted perceived 'off-task' behaviour by EAL pupils within the 'carpet session.' It was felt that an observational schedule detailing pre-defined observable 'on and off' task behaviours could have been useful for capturing the behaviour of EAL pupils within the Literacy Hour 'carpet session.' An observational schedule was therefore developed, modelled upon the instrument designed by Day (1983 adapted by Tindall & Marston, 1990). This behaviour checklist was designed for use with kindergarten children. Whilst it is not meant to be an 'exhaustive account' of children's behaviour, '... it reflects the results of research, judgements about the developmental behaviour of young children, and goals of early education accepted by a diverse group of practitioners' (Tindall & Marston, 1990, p. 424). For such instruments to be reliable, each behaviour must be clearly defined so that observations can be made consistently and interpreted accurately (Tindall & Marston, 1990). I therefore decided to adapt the observation schedule to the 'carpet session' situation as much as possible (see appendix 3 for copy of schedule used). The original schedule was designed as a rating scale based upon the frequency with which the behaviours were observed 'consistently, sometimes, rarely or never'.

For the purpose of this study, I utilised a time interval approach (Denscombe, 1998), whereby I watched the target pupil at one-minute intervals for a total of ten minutes. In total, I utilised the checklist on ten separate occasions whilst observing five different EAL pupils. I also observed three monolingual pupils for comparative purposes. In practice, it proved difficult to identify what was 'on' and what was 'off' task behaviour within this setting. For example, on one occasion, Nasser was observed to be looking at the teacher whilst 'fiddling' with the Velcro on his shoe. In another

instance, Jacky was noted looking out of the window but when asked a question provided a correct answer. However, the data collected illustrated that the EAL pupils tended to conform externally to teacher expectations of behaviour. For example, EAL pupils often raised their hands to answer questions despite their inability to convey an answer in English.

A field note extract illustrates a typical finding:

I am again surprised at what I have seen today. Sitting with my checklist, I have not been able to tick off the 'off task' behaviours that I thought I would have seen. The pupils are all sitting hands in laps with legs crossed, looking at the teacher. This has continued for some ten minutes now. The only pupil not to do so is a monolingual white pupil who has been moved to sit right in front of the teacher. Once again, I have witnessed the teacher's firm classroom management style and interactive style of teaching.'

Fieldnote extract: October, 2002.

The observational schedule was therefore not considered to have 'fitness for purpose' for this particular study. Its use was therefore curtailed during the initial stages of the research. Consequently, preliminary observations of the Literacy Hour 'in action' consisted of unfocused watching to get an overall 'feel' for the situation. This progressively changed to more focused observations related to the aims of the study. To further enhance observations of the Literacy Hour, the sessions were audio taped to enable verbal interactions between teacher and pupils to be assessed. However, as Gregory (1996) has emphasised, EAL learners often have a 'silent period', of up to a year, where verbal responses are not forthcoming and should not be interpreted by the researcher as a lack of understanding.

As recommended by Delamont (2002), background information was obtained to ‘set the scene’ for the observational data. Details such as classroom layout and lesson materials were recorded. Participants’ physical movements, actions and gestures, as well as their speech, was recorded as much as possible, although this was dependent on the role of the researcher at the time. Burgess (1984), Ball (1984), Salisbury (1994) and numerous other researchers working in educational settings have referred to the fieldwork ‘duties’, ‘roles’ and work that they have undertaken. I too was cast into various ‘support roles’. In some instances, during participant observations, I had my ‘hands full’ as a classroom assistant and therefore recorded the information at the earliest possible opportunity after the event. My research diary records some of the ‘multi-tasking’ that is quite typical of ethnographers or observers in educational settings:

‘This morning after break Miss Pink asked me to help a group of pupils with their literacy task. Mindful of my need to keep access to her EAL learners I had to oblige. This meant however, that I was working in an adjoining room to the EAL pupils and could only observe them through the half open doorway. I had to wait until break time to record what I had seen’

(Field note Extract, October 2002).

Observational field notes

My field notes proved to be a rich and valuable source of information. From the beginning to the end of the project, I noted day to day information as well as the important decisions and critical incidents. The highs and lows, trials and tribulations were recorded in ‘black and white’ and served as a potent reminder as time eroded memories of ‘the field’.

As Delamont (2002, p. 59) notes ‘...our data are only as good as our field notes’. It is important therefore to incorporate contextual details. As reported above, it was not

always possible to record information immediately. Notes were often expanded when out-of-the-field, based on hurriedly scribbled notes. Indeed, during the second phase of the research, pupils became familiar with ‘my scribbles’ and often added their own ‘to help me with my work’.

Conversations with staff members and pupils were on an ongoing and often ad-hoc basis. The comments of individuals were recorded within my notebook as soon as possible. Exact quotations were identified by speech marks and where this was not possible the ‘gist’ of comments was noted via close paraphrase. At all times however, I strived to capture particular vocabulary. Whilst these encounters were not tape recorded, they do provide insights into individual perspectives offered in naturalistic conversation. It also enabled the identification of themes and issues to be explored in more formal interviews at a later stage.

Secondary data sources

Secondary data sources can provide a useful place to start with any investigation (Hakim, 1982) and provide the background to the study (Gorard, 2001). Given the research aims, it was considered essential that the study involved an analysis of relevant policy documents to depict historical and current policy thrusts on a local and more global level. As Delamont (2002) warns, it is important to acknowledge that policy documents are written within a particular social context. They are written within the pervading political ‘back drop’ and therefore provided important contextual information for this study, as exemplified in Chapters 2 and 3 which broadly review the relevant literature and policies. They also provided a framework for focusing upon how ‘policy’ was translated into everyday ‘practice.’ The secondary data used in this

thesis were diverse in form and produced not necessarily for a researcher audience.

The table presented below lists the different data sources and types which ranged from teachers' planning sheets to official Estyn Inspection reports.

Table: 5.8: An overview of types of secondary data used in this study.

School level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers planning documents - School schemes of work - School prospectuses - Estyn Inspection reports - Equal opportunities policies - Pupil records - Correspondence to parents.
LEA level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - County Council website - Literacy hour teacher guidance material - LEA Inspection report
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EALAW report - Policy documents - Estyn publications - Statistical reports - Estyn Inspection Framework document.
England/UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Central government policy documents - DfES publications - Ofsted publications - Statistical reports - SEU publications

The CAL Intervention

The context of this research offered the opportunity to carry out a ‘real-life’ investigation within the naturally occurring environment of the classroom. This quasi-experimental format focused upon the hypothesis that the use of a home language translation of a story would increase the number of English words correctly identified in a subsequent test compared to an English-only version of a comparison story. In addition, it was hypothesised that EAL pupils would provide more detailed story retellings as a result of the presentation of a story with a home language translation compared to an English-only version of a comparison story.

Details of the procedure, modes of analysis and a discussion of the results are provided in Chapter 7.

Data analysis

The use of a number of data collection strategies meant that both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. This enabled a number of data sources to be compared with each other, this between-method triangulation of the data is considered to improve the quality and accuracy of the data (Robson, 1993). The use of a number of data collection methods to address the research questions is considered to be an asset within this study. The different data types were analysed in appropriate ways and advice from the research methods literature and research training informed my approach.

Robson (1993, p. 370) suggests that for qualitative analysis ‘There is no clear and accepted set of conventions for analysis. Indeed many ‘qualitative’ workers would resist their development, viewing this enterprise as more of an art than a science’. For

this study, it was considered appropriate to undertake the process of ‘analytic induction’ (Silverman, 1993). Consequently, a range of thematic areas were developed after consideration of the data and in response to it. These areas were then expanded, refined and developed as more and more data were explored. Analytic memos were kept in a Research Diary and detailed indexes were built up listing sources against key themes.

The CAL intervention provided the opportunity to collect numerical data as a result of each pupils’ performance on the Pictorial Grid Test (PGT) and the Story Component Test (SCT). As Denscombe (1998, p. 183) acknowledges, making sense of this data ‘...is a process of artfully moulding, extracting and refining the raw data, so that the meaning and significance can be grasped’. By subjecting the data to statistical analysis the researcher is able to ‘...move beyond individual interpretations of the data towards some more *universal criteria* for assessing key facets of the data’ (Denscombe, 1998, p.192). Within this study, the use of analysis of variance (ANOVA) enabled the variability of scores between groups to be compared with that in the groups (Nunan, 1992).

Access negotiations for initial and ongoing fieldwork

Access was negotiated at multiple levels through various ‘hierarchies of consent’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lofland & Lofland, 1995). First of all, access was required from and granted by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) which employs the EAL teachers located within both schools. The main ‘gatekeepers’ at each school were the head teachers who also sought permission from the school governors. To aid this process, I wrote a letter outlining the study and offering to

disseminate findings to the governors at a later stage (see Appendix 4). Both schools granted formal access within a short period of time via short letters.

I considered it critical to have each class teacher ‘on side’ as I would be encroaching on their classrooms for a number of weeks. Indeed it is noted that any researcher needs to build good working relationships with staff in order to gain access and successfully complete fieldwork (Ball, 1984; Cohen & Manion, 1994). After securing agreement from both head teachers, it was thought unlikely that any individual teacher would have refused to participate. Nevertheless, I did not make that assumption and set about sensitive negotiations with individual teachers. I was aware of each individual’s right not to participate within this research if they chose not to. I therefore entered the field with some trepidation about the level of support that I would receive. In fact, every class teacher was very welcoming and helpful and aided the research process by being flexible in allowing me to interrupt their daily schedules. In return, I volunteered to work as an ‘extra pair of hands’ and was given a range of tasks from sharpening the pencils first thing in the morning to reading a story to the class at home time. The level of my involvement as ‘helper’ did vary between the two schools. The constraints of the school year meant that my time at Brownbrook during the second phase of the research was restricted and therefore priority had to be given to ensuring that all pupils completed the required number of computer sessions as well as the test instruments.

Despite the head teachers granting access, I found that I had to introduce myself and renegotiate access and explain my presence on a number of occasions. This is not untypical as Beynon (1984) notes. In hindsight, it would have been easier to explain

my role in a staff meeting and answer any questions that may have arisen, as I felt, initially, that staff on the periphery of the research were suspicious of my presence. This dissipated over time and as I familiarised myself with and entered into staff room discourse.

Informed consent

The British Sociological Association (BSA, 2001) guidelines were followed. Informed consent is considered the 'cornerstone' of ethical researching (Delamont, 2002; Heath, 2001). Individual staff members and pupils were given the option of participating following an explanation of the study. They were also advised that they had a right to withdraw from the research process at any time. As one pupil commented 'anything to get out of lessons!'

Arrangements to audio tape-record interviews

Permission was requested in advance for interviews with staff members to be tape-recorded. This was to provide an accurate record of events and also for ease of conducting the interview. However, as a result of past experience, I also jotted down notes about the key points as a supplementary measure. Teacher schedules and unforeseen disturbance - such as wet play time - meant that on a few occasions, interviews had to be stopped and restarted. The availability of tape-recorded versions of conversations proved very useful for 'picking up the thread' from previous discussions. The audio tape recording was optional. All participants agreed to being taped. There is however a potential dilemma between obtaining an accurate record of the interview and the possibility that it may inhibit responses.

It is suggested that fieldwork notes capture more ‘off guard’ comments made during the research process (Nunan, 1992; Denscombe, 1998).

Initial visits

The initial visits to both schools provided opportunities to ‘acclimatise’ and make myself familiar to both staff and pupils. This initial ‘feel’ for the research helped to generate and identify emerging themes which were then used to inform my research schedules. Perhaps due to the nature of the research, I was often reliant on other people to provide the information that I required and this caused unavoidable delays—as time pressures, illness and at times participants’ lack of knowledge thwarted the data collection process. For example, some teachers’ demonstrated a lack of knowledge concerning which languages were present in their classes and in particular the difficulties with translations into Sylheti (see Chapter 4).

The social context of the research field

Interview data are sometimes regarded as ‘contaminated’ because of the social context of the interview (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Indeed the interview is a data collection tool and a social phenomenon in itself. It is impossible to ignore how social dynamics, interpretation and the ‘researcher effect’ impact upon the data collected (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981). Interpretations based upon personality as well as cultural background, age, gender, skin colour, clothing and presumed social class are made by the interviewer and interviewee. This social interaction shapes what is revealed and what remains concealed (Heath, 2001). I was aware that during my stay within the schools, I was continually being judged and evaluated. The pupils seemed to view me initially as a classroom helper and later as the ‘not so clever Mrs Ellis’ (please refer to

'Fieldwork findings' Chapter 6). I feel that I was viewed with suspicion by some of the EAL teachers and bilingual assistants who perhaps felt more threatened by my research than did the class teachers. However, my application for and subsequent acceptance onto the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) for primary teaching whilst working within both schools, helped to give credibility to my identity among the teaching staff as 'one of them', rather than as an outside researcher. Indeed, on completing the school-based research, two of the teachers offered personal telephone contact numbers in case I needed any help whilst doing the PGCE course. From this I gauged that 'rapport' had been maintained! (Salisbury, 1994).

It is therefore important to build a rapport with the respondents in the hope of eliciting 'truthful' answers even though there is no guarantee or way of knowing whether a respondent provides a 'full' account (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981). Inevitably, regardless of how data are collected, both informant and researcher place their own interpretation on its context and purpose. It is also important to acknowledge that for everything that is noticed a multitude of things go unseen (Ball, 1984).

On designing the study, general textbook advice such as the importance of gaining the trust and building up a rapport with the children was heeded. Fieldwork roles within schools often involve the researcher in a range of activities (Ball, 1984; Salisbury, 1994) and indeed many hours spent as classroom 'assistant' and playground 'monitor' ensured that the children were familiar and relaxed within my company. However, I was still conscious of the power differential between myself as a monolingual white adult and the children, many of whom were only just beginning to learn English and become accustomed to the 'cultural rules' imposed by school life. In an attempt to

reduce this power differential, I often took part in playground games. I also found that by lowering the height of my chair during the computer sessions, I was able to negate the physical height difference between myself and the pupil. But perhaps the most important factor was my, very genuine, appreciation of their ability to speak in two and in some cases three or four different languages. I did feel humbled by this ability at such a young age.

Researcher bias and the dangers of 'going native'

My prolonged involvement at both schools over a number of months enabled me to gain the trust of both pupils and staff. During this time, I was cast within a variety of roles while I conducted my field work- these included classroom helper, playground monitor, apprentice teacher, insider and outsider. However, I was aware that the close relationships formed with key staff members and pupils could have resulted in researcher bias. Indeed, it was largely as a result of an emotional response that the project took this direction (Please refer to 'critical incident' as detailed in Chapter 4). From the initial stages, the research to some extent was influenced by my personal sympathies as both a researcher and mother towards the experiences of individuals just beginning to learn English as an additional language within the school system. As Robson (2002) notes, even when preconceptions and biases are acknowledged, they are not always easily abandoned. In particular, my interpretations as a white monolingual researcher may differ culturally from those of other ethnic groups. Attempts have therefore been made to 'render visible' the data - including the use of tape recordings during interview data collection and the publishing of exact quotations and field notes extracts where possible. My interpretations of certain events/ aspects of the research were also discussed in detail with my supervisors for an injection of

‘objectivity’ or at least an attempt at gaining analytical strangeness. ‘Making the familiar strange’ (Becker 1972; Delamont 2002) was an important strategy and describing incidents to my supervisors helped subsequent thematic analyses of data.

Confidentiality

All institutions and participants have been given culturally appropriate pseudonyms. This relevant ‘humanising’ textual representation is supported by more experienced researchers (see Delamont, 2002; Atkinson, 1981). However, the BSA (2001) guidelines warn of the ‘identifiable combination of attributes’ that informants and institutions can have. Thus key information may identify an institution or an individual to someone familiar with the research site. This creates a dilemma for balancing confidentiality with the needs of the study (Heath, 2001). I hope that this matter has been addressed with the sensitivity and care that it deserves.

Leaving the field

Temporal constraints of the school year structured the research timetable and, together with the impending start of the PGCE course, marked the point of exit. As advised within the ‘methods’ literature the door was ‘left open’ in case of further research opportunities. Thank you cards and small gifts were presented to staff and pupils. In addition, a range of bilingual story books (mainly Somali, Arabic and Albanian) were purchased for Redbridge school and funds provided to Brownbrook school for purchase of similar bilingual materials.

Justification for choice of schools.

Both schools were chosen for this research primarily due to the large number of ethnic minority pupils, many of whom speak English as an additional language, who attend them. They are considered typical of many inner city primary schools. They are in economically deprived areas, with a high proportion of children eligible for free school meals (see Chapter 5 for further details).

The chief aim of researching in two sites was to identify and analyse practices and experiences that were apparent across both schools and also to identify school-specific issues. It is suggested that because the schools reflect the ‘make-up’ of many inner city schools, the findings can be generalised to other schools in similar circumstances. As Denscombe (1998, p.36) wisely notes although ‘...each case is in some respects unique, it is also a single example of a broader class of things’.

Given that inner city schools across the UK are struggling to implement the Literacy Hour and make it meaningful for EAL pupils, there are likely to be similar pupil, teacher and institution specific experiences. The two sampled case study primary schools will inevitably have unique features but will also represent the wider groups of schools catering for a similar EAL learner population. It is estimated that there are currently over 632,000 pupils in schools in England recorded as having English as an additional language (DfES, 2003a). The DfES (2003a) statistics include those pupils who speak language like French and Dutch at home. In Wales, the recent EALAW report (2003) concentrated only upon surveying pupils from an ethnic minority. The report identified over 15,000 ethnic minority pupils in Wales, the majority of whom are learning English as an additional language. (A statistical depiction of the

multilingual pupil population is provided earlier in the dissertation on page 45).

Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) intervention in the home language

The context of this research offered the opportunity to carry out a ‘real-life’ investigation within the naturally occurring environment of the classroom. This quasi-experimental format focused upon the hypothesis that the use of a home language translation of a story would increase the number of English words correctly identified compared to an English-only version of a comparable story.

A comparison of the quasi-experimental format to the laboratory ‘ideal’

The experiment is often described as the ‘gold standard’ of research design due to its ability to test for cause and effect (Gorard, 2001; Robson, 2002). The ‘ideal’ experimental format is considered to be one which takes place under laboratory conditions. This enables greater control over extraneous conditions and therefore strengthens the claim that any observable difference between groups is a result of the treatment variable.

Within this study, an experimental design of this nature would have required a large sample size and random allocation of the subjects to one of two groups, the experimental and control group. The experimental group would have received the treatment i.e. the home language version of CAL, whilst the control group would have received the English-only version. However, for reasons described below, this design could not be realised in practice.

Sample size

Due to the language compositions of the schools within the area, a larger sample of EAL pupils meeting the relevant criteria was not available. The two sampled schools were chosen because their pupil populations contained the highest number of ethnic minority pupils available within the LEA. All of the pupils with Somali, Arabic and Sylheti as their home languages within the reception classes were included within the sample. These languages were specifically chosen because they represented the largest number of EAL pupils within the two schools. It was not considered appropriate to divide the sample into experimental and control groups for two reasons. First, the sample when broken down into constituent languages was considered to be too small. Second, if an experimental and control group format had been used, it would have been necessary to ensure comparability between groups. More detailed information concerning each individual's home language capability would therefore have been required. This type of information was not readily available from either school. Collection of home language assessment information was considered beyond the scope of this study. In the design that was adopted, the individuals acted as their own controls and participated in both the experimental and control conditions in a within-subjects design.

'Real-life' research

It is postulated that a laboratory setting would have provided more conclusive evidence of the effects of the CAL intervention within this study. However, it was not considered feasible, primarily due to the size of the available sample, the age of the children involved and the format of the research. The classroom setting as opposed to the laboratory setting provides a greater ecological validity. Whilst the intervention

was carried out with as much rigour as possible, the 'quasi-experimental' design gave the CAL intervention a lower level of internal validity. Robson (2002) acknowledges that one of the challenges inherent in carrying out investigations in the 'real world' lies in seeking to say something sensible about a complex, relatively poorly controlled and generally 'messy' situation. The validity of the findings was however strengthened by the triangulation of the results with other forms of data collection during this phase, including observational data and comments from pupils, parents and staff members.

Factors challenging the validity of the findings

The physical setting and pupil talk

By utilising the natural setting of the school and classroom (rather than a neutral laboratory context), there was a greater possibility that the normal, daily, social experiences of the pupils during the period of the intervention may have influenced the pupil's scores and results. For example, the novelty factor of home language usage within school may well have acted as a catalyst for pupils to discuss the stories with friends at playtimes or with their family members at home. Such conversations may have helped to increase their familiarity with each of the stories used within the CAL intervention. It is also possible that some of the target words may have been discussed even though they were not considered to be in general conversational use (Robbins & Ehri, 1994). Children interact with their peers, family members and teachers through talk and it is possible that the study pupils shared, rehearsed and used their new vocabularies which enhanced individual results in unanticipated ways.

Maturation

The time period between the beginning of the experiment (Day One) and the post tests on the last day (Day Four) was kept to a minimum. The tests consisted of a Story Component Test (SCT) which was carried out following the intervention on Day One and Day Four and a Pictorial Grid Test (PGT) carried out following the intervention on Day Four. A further PGT was completed some two weeks later. The four day period reflected the typical Literacy Hour format (the Literacy Hour was used by one school for four days and the other for five days). As noted by Robbins and Ehri

(1994), four exposures to unfamiliar words is considered to be the minimum number required to make retention of meaning possible. It is suggested that the repetition of the story, especially when using headphones, provided a rather sterile approach. In reality, it is considered more likely that the computer-based materials would be used for paired work and with the support of the activities being carried out as part of the traditional Literacy Hour format.

'Hawthorne effect' and being in the researcher's gaze

Discussing the challenges facing rigorous experimental procedures in the social sciences, Gorard (2001) points out that the simple fact of being in an experiment can affect subjects' behaviour. Put differently, simply by being in the 'researcher's gaze', participants often improve or show a change in behaviour. Within this particular study, which utilised a single case design (Franklin, Allison & Gorman, 1997), each pupil acted as their own control. It was considered likely that any possible Hawthorne effect would occur in both sets of story conditions hence also influencing the subsequent results from both story conditions. Of course, it is impossible to gauge to what extent being part of the 'special project with Mrs Ellis' actually impacted on pupil language outcomes. The majority of pupils involved however, appeared pleased to work with me and I remain grateful for their enthusiasm and willing participation.

Testing

The research design of the CAL intervention raised the potential for a possible experimenter effect. Where researchers know which group is which and what is 'expected' of each group during testing, they may subconsciously give cues to this in their behaviour (Gorard, 2001). During the period of testing I was aware of this

possibility and made every effort to guard against it by using a standard format. This meant that no advice or specific encouragement was given. I said the target word clearly and then pointed to each picture on the grid. For example, for the word 'consume' I said 'does it mean to 'swim', 'sing', 'eat' or 'play?' as I pointed in turn to the relevant corresponding pictures.

Messy realities of the intervention process.

Perhaps the most frustrating aspects of the intervention process were the delays and setbacks encountered whilst trying to obtain translated versions of the stories. I was able to 'scan and dub' the pictures and English vocals using 'Clicker 4' software over a relatively short period of time (see later sections below). However, obtaining suitable translations for the Somali, Arabic and Sylheti versions proved more difficult. Initially, I had hoped that bilingual assistants located within both schools would have been able to translate the stories for me, suitably recompensed for their time and effort. However, the bilingual assistant who had previously helped with Arabic translations felt unable to help further. She explained that she was only able to help during school hours and her time was fully utilised. I also approached the Somali speaking assistant and although she said that she did not feel confident to do the translations herself, she introduced me to her friend who was willing to help. However, there was a long delay before the completed translations were received and, unfortunately, the quality of the translations were not of an acceptable level for use within this study. A Sylheti speaking bilingual assistant had agreed to undertake the Sylheti translations. However, a long unforeseen period of sick leave meant that I was forced to seek an alternative option. Time was passing by and feelings of frustration were increasing. I therefore decided to contact a professional translation company

that, after a number of initial discussions, agreed to undertake the necessary work, but at a substantial cost. By involving an external company, a number of problems arose. Firstly, I had no control over the timescale, which was becoming increasingly protracted. When the first tape recording (Arabic version) was received, it was found to be of poor quality and had to be returned. This was replaced and the quality was improved. However, I was still awaiting the other two language versions. The translation company was encountering difficulties in finding a female Somali-speaking translator and after an extensive unsuccessful search it was agreed that a male translator had to be used (I had requested a female translator to avoid any possible gender effects when analysing the data). Unfortunately the quality of this recording was not as good as had been hoped, however it was decided to utilise it as time was running out. The ‘Sylheti’ translations were received shortly afterwards. However, on commencing the research it became apparent that the children did not understand the ‘Sylheti’ translations. I approached a parent who confirmed that the translations were in fact a version of Bengali and not Sylheti: hence the children’s confusion. Time was now critical as I had started the data collection process and desperately needed a correct translation. Fortunately, another Sylheti speaking bilingual assistant had begun working at one of the schools and agreed to assist. I was very grateful for her prompt attention to the translation which meant that I was able to recommence the intervention with minimal delay.

As the intervention progressed, a number of additional difficulties were encountered with the Arabic and Somali translations. These served to highlight the importance and value of ‘local knowledge’ when having materials translated. For example, the Arabic translation was described by the Bilingual Assistant as ‘official’ Arabic which

contained formal translations of the words rather than localised versions. In addition, there was some confusion caused by the tense used by the translator. Abdul, an Arabic-speaking mature student began to help in Redbridge school shortly after the study commenced. He explained that initially Arabic parents are likely to teach the present tense version of a word to their children. Unlike English, the present and past tense for an item can be completely different words. For example 'throw' is 'turmecha' [phonetic spelling] in the present tense and 'ramatnee' in the past tense. The majority of pupils were more familiar with the present tense than the past tense and unfortunately the past tense had been used within the translation.

In certain instances, it was also apparent that direct translations were not available for certain English words. For example, there was no equivalent word for 'crocodile' in Sylheti which was described within the story as a 'big fish'. In addition, certain words had more than one meaning. For example, audible and clamour were both described in Arabic by one word 'seylanee' (transliteration into Roman script). The children also commented that the Somali translator spoke too quickly at times and that they had experienced difficulty in following the translation.

As envisaged, the pupils' individual vocabulary levels in their first languages varied and this affected their ability to engage with the home language translation. Whilst some pupils were able to understand all or most of the home language version, others professed to understanding hardly any of it. The bilingual assistants advised that a few pupils had been assessed in their home languages and were found to be unfamiliar with the vocabulary for items such as colours or clothing. Obviously, this was likely to impact on their ability to understand the home language version of the story. Thus

many issues arose about the ‘translated versions’ highlighting the numerous factors in relation to vocabulary, dialect and accent which had hitherto been unanticipated.

Dialects

It also became apparent as the later fieldwork got underway that while pupils from an Arabic background were recorded as Arabic speakers, there were in fact two dialects present within both schools in the study. There was a Yemeni version and an Egyptian version of Arabic. A Bengali speaking parent also identified three types of Bengali: a formal version of Bengali, a mixture of Sylheti and Bengali, and Sylheti, which were being spoken by different pupils.

Overall, however, whilst not ideal, the translations were considered to provide an opportunity for pupils to gain a general understanding of the story.

The translation company was very expensive and did not seem to utilise ‘local knowledge’ when making the recordings despite being fully briefed as to the purpose of the translations and the ages of the children involved. By relying upon an external agency, I was limited in my ability to control the factors of time and quality. Had more time and more contacts within the local language communities been available, the research would have benefited from translations by local speakers, especially by individuals with previous experience in reading to young children. Future, more formal LEA based endeavours in this area would hopefully draw upon community resources and be able to commission more easily, readily useable ‘translations’ for primary pupils. These implications are addressed in the final section of the thesis.

Procedure for making the ‘Clicker 4’ Talking Book material.

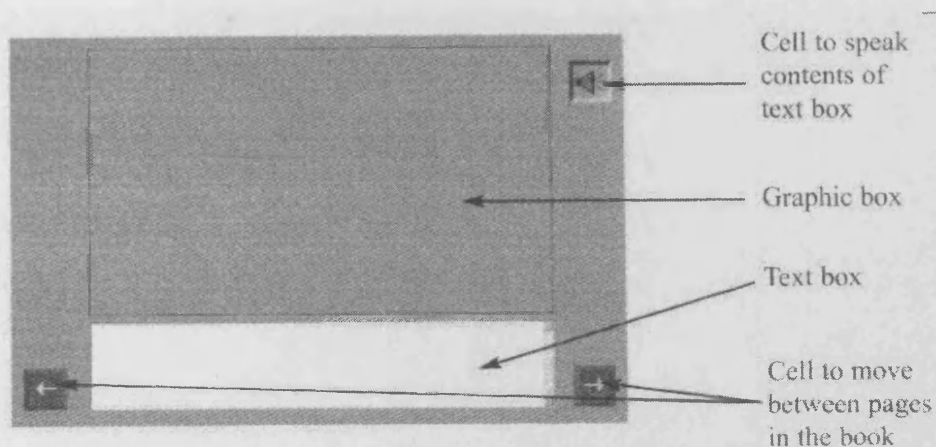
This section outlines how I developed new knowledge and skills with software that enabled me to ‘dub’ or import the home languages of EAL children into a user friendly software package.

For the purpose of this intervention, I utilised ‘Clicker 4’ software (Crick Software Ltd, 2002). I became aware of the potential of this software following an internet search of available products for making ‘talking books.’ Subsequent research identified that it was commonly used in primary schools within England and Wales. I ordered the relevant software and installed it onto my home computer. For school use, the software is currently priced at £90 for a single user licence and £20 for each additional user licence and for home use a single user licence can be purchased for £49 (Crick Software Ltd, 2005). A Clicker 4 User Guide (Crick Software Ltd, 2000) was provided with the software and a ‘Clicker 4’ Training Booklet (Crick Software Ltd, 2002) was also purchased for £10 which provided the necessary information to create a ‘talking book’. A website is available (www.clicker grids.com) which provides details of available products and technical support. It also includes a ‘Clicker Grids for Learning’ (CGfL) area which provides a range of ready made Clicker materials for use in the classroom.

I began the doctoral journey with very basic computing knowledge. The step-by-step Training Booklet and User Guides were very easy to follow and enabled me as a novice user to successfully complete the required task. Indeed, I was very pleased with the final products of my labour.

The 'Clicker 4' software provides talking book templates which can incorporate pictures, text and software speech. There are a range of template layouts available.

Figure:5.3: An example of a 'Clicker 4' template



(Source: Clicker 4 Training Booklet (CrickSoftware Ltd, 2002, p.45)

Each page of the talking book template is referred to as a 'grid'. Each page was created by making a new grid using the book making template. They were labelled numerically so that the computer opened each page in the correct sequence.

Graphics

Talking books can be created using photographs, pictures and video clips.

Unfortunately, for the purposes of this study, it was not possible to obtain the original story books of '*The Boy Who Cried Wolf*' (Littledale, 1975) and '*A Crocodile's Tale*' (Areugo & Areugo, 1972) as they were no longer available in print. It was therefore necessary to create new graphical images. These were hand painted using watercolours by a member of my family. Each picture was designed to illustrate the

main elements of the text for each individual page. For example, the grid below illustrates the little boy talking to the monkey.

Figure: 5.4: A graphical image from 'A Crocodile's Tale'



The hand painted pictures for each page of the story were scanned into the computer using an A4 scanner. These were saved as Jpeg files and imported into the relevant grid space within the 'Clicker 4' software programme.

Text

The text for each page was word processed into the text box on the grid. The font 'comic sans MS' was used so that the formation of the letters was familiar to the children, for example the letter 'a' was represented in the more typical format of 'ɑ'.

Sound

The 'Clicker 4' software comes with three computerised voices, 'Mary,' 'Mike' and 'Sam.' However, a recorded 'human' voice can also be used. For the purposes of this study, I used my own voice to 'speak' the English language version of the text automatically as each page was opened. To do this, I recorded my voice through a microphone using the 'sound recorder' in the 'accessories' section of Microsoft Windows. The sound recording for each grid was stored as a wav file (a sound file). For the home language versions of the stories, the translators recorded the translations for each page of the story onto a cassette tape. The cassette recorder was then connected to the microphone input on the computer and the sound recording for each grid was recorded using the 'sound recorder' and stored as a wav file. The wav files were then imported into the relevant 'Clicker 4' grids. Of course, these processes took up time but progressed researcher knowledge and 'technical know how' considerably.

The field note overleaf illustrates how the 'Clicker 4' materials were used by Khalil, a five year old Arabic speaking boy, for the first time.

Khalil: Close encounters with CAL

I am at Redbridge School and Khalil is using the home language materials for the first time today. He is familiar with the computer as he has used it on a number of occasions in class. He has good mouse control and is able to move the mouse to click on the relevant icons. We are going to listen to '*The Boy Who Cried Wolf*' story. I show Khalil how to click on the 'wolf' folder within 'Clicker 4' and then to click on 'grid 1'. This starts the first page of the story which shows a visual image of the 'boy' and the 'wolf' and has the title and author of the story in the text below. The English version of the text is automatically spoken as the page is displayed. I show Khalil the sound icon at the top right hand side of the screen. He clicks on it and is able to listen to the instructions for using the story in his home language of Arabic. We then click on the bottom right hand arrow to

move on to the next page of the story. After the picture on page 2 has become visible the text is automatically spoken in English (my voice). Khalil moves the mouse to enable him to click on the sound icon, he is then able to hear the page spoken in Arabic. He is very pleased to hear the Arabic and is smiling broadly! He tells me that he knows lots of Arabic words. He is keen to turn to the next page and clicks on the right hand arrow to move onto the next page without any assistance from me. Khalil listens to each page of the story in English then in Arabic. I point out the unfamiliar target words and we discuss the word meanings. When we come to the last page of the story, Khalil notices that there is no right hand arrow, just one on the left, which I explain is used to move backwards through the story. He wants to listen again, but there is not enough time and so I explain that he can do it again tomorrow...

(Field note extract: November, 2002)

Of particular note was the ease by which all of the pupils learned how to navigate through the screens adeptly 'flicking' backwards and forwards through the pages. There was also a tangible feeling of enjoyment when EAL pupils heard their home language relayed out through the sound system of the computer.

In preparation and to further refine the procedures and tests a pilot study was undertaken, the details of which are described overleaf.

The pilot study for the CAL intervention

Before embarking upon the full intervention within the two participating schools, where access was secure, a pilot project was undertaken. This provided the opportunity to examine the research procedures and instruments and to make final adjustments before the intervention commenced. Due to the unavailability of pupils with the required home languages (i.e. Arabic, Somali and Sylheti), the pilot study was carried out with eleven monolingual English pupils. The pilot study was implemented in a school situated within a different Local Education Authority where the head teacher and staff were happy to help. The reception class pupils were chosen by their class teacher as representative of the range of vocabulary levels within the class i.e. high, medium and low. In addition, the British Pictorial Vocabulary Scale - Revised (BPVS-R) (Dunn & Dunn, 1997) was administered to each individual and their scores recorded.

Method

Each child acted as his/her own control. They were randomly allocated to one of two groups. Group One received the crocodile story in the first week and the wolf story in the second week of the pilot study. Conversely, Group Two received the wolf story in the first week and the crocodile story in the second week to control for any possible order effects.

The first story was listened to by each child on four consecutive days. On each day, the meanings of the target words were discussed. On Day One and Day Four, the individuals were asked to retell the story to me and their responses were recorded. On Day Four, the pupils were also asked to complete a Pictorial Grid Test. This procedure was repeated for the second story in the second week. The individual pupil scores across both stories were then compared and no significant difference was found within and between the scores.

Pictorial Grid Test

In line with the format used by Robbins and Ehri (1994), a post-test only format was utilised. Robbins and Ehri (1994) had identified that the target words were low frequency words within children's literature and that they were also very low in frequency in conversations involving five-year-old children (Hall, Nagy & Linn, 1984). However, as part of the pilot procedure, five pupils who were not part of the CAL trial were asked to undertake the post-test without the benefit of hearing the stories. This was a precautionary measure to check that the pupils were not familiar with the target words. None of the pupils was able to identify the meanings of any of the target words (for example, clamour, toting and chortle). As a result, it was decided to add three words considered to be more familiar to the children to the list of target words. This ensured that all of the pupils experienced some success during the post-test. A total of 14 target words was therefore used for each story.

The suitability of the post-test pictorial representations was also evaluated. Five pupils not involved within the pilot study were asked to look at the pictures and point to the individual picture that they felt best represented the target word. Each target word was

explained so that the pupils were aware of the pictorial representation that they were trying to identify. For example, for the target word 'consume', the individual was advised that this meant 'to eat.' The pupils were then shown the four pictorial options and asked to point to the relevant picture. All of the pictorial grids were found to be representative of the specific target words. (An example of a pictorial grid is provided in Chapter 7).

Factors for consideration identified during the piloting process

Initially, pupils were given props relevant to the story (such as a plastic crocodile) to assist with the retelling of the stories. However, it was found that the props tended to distract the children. It was therefore decided not to use any physical or visual props for the story retellings during the actual intervention. It was also noted that some of the pupils seemed less comfortable with retelling the stories than other pupils. For example, 'John' who had a high vocabulary level, appeared reluctant to retell the stories. It is suggested that confidence in story retelling may affect pupils' ability to do so and consequently story retellings may not be an accurate measure of ability. In addition, it was noted that EAL pupils may be constrained by the language demands of retelling the stories in English. It was therefore decided to offer the option of retelling the stories in the home language. These would be recorded for subsequent translation.

The pilot procedure enabled me to gain a greater insight into the potential difficulties of the proposed study and in particular the likely time pressures. It highlighted the regular disruptions to the research process from typical school events such as assembly, break times and lunch times and the possibility that the class teacher may wish to keep the pupils in class for specific reasons, such as an explanation of a new

topic. Consequently, it was recognised that only six or seven pupils on average could participate in the intervention each day. This provided a more detailed insight into the likely length and structure of the research period, which was longer than had been anticipated previously. Indeed, the piloting of material albeit with a mixed ability group of monolingual English speaking pupils afforded me important glimpses and insights into the type of data I would eventually generate and the challenging contexts of routine primary school life.

Research strategies are revisited later in Chapter 7 which outlines the procedures and research design for the CAL intervention and subsequent statistical analysis. The first empirical chapter, Chapter 6, follows and presents a picture of EAL pupils' and teachers' experiences through field note and interview extracts largely qualitative in nature.

CHAPTER 6

Section Three

Chapter Six

EAL pupils, their teachers and experiences in the Literacy Hour

Introduction

This chapter draws together empirical material from two schools and four classrooms. The qualitative data derive from fieldwork conducted at Redbridge and Brownbrook Primary Schools where I was welcomed as a researcher. The chapter sections address the key research questions and combine together to portray the experiences of pupils, teachers and others who face the challenge of the Literacy Hour. The chapter highlights important issues and provides a contextual backdrop to the CAL intervention which is reported later.

How do EAL pupils experience the Literacy Hour?

There is a paucity of published research on the experiences of EAL pupils within the literacy hour. Indeed, there is little work on such pupils' experiences at school generally (Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000). However, the information that is available highlights the frustration and disillusionment felt by many pupils who are only just beginning to learn English as an additional language (Grugeon and Woods, 1990; Gregory, 1996).

By utilising interview and observational data as well as fieldwork notes, it has been possible to develop a greater awareness of the experiences of EAL pupils within the literacy hour and in particular during what is commonly known in the teaching profession as the ‘carpet session’. This involves pupils sitting in a carpeted area of the classroom with their teacher. The physical setting appears informal but clear aims frame this activity. During this initial part of the lesson, the Big Book (the featured text for the week) is read out aloud by the teacher who subsequently poses a range of questions and manages a pupil discussion which focuses on key words and the target language of the week.

As an initial starting point and to gain a better understanding of the literacy hour I asked some EAL pupils about their own experiences of the ‘carpet session’. An awareness of expected behaviour and a willingness to please their teachers were clearly evident from their responses.

‘I sometimes don’t know what the book is about- I just look at the teacher and pretend that I do.

(Maya, aged 5)

‘The teacher she like you to put your hand up- I do, but I don’t know the answer’.

(Desai, aged 5)

Such compliant pupils had clearly learned the hidden curriculum ‘pleasing teacher’ rule. An awareness of this willingness to please was also echoed by one of the teachers at Brownbrook school, who felt that it was also a firmly-rooted cultural expectation.

‘Teachers are seen as high status particularly in the Bengali community...’.

(Mr. Malik)

This teacher also commented on the fact that many of the pupils attended after-school classes at the local Mosque and due to the formal style of instruction were used to sitting still for long periods of time.

Whilst pupils outwardly did not seem to exhibit signs of boredom or frustration, their comments highlighted inner feelings of frustration. In particular, the speed of interactions and the inability to 'keep up' with the discussion were highlighted as areas of difficulty.

'The teacher speaks too quick and I can't keep up'.

(Nazira, aged 6)

'The teacher she say it in English, I have to change to Somali, think of the answer and say in English, by then the teacher she moved on and left me'.

(Hassan, aged 5)

When this information was later tactfully conveyed to the class teacher she seemed genuinely surprised that the pupils translated the English into the home language before answering and commented:

'That's interesting- I had never really thought about it before'.

(Miss Field)

It appeared from this preliminary fieldwork that several class teachers had not received INSET or training on working with EAL pupils and had not actually considered some of their pupils' coping strategies.

Some pupils were also aware of the dual task that they were undertaking and the compounding demands of learning a new language and trying to learn the curriculum at the same time. One year two pupil captured this well when he told me:

'I speak good English now- but when I was younger it was really hard. You try to learn things but when you don't know what they mean how can you?'

(Ahmed, aged 7)

EAL pupils also spoke of an awareness that their monolingual peers were not 'standing still' whilst they were learning English:

'I was dead jealous of some of the other kids, they knew it already [English language] so all they had to do was learn the stuff in class... but I can speak good now, so it's not a problem'.

(Moir, aged 6)

In her own mind, this pupil felt that she had 'caught up' with her monolingual peers. Yet Cummins (1996, 2000) suggests that learning a second language can take some five to seven years. The following term, this pupil was due to move to the Junior school. It is therefore pertinent to consider what effects this may have on her perceptions of her language skills and whether the use of more 'academic' language and less context-based activities will disadvantage her learning. Will she once again feel the frustrations experienced previously or has she progressed sufficiently to cope within the school system? Cummins (2000) highlights the importance of knowledge about language for successful academic development. As children progress through the education system, they encounter more low frequency vocabulary and more complex grammatical structures. The demands placed upon memory, analysis and other cognitive processes therefore become greater.

The attainment of ‘sufficient’ English is considered an important hurdle by both pupils and teachers alike. Of course, what is meant by ‘sufficient’, ‘adequate’ or ‘basic’ may differ. The varied views from the teachers I observed during the fieldwork demonstrate this:

‘They need basic English to survive in class because obviously I don’t speak their language.’

(Miss Field)

‘We need to help them speak English as quickly as possible so that they can understand what is being taught.’

(Mrs Black)

‘Once they have sufficient English, they cope much better with the curriculum.’

(Mrs Green)

One pupil commented aptly:

‘If you can’t understand English you are stuck’

(Atia, aged 6)

Pupils also spoke of their frustration when their language abilities did not match their cognitive abilities, of knowing the answer but being unable to express it ‘in words’.

‘I know the answer in my head in Arabic but not in English.’

(Fazila, aged 5)

‘Sometimes I really want to answer the question but I just can’t speak in English that well yet’ (response from a beginner EAL pupil translated by a more advanced EAL pupil).

(Rohale, aged 5)

‘The teacher she don’t think I know the answer but I do know it, I just can’t get it out’.

(Arvind, age 5)

They also commented on strategies that they used to help them cope with the literacy hour, including their use of pictorial cues:

'If it is a good book, you can tell a lot of the story from the pictures'.

(Meara, aged 6)

Conversely, pupils were aware that the context of the story, via its illustrations did not always help them. They also reported that observation of peers was a useful strategy when unsure of what was required, their pupil roles cast them into astute 'participant observers' enabling them to maintain credible and appropriate pupil behaviours:

'I sometimes don't get what to do, so I wait and see what everyone else do and then I do it too'.

(Maruar, aged 5)

These young learners had already learned to cope by trying to emulate peers, giving the appearance that they understood what was required of them.

Teacher perspectives of the Literacy Hour

I was able to speak to class teachers, support teachers and bilingual assistants and build up an early picture of some of the challenges encountered by EAL pupils in the ways schools operationalised the Literacy Hour. The teachers expressed concerns about the actual value of the Literacy Hour for their EAL pupils. An EAL support teacher (employed specifically to support the literacy hour) in Redbridge school commented:

'I think the Big Book is, as a visual aid, very useful. In this particular case- with support from an EAL teacher and sometimes an SEN teacher as well- it is very valuable. Without support from an EAL teacher EAL pupils would find it virtually impossible to access it at times.'

(Mrs Ridge)

'The carpet session provides the opportunity for the teacher to model appropriate language for EAL pupils. Sometimes though they cannot follow that language'.

(Mrs Green)

Whilst the majority of EAL pupils that I observed, appeared to have conversational fluency, it was apparent that semantic knowledge i.e. an understanding of the meaning behind the words was, at times, lacking. This is illustrated within the following field note captured during the observation of a carpet session:

Today the year one class read a story about a pig. As a follow-up activity, pupils were invited to make words ending in 'ig' using magnetic letters on the whiteboard at the front of the class. Naeem has been chosen by the teacher to make a word: he has chosen to make the word 'wig.' The class teacher praises him for correctly spelling the word with the magnetic letters. She then asks him what 'wig' means. Naeem looks unsure and so the teacher asks the rest of the class. Lots of hands go up - the teacher chooses Ahmed who replies that 'wig' is 'when you begin to wiggle.' (A very creative and innovative response!) The teacher says 'good try but not right' and chooses a monolingual English pupil to respond who answers that 'it is not real hair that bald people wear'. Another EAL pupil is then chosen to make a word and correctly spells out 'gig'. The class teacher asks if anyone knows the meaning of this word. A few hands go up: the creativity of Ahmed's previous response is capitalised on when Asma says 'gig is when you start to giggle'.

(Field note extract: October, 2002).

The difficulties experienced by EAL pupils in following teacher explanations was noted within the following field note:

The year two class are discussing a story about Autumn: the teacher asks the children what a 'twig' is. The majority of monolingual pupils but only three EAL pupils put their hands up. The teacher is trying to explain what it is, but there are a lot of blank expressions. The teacher looks in desperation at the EAL support teacher (who is sitting to the side of the class teacher) who then offers to go and get one from outside. She returns shortly after with a twig for all to see. This impromptu use of a visual aid enables all of the pupils to make a connection to the word 'twig'. (I wonder whether there is an equivalent word for twig in the pupils' home languages to help 'solidify' this connection?)

(Field note extract: September, 2002.)

The class teachers were also aware of various limitations of the Literacy Hour. For example, a number of them referred to the requirement to participate within discussions and the difficulties caused for EAL pupils by a lack of vocabulary:

'It is difficult for EAL pupils to enter into general discussions. They just don't have the language to do so.'

(Miss White)

'Reception and year one in particular find the Big Book sessions difficult. By year two they tend to be alright because their language is okay.'

(Miss Pink)

'Brighter children cope quite well. Slower learners have a double handicap- their cognitive ability and their language level.'

(Mrs Ridge)

'Its too hard for a lot of EAL pupils because they do not have the vocabulary they need.'

(Mrs Anwar)

'The literacy hour is not beneficial for EAL pupils- its too hard for them, they need very, very basic work to do with vocabulary. They can't sit in front of the Big Book- well they can but half of the time it goes over their heads and they get bored. Unless its got good pictures and then they are just sitting there then!'

(Miss White)

This perceived unsuitability of the Literacy Hour was highlighted in the case of Nassar. He had only recently arrived in the UK and was thought to have a very limited understanding of English. He had not yet spoken in English. Nassar was removed from the literacy sessions almost on a daily basis. The class teacher justified this on the basis that:

'It wouldn't be fair to keep him in here. He has no understanding of what is going on- he gets bored on the carpet.'

(Miss White)

When removed from the carpet session, Nassar would occasionally receive bilingual support - although this was not on a regular basis as the bilingual assistant was not 'timetabled' to work with this class during the literacy hour. Clearly there were both resource and temporal constraints impacting upon the level of available support for Nassar. The following field-note illustrates how he spent his time:

The class has just settled down to begin the carpet session. The EAL teacher pops her head around the door and asks the teacher 'Is Nassar staying today?' The class teacher decides that 'there's no benefit in him staying' and he is taken by the EAL teacher to the room next door. Here he spends his time playing on his own in the sand and water trays. The EAL teacher is in the room with him but is busy preparing the resources for the written activities to follow shortly after the reading of the Big Book.

(Field note extract: October, 2002).

As an observer, it is difficult to see how this solitary play would be of any benefit to Nassar and his subsequent language development. His 'time out' of the mainstream classroom activities were certainly not always language enhancing experiences.

The teachers did however report using specific strategies within the literacy hour to try to make it more accessible for EAL pupils. These included differentiating questions to make them easier to understand, the use of visual aids and the option to point to things

rather than say the answer. Even with these strategies in place, the teachers expressed concern about how beneficial the ‘carpet sessions’ were.

‘I explain things more, in more detail but I’m not always sure that they have understood - even if they say they have.’

(Miss Pink)

Field notes of carpet sessions taken by this particular teacher capture her quest to check for understanding:

Today the class teacher is recapping on the use of capital letters and full stops. She has written some sentences on the whiteboard and has asked individual pupils to come out and correct them (they are all missing some capital letters/ full stops). This is quite time consuming - I’ve noticed the teacher glance at her watch, it must be time to move on. She asks all the pupils if they understand- lots of nodding in response (the teacher doesn’t look convinced!).

(Field note extract: October, 2002).

The class teacher is keen to check that all the pupils understand the word ‘scared’. She asks them to think of another word for scared and waits for the hands to go up. Five pupils respond (3 monolingual and 2 EAL pupils). She then asks the pupils why they think the little bear was feeling scared/ have they ever felt scared... Lots of probing questions- yet the same hands seem to be going up. The teacher has however started to choose pupils who have not raised their hands. Handa is asked if she has ever felt scared- she shrugs her shoulders (As an observer, it is not clear whether she has understood the question and if so, whether she has the vocabulary to respond...)

(Field note extract: October 2002).

Many of the teachers seemed to make an assumption that children would ‘just pick up’ English as a second language. Their ‘lay’ models of language acquisition were linked to notions of ‘absorption’. This general apathy is captured within the following teacher comments:

‘You just have to be patient, they pick it up [English language] eventually’.

(Mr Grey)

'I just keep repeating things over and over and keep it as simple as I can. It takes time but they get there in the end.'

(Mrs Black)

Mrs Anwar felt that she was unable to differentiate the level of the discussion sufficiently for the full range of learners in her care. She expressed a certain fatalism about 'short changing' some.

I have pupils who can't say a word of English on a continuum right through to a gifted pupil- how do you pitch a discussion to suit both? Its impossible, someone will always lose out'.

Mr Grey in Redbridge school admitted:

'I often teach the majority of stuff to the middle masses and throw in the odd question to high achievers to relieve the boredom and questions for the low achievers to stop them switching off completely'.

Research by Cummins (1996; Collier & Thomas, 1999) highlights the importance of providing work at the cognitive level rather than at the language level of EAL learners.

All of the teachers interviewed shared their concerns about the level of work that they were providing their EAL pupils. As the following teacher comments illustrate:

'I know that you are supposed to start from what they know already. The theory sounds good - its wonderful on paper. But in reality, it's just not possible. With the best will in the world you cannot do it'.

(Mrs Hill)

'To do so, I'd need to tap into their first languages. I just haven't got the bilingual support available to do this'.

'You are supposed to start with what they know and build from there. But when they don't know their letter sounds and can't write their own name - even in year two - how can you?'

(Miss Field)

Both teachers were clearly frustrated with the specific challenges presented by the Literacy Hour for some EAL children. Due to the reliance on English language as the medium for the literacy hour, teachers were seemingly required to focus upon the 'perceived' language deficit of the pupils. Consequently, class teachers reported difficulties in matching tasks to cognitive ability due to the inherent language demands of such tasks. As a result, activities tended to be rather simplified with teachers aware that they were probably not 'extending' their EAL learners' repertoires in English very greatly.

One teacher in Redbridge school referred to the specific ways in which he set about differentiating for pupils:

'I differentiate my lessons in four different ways according to ability. For EAL pupils, my differentiation is accentuated by the language differences. It's not their ability as such it's their language skills that I have to use as the basis.'

(Mr Grey)

'It's very hard to pitch activities and questions at the right level when children do not understand what you are talking about.'

(Mrs Anwar)

'We tend to simplify the tasks to meet their language.'

(Mrs Black)

Observational field notes on a number of occasions highlighted this simplification of tasks and in particular the increased number of ‘colouring-in’ or simple craft activities unrelated to the development of language.

The children have been sent to their small groups following the carpet session and the reading of the Big Book. The more able pupils are writing sentences to describe their favourite bear (My favourite bear is...) whilst the less able are filling in a close procedure relating to the bear story. The table with EAL pupils is colouring in items beginning with the letter ‘b’- (for bear) this ‘colouring in’ seems a regular occurrence!

Field note extract: March, 2003.

Additional support for EAL learners

The main strategy for supporting pupils within the Literacy Hour within both schools was the use of EAL teachers. They were funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS). Both the class teachers and EAL teachers when interviewed considered the primary role of the EAL teacher to be to increase pupils’ English language vocabulary. It was the policy of both schools to do this on a withdrawal basis. This was considered beneficial to remove the distractions of the class, so that pupils were more likely to remain ‘on task’, focused and with a quieter atmosphere to assist their concentration.

Funding for EAL support was based on the number of ethnic minority pupils on the school roll. Whilst both sets of staff from Redbridge and Brownbrook schools were happy with the current level of EAL support, there was a general consensus that ‘you can always do with more.’ EAL support within both schools was shared between classes and focused mainly on literacy based sessions - in line with the commonly cited objective of developing English vocabulary.

The main benefits of EAL support were seen as the acquisition of English vocabulary and the increase in children's confidence in using the English language. One teacher also stressed that the main benefit was to 'free up' the teacher to help other pupils in the class. EAL pupils were often viewed as 'support intensive' and with class sizes averaging between 20 to 30 pupils this made it difficult for the teachers to service the needs of all of the children in the class.

Most surprisingly, all of the EAL teachers interviewed reported having no specialist qualifications for teaching English as a second language. They had received no formal training apart from 'an occasional EMAS run course'. Two of the EAL teachers cited prior experience of working with EAL pupils in other inner cities in the UK prior to moving to this location. However, they did not have any formal qualifications for teaching English as a second language. Most notably, a recommendation made by the LEA (CCC, 2002) following the 'Best Value Review of the English as an Additional Language Service' was to set up a Post Graduate Masters Course in Bilingual Education in Edinburgh University specifically for EMAS teachers. Clearly, the training deficit was acknowledged by the LEA and this initiative was to provide a solution.

Both the class teachers and EAL teachers reported that they worked collaboratively to plan for their EAL pupils. Feedback and briefing between these staff was often informal on an 'as and when' basis. It appeared that structured meetings and language schemes of work jointly created by class teachers and support staff were utilised on an 'ad hoc' basis. The EAL teachers at both schools, to a degree, supervised the work of the bilingual assistants. Clearly there were opportunities for considerable tensions

around the lines of reporting between school staff where EAL pupils were concerned.

The following comments by EAL support teachers highlight the informal nature of the ‘tracking’ of EAL pupils’ achievements:

‘I keep the class teacher up to date, as and when necessary’.

(Mrs Ridge)

‘The class teacher oversees my work, so she can see how they are doing’ ... ‘If she [class teacher] wants to know then she usually asks’.

(Mrs Green)

‘My work isn’t really related to the Literacy Hour as such - I’m working on really, really basic vocabulary to do with colours, numbers and simple vocabulary. We don’t do sentences yet- so the class teacher just lets me get on with it.’

(Mrs Ridge)

In turn, the class teachers acknowledged that the objectives for beginner EAL pupils did not often match those used in the Literacy Hour:

‘My beginner EAL pupils are often withdrawn for extra support. This support is to help them build up their vocabulary on an ongoing basis, so it’s not really linked to the weekly [Literacy Hour] objectives’.

(Miss Field)

‘The EAL support teacher is very experienced- I leave it to her to decide what to do. She keeps me updated when necessary.’

(Mrs Hill)

Bilingual assistants

The role of bilingual assistants in LEA documentation is primarily considered to be to support individuals or small groups of pupils in the home language. An example of good practice provided for the Literacy Hour is for the bilingual assistant to share the featured text in the home language (CASE, 2002). As a strategy within the Literacy Hour the use of bilingual support was a feature of both Redbridge and Brownbrook schools.

However, their use was often on a ‘piecemeal basis,’ as the following field note illustrates:

Mrs Anwar was pleased to have some bilingual support this morning. This was a bonus as she doesn’t normally have any today: In fact she hasn’t had any all week as the bilingual assistant has been directed elsewhere. She quickly allocates some beginner EAL pupils to talk about pictures in a reading book. Mrs Anwar finds that the irregularity of support makes it very difficult to plan in advance and integrate bilingual support within her lesson plans.

(Field note extract: November, 2002).

A review of the literature uncovers a plethora of sources that highlight the perceived benefits of bilingual support. However, the reality for many classrooms is that this support is not always feasible. It is not untypical for a range of languages and dialects to exist within a class which cannot all be catered for. Within the featured schools, there were up to eight different languages within a class and in turn, some of these languages also had a range of dialects. For example during the initial stages of my intervention work, I identified two varieties of Arabic and three forms of Sylheti/Bengali within one class.

The head teachers at both schools, when interviewed, reported difficulty in finding bilingual support for every language represented within the school population. As one head teacher stated:

‘Bilingual assistants are not that easy to come by- there is often a cultural ‘block’ on women working even within the school. In particular I find Sylheti speaking assistants hard to find.’

(Mrs Brook)

Whilst a certain amount of bilingual support was provided by the LEA’s Ethnic Minority Achievement Service, this support was not always considered sufficient in

terms of the amount of support received and the range of languages it covered. The high costs of funding such bilingual support restricted the schools' efforts to 'buy in' additional support. As one head teacher commented, her solution was to 'share' staff:

'I have to share my bilingual support with another school - the funding just doesn't go far enough'.

(Mrs Bridge)

Consequently bilingual support at both case study schools was targeted at the languages that were most prevalent. For the languages not supported, this may represent a 'double whammy' of exclusion from the curriculum. Due to funding constraints bilingual support tended to focus upon pupils in the very early stages of English language acquisition. Consequently, pupils considered to be 'more advanced' in their English language development did not tend to receive bilingual support. As one year two class teacher from Redbridge school explained:

'I don't receive any bilingual support. It seems to be concentrated on reception and year one. It's a case of using it where it is needed most- but there are plenty of children in my class who would really benefit from it'.

(Miss Pink)

An EAL support teacher at Brownbrook school also noted that:

'Lots more bilingual support would really help the Junior school pupils, especially in more abstract topics such as history and science, but our resources are stretched to the limit and we just can't do all the things we would like to do'.

(Mrs Bush)

Indeed one class teacher noted from her experience that:

'The number of EAL pupils is increasing year on year but the resources are not increasing in line'.

(Mrs Hill)

Fieldwork across both schools revealed several issues and concerns around the supply and use of bilingual support teachers. A clear message from both head teachers was that the school populations of EAL children could benefit further with more specialist

support.

The role of the bilingual assistant

Throughout the preliminary fieldwork and exploratory conversations with staff, no mention was made of using the home languages in class. This was surprising as the schools both conveyed a 'community feel' in their Equal Opportunities policies. Demonstrating respect and value for the languages of the local community, by means of displays and language celebration would convey to pupils and their families a more inclusive curriculum.

A recurring theme across the data and one that the teachers and bilingual assistants all agreed upon was that the role of the bilingual assistants was:

'To widen the English vocabulary, settle them in and learn English in general really'.

(Miss White)

Views differed widely on the value of bilingual assistants in the classroom. One teacher explained:

'Its nice if you can get it but I don't see it as essential'.

(Mrs Hill)

In contrast, other teachers felt that such bilingual assistants were a very necessary resource for EAL learners:

'It's important for the younger pupils to have home language support - particularly in English lessons'.

(Miss Pink)

'It's not fair on the child, other class members or the teacher. They need bilingual support and lots of it - but that just doesn't happen.'

(Mrs Black)

When questioned however, given the choice of additional support, all of the teachers

opted for additional EAL rather than bilingual support as they felt that more pupils could be catered for.

'Bilingual support is usually one to one or small groups depending on how many pupils speak that language and need the extra help. If I have EAL support then six or eight children may be withdrawn - this allows me to concentrate on the rest of the class'.

(Mrs Hill)

This teacher's concentration on 'the rest of the class' suggests that she found the withdrawal of small groups somewhat liberating in that it allowed her to focus:

'When the beginner EAL pupils are taken away, I can step up a gear with the rest of the class. I don't have to keep trying to simplify things'.

During my observations of the work of the EAL teachers with small groups of EAL pupils, the focus tended to be on basic vocabulary development.

I observed a withdrawal session in Brownbrook this morning. The EAL teacher used flashcards to aid delivery of the lesson. The topic was 'colours' : pupils were asked to point to items of specific colours. No reference was made to home language colour equivalents.

(Field note extract: May, 2003).

My interviews with a number of bilingual assistants highlighted the fact that none of them had been given specific training, although one by her own volition was hoping to enrol on a teaching assistant course.

The Best Value Review of the English as an Additional Language Service document (CCC, 2002, p .8) cited an objective by September 2002 to 'Ensure all bilingual staff are on an accredited training programme at an appropriate level from NVQ2, NVQ3, NNEB, Degree, PGCE or overseas teacher training programme'. However, Estyn (2003a, p.9) *Survey Report: EMAG Effective Use of Resources* notes that whilst

bilingual assistants are encouraged to follow a qualification such as NVQ 2,

'These courses require a great deal of personal commitment and the length of time taken to complete them is often a barrier to staff attainment'.

All four bilingual assistants interviewed within this study had *'picked up what to do on the job'* although they often seemed unclear of their specific objectives - other than *'to get them speaking more English'*. In fact, it was noted that the bilingual assistants often spoke in English to the bilingual pupils, perhaps reflecting the overarching aim to help with English language development rather than the support and development of bilingualism.

It is a wet and wintry Thursday afternoon. I am helping a group of children in Mrs. Anwar's class with a craft activity. Mrs. Hanif, the Arabic speaking bilingual assistant, has arrived to work with Desai. The teacher asks her to help Desai with his graded reading book. Mrs. Hanif takes Desai to a quieter part of the classroom. Desai seems reluctant to leave his artwork. The rest of the class are immersed in a range of practical activities including painting and sand and water play. I am able to wash some paintbrushes near to where Desai is sitting. Mrs Hanif starts by discussing the pictures - both speak in English to do this. Desai says an occasional word but the bilingual assistant is doing most of the talking. I wonder what the discussion would be like in Arabic? Why aren't they using Arabic? Mrs.Hanif's English by her own admission is 'not very good'- so why is she acting as a role model for English? They continue to read through the book solely in English- no Arabic is spoken at all.

(Field note extract: November, 2002)

Observed incidents like this one led me to reflect on 'language in use' in the whole class, small group and individualised sessions. In the next section, the use of the home language and teachers' views on this are discussed.

Teacher perceptions of the benefits of home language usage within school

It became apparent that there was no consensus at the school level as to how much individual teachers should or should not use home languages within their classes. None of the teachers had received any formal training for working with EAL pupils and none had received any additional information or guidance following the introduction of the literacy hour on how to use it effectively with EAL pupils.

The lack of available courses appeared to be acknowledged by the recommendation within the *Best Value Review English as an Additional Language* document (CCC, 2002) to offer INSET sessions on issues such as 'Racial and Equal Opportunity Issues' and 'Inclusion'. However, Estyn (2003a, p. 8) acknowledges that despite many larger LEAs offering good quality courses, '... mainstream teaching staff do not see this as a priority for their personal or professional development and therefore do not access courses'.

The majority of teachers interviewed acknowledged the benefit of the home language in times of distress. They described how older EAL pupils are used in some social or crisis situations:

'Sometimes we have to get a pupil from the Juniors to come down and speak to a child in the home language to find out why they are upset'.

(Miss White)

'The home language is very useful to settle pupils down'.

(Mrs Silver)

Clearly these staff appreciated the value of the home language in certain situations.

However the individual teacher's openness to home language usage within their own classrooms was found to vary greatly even between teachers working in the same school. For example, at Redbridge, the year two teacher said that she would actively encourage pupils to converse in the home language if she felt it was beneficial.

'I don't get any bilingual support but sometimes I pair pupils with very limited English with more fluent speakers and then they translate my instructions and things to them'.

(Miss Pink)

Thus Miss Pink used some more competent pupils as peer tutors and facilitators. In contrast, another teacher, Mrs Anwar, specifically prohibited home language usage between pupils, preferring instead to rely upon the support of bilingual assistants for this purpose:

I've been helping in class today, supporting a mixed ability group of EAL pupils. I'm sitting next to Meara who appears competent in English (from our computer work her Arabic seems to be very good) and Zuleka who has recently arrived in the UK and is only just beginning to learn English. The class teacher has explained the task but Zuleka does not understand what to do. I ask Meara to translate the instructions for Zuleka- but the teacher stops the translation by saying 'Please don't encourage them to speak that in class. We do value the home language but we don't use it in here because we are all here to learn English'. I felt quite uncomfortable and embarrassed but my chief reaction was empathy to the confused child Zuleka who was struggling to be involved.

(Field note extract: February, 2003)

In a different classroom, I also noted a teacher assistant reprimanding a pupil for using his first language.

Arvind has just returned to class- he really enjoyed using the computer today. He gave me a sticker for my pronunciation and has given me two new words not in the story to remember for tomorrow (I have hastily written the phonetic version down to aid my memory!). Arvind has also picked up a few new home language words and has gone back to class. I can hear him telling Ahmed them in Somali. The teacher's assistant has just interrupted this pupil dialogue and

stopped Arvind saying quite sharply, 'Stop speaking Somali now - we don't use it in here'.

(Field note extract: May, 2003).

Pupils speaking in their own languages and trying to learn or convey English equivalents in their 'own tongues' are clearly receiving very mixed messages.

The bilingual assistants were also aware of the different teacher attitudes towards home language use. A bilingual assistant at Brownbrook school acknowledged that she was given a more active bilingual role in some classes than others. She noted that:

'I'm not as involved in this class as I am in others. She [class teacher] doesn't let me do as much in Sylheti. I tend to speak mostly in English- I think the teacher prefers it that way'.

(Miss Patel)

Such disparate attitudes and teacher reactions to home languages were probably conveyed to learners. Conflicting messages were therefore being sent to the children regarding the value being placed upon the home language by different adults within the same school environment.

Indeed, some pupils were very reluctant to interact in their home language when I first introduced them to the computer programme and needed clear reassurance that they were 'allowed' to speak in it. They did not want to incur the wrath of their teachers or other staff.

Whilst teacher responses to home language use in their classroom varied, all of the teachers welcomed the work of the bilingual assistants - usually in the form of withdrawal from class. All of the teachers when asked, felt that computer-based home language materials would be useful, particularly for beginner bilinguals. However the

mere presence of such resources is not enough. It would require the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers to make their use a success. I wondered in certain instances whether the teachers would in practice use these resources. I felt that I had built up good relationships with all of the class teachers and I respected their teaching abilities. So were they just saying what I wanted to hear? Would they in reality continue with the home language computer programmes in my absence? The majority of teachers within Redbridge school had already received New Opportunities Funded (NOF) 'Clicker 4' training and staff at Brownbrook school were shortly due to receive this training. However, the teachers at Redbridge had reported that whilst the training was a useful starting point, they had not had the opportunity to 'put it into practice'.

As one teacher revealed:

'It's great to have this sort of training, you leave feeling very enthusiastic, but really all you have learned is the basics. It takes time to become familiar with the software before using with the pupils and time to work out how it can enhance my lessons. I'm not going to use it just for the sake of it'.

(Miss White)

My initial concerns about teachers' subsequent use of the computer material is highlighted in the following field note:

During afternoon playtime, I demonstrated the stories to the two teachers at Brownbrook today. They showed some interest but did not ask any further questions. I then happened to mention that Clicker 4 could also be used to assist Welsh lessons by making simple talking- Welsh books. The reaction of the teachers immediately changed - they were keen to know how this could be done. One of the teachers made me promise to show her before the end of the trial...

(Field note extract: June 2003).

It appeared on this occasion that these staff were politely interested but more motivated when they could appreciate the transferability of CAL and 'Clicker 4' to the

Welsh language. It is postulated that the demands of fulfilling the National Curriculum requirements for documented subjects such as Welsh were in the forefront of the teachers' minds. Whilst in principle, they may wish to develop new home language materials, the time constraints imposed by routine classroom life may impact on their opinions regarding the possibilities of doing so.

Attempts to learn home languages

Research suggests that a teacher's personal attempts to use the home languages within class are an effective way of demonstrating value and respect for the home language and a positive step towards 'bridging the cultural chasm' between home and school (Houlton, 1985; Gregory, 1996).

This current study uncovered a continuum of attitudes from '*No, I don't think it's up to me to learn their languages*' through to Mr. Malik who had actually learnt two languages in response to the language mix in his class. Mr. Malik's response was unusual and embraced 'being able to communicate' fully:

'I just assumed that all teachers learnt the languages of their class - it seemed the natural thing to do to me'.

This teacher, in his mid-thirties, also felt that the children saw him as an 'uncle' because he could converse in their mother tongue. He felt that they had greater respect for him as a result. Whilst on playground duty with this teacher, I noted how several children came up to him to say, 'you speak my language don't you'.

'I learnt Sylheti and some Arabic from the children within my class: they were delighted to help me learn and thought it very funny when I had difficulty pronouncing words or had forgotten them entirely. It bonded us somehow'.

Mr Malik felt that his pupils appreciated his being a language learner. He felt that this additional language knowledge also helped on a practical level because where possible, he could translate any difficult terms into Sylheti or at least try and explain what it meant in Sylheti.

Another teacher reported trying to learn some words but felt that partial knowledge may not be a positive thing in terms of her role as 'teacher'.

'I tried to learn their language but I'm no good at it. I won't understand what they are saying- they may swear at me or say something rude and I'm just smiling away'.

(Miss White)

It was apparent that the majority of teachers, some of whom had been teachers in classes with large numbers of EAL pupils for many years, had made no real attempt to learn the languages of their pupils or to incorporate these languages within their classroom teaching. Thus teachers' orientations differed greatly.

What should we expect from our teachers?

This study and also a review of the literature has highlighted a number of differing perspectives on home language use within school and more specifically teachers' use of the home language. All of the teachers interviewed were caring, sensitive teachers who I genuinely feel had the best interests of their pupils at the forefront of their minds. However, their responses varied considerably. So what should we expect from our teachers? Should we expect them to try and learn one or more different languages on top of the increasing workload and stresses of their day to day teaching lives? Conversely should teachers as committed professionals put the onus on very young children to communicate with them and make no attempt to enter their language

worlds? It is an interesting debate that has both moral and ethical implications on an individual and societal level. The implications and issues arising from a study of EAL pupils' experiences are pertinent to the notion of 'social inclusion'.

How can ICT help?

There are two central issues highlighted in the literature and within this study, which affect the use of home languages within the classroom. These are the cost of bilingual support in terms of the employment of bilingual assistants and the availability of appropriate support for each language in the school.

Whilst EAL support is available in the form of EAL teachers, this has been shown to be purely through the medium of English and therefore does not attempt to address home language usage. With the increasing profile of ICT within the school environment, it is suggested that one way of utilising the home languages is via the use of computer technology.

ICT offers a cost effective way of providing a range of materials in any language required. In addition, both of the schools within this study had access to 'Clicker 3', an older version of the software and two of the teachers profiled had received NOF funded training in its use. Neither of the teachers had actually used the software, however, and attributed this to a lack of time to 'get to grips with it'. General computer usage by teachers between the two schools was found to vary. In Redbridge, the majority of teachers felt that they did not use computers as frequently as they should. The main reason cited by the year one and two teachers was the location of the

computers outside of the classroom, making it difficult to supervise and support the computer users. The reception class teachers commented on the age/ quality of the sole computers in their classes. Observations of computer use had identified its use as a reward for finishing tasks or as a free choice activity using programmes such as RM Colour Magic. One of the EAL teachers also commented ‘We don’t do computers here...’ In contrast, the computers at Brownbrook which were located in the classrooms were used daily, either for a specific activity or as a ‘free choice’ activity. The familiarity of the pupils with computer use appeared to vary between schools and between individuals. Many of the pupils were familiar with computers and had good mouse control skills. Some pupils however had poorly developed mouse skills and required more assistance in clicking on the relevant icons on the page. (The location and familiarity of the pupils with the computers was to impact on the running of my study and has been discussed elsewhere, see Chapter 7).

‘That’s my language!’ Pupil responses.

Prior to the introduction of the computer material, I had worked for a number of days in the classrooms of the pupils as a ‘helper’. I felt that this was necessary to ensure that the children were comfortable and at ease with me. Rapport building with teachers and staff was an added function of this voluntary work.

On the first day of the trial at Redbridge, I was very excited and slightly nervous, how would the children react? I had undertaken initial fieldwork using home language materials but with older pupils. This would be the first time that these pupils had heard the computer ‘talk’. As hoped, the children all showed surprise and excitement ‘That’s my language!’ was a common response. All of the children were pleased to

hear it in school. However, it was apparent that a number of children were reluctant to speak with me in their home language. At first, I attributed this to the fact that I was trying to speak their language and that it must seem strange. However, with gentle probing, a number of pupils opened up.

'They don't like us to use Arabic in school'.

(Atia, aged 6)

'Are we allowed?'

(Maruah, aged 5)

I therefore had to reassure them that it was okay to use it. After this initial reluctance, pupils became very keen to demonstrate their prowess in their home language.

In Redbridge, I was allocated a computer which was located in the corridor in an open library area. Pupils were keen to tell passing pupils

'I'm doing Somali! Look at this!'

(Arvind, aged 6)

There was a novelty and pride in being seen to be using the computer too. In turn, passing pupils often showed surprise on hearing the computer 'talk', such as :

'It speaks Arabic- that's my language!'

(Meara, aged 6)

The ability of the home language material to act as a catalyst for pupil interaction was evidenced on a number of occasions. As the following field note from Brownbrook illustrates:

I had to 'double up' today by having two pupils working together on the story rather than just one. I needed to catch up after having to stop my schedule for sports day practice. I had two girls working together on the classroom computer. I can only describe their behaviour as 'rowdy'- they were

talking very quickly and animatedly in Arabic to each other and laughing and smiling. In fact, I leant over and apologised to the teacher's assistant working close by. Her reaction surprised me- 'Don't worry - it's lovely to see'. She later explained that both girls had not spoken a single word in English during class time and that she had been surprised at how much they had enjoyed the computer work and how vocal they had been in their home language.

(Field note extract: June, 2003)

At both schools, the news that a computer could speak in three different languages spread among the children in the Infant classes. During playground duty, I was frequently mobbed by pupils asking when it would be their turn to use it. Unfortunately, due to the time constraints of the study, I was unable to accommodate pupils from other year groups. However I did leave copies of the CD Roms with the class teachers. Pupils with whom I was working also asked '*When can we do some more books in my language?*'. My presence and the reputation of the CAL materials spread widely amongst EAL pupil populations in both schools.

To keep me 'on my toes', the children often gave me impromptu quizzes during play times to see if I could remember how to say words in the various languages. I was often cast as the 'not very clever Mrs Ellis!' 'We can speak two / three languages and you can't!' Children were now keen to talk about their prowess in a range of languages. My perception was that they now thought it 'acceptable' to talk about their lives outside of school.

My field note diary is full of description which testifies to the rapport built up with pupils and also details their abilities and encounters with the home language stories.

I passed my vocabulary test today from Juval! I had to cheat and had the words written on the back of my hand: I am not as adept as these children in picking up new vocabulary! Juval is very chatty and keen to talk to me about his life. He tells me that he will go straight from school to Arabic lessons at the Mosque. He won't get his tea until later tonight. He goes to Arabic lessons after school on three afternoons per week and again on Saturday morning. He is learning about the Arabic alphabet and the Qu'ran. I tell him that I am envious of his language abilities- he looks shocked! I don't think anyone within school has ever openly acknowledged his language prowess before. I ask him how he feels about using the home language materials. He says that he enjoys using the computer- he has one at home. He also enjoys hearing the Arabic despite being conversationally fluent in English. He explains that the Arabic translation is easier for him to understand, it is not hard to listen to, unlike English.

'I can enjoy the story, I know what it is about without having to think hard about what the words mean'. For Juval, the 'cognitive load' appears to be reduced by the availability of an Arabic translation, enabling him to derive pleasure from the story itself.

(Field note extract: November, 2002)

My adapted field role as the 'not very clever Mrs Ellis' was enjoyed by the children.

Pupils liked it when I got pronunciations wrong or forgot the word in their home language. It put them in the unique position of 'owner of knowledge'. I was the pupil and they were the teachers. Both the pupils and I learnt through our 'talk'. The individuals would often say 'Do you know what this word is in my language? Its...'

Some pupils even set me challenges to remember words not in the story and gave me stickers if I got them right.

There was an heterogeneity in the level and use of home language in both classes. The ability of pupils to understand the home language vocabulary varied greatly. Some pupils could only understand a few words - this was confirmed by the bilingual assistants, who had identified a few children who did not know the different colours or body parts in their home language. In contrast other pupils were able to translate the complete home language version word for word into English. It was as expected, more likely that pupils would understand words used more frequently within the home language than those heard less frequently. What was clear during the CAL intervention was that many of the children used the home language in a supportive and confirming role. It enabled children to clarify the meanings of words in English by reference to the home language. They would often listen to the home language story translations to identify the meanings of specific English words.

'Let's see what the Arabic is, then we'll know' (Hudi, aged 5)

'It helps when you get stuck in English' (Zara, aged 6)

'It says really hard word in English and I knew it in my language'
(Javinda, aged 5)

Conversely at times pupils did not know the home language translation of a word and would actively seek it by listening to the translation and trying to 'work it out'. Whilst not a specific focus of this current study, it is suggested from my observations and discussions with the pupils that they 'picked up' some new words in their home language as a result of the computer work.

The exuberance of Arvind about the gains in his own home language were tangible.

'I know what it is in my language now!'

(Arvind, aged 6)

Arvind is very adept at using the mouse and keen to take control of the computer. I sit back and watch as he listens carefully to the page in English then in Somali. On two occasions today he has clicked on the sound icon to hear the pages again in Somali. When we have finished listening to the story, I ask him why he chose to listen to two pages twice. He explains that he wasn't sure what some of the English version meant and so listened to the Somali to help him. There were however some Somali words that he also didn't know and so he listened a couple of times to try and work out their meaning. He asks me when will I bring in some different stories in Somali for him to listen to and so I explain that I will not be staying in the school for very long and so this may not be possible. 'Ah, that's no good, I like hearing Somali' he says in reply. I feel deeply disappointed that I am unable to do more and realise that my research intervention may have raised the hopes of the EAL children.

(Field note extract: November, 2002)

The field note extract presented below captures something of the interaction between the pupils, myself as a researcher and the differently located computers. When out of the range of their regular teachers some pupils seem to ‘blossom’.

I am at Redbrook school today. One benefit of working on a computer which is outside the classroom, is that I don't have to worry about disturbing the class and can therefore talk more freely with the pupils. They in turn are able to show their feelings more openly. Today I am working with Sunita. She has poor mouse control and so it takes her longer to ‘click’ on the relevant icons. I have noticed however that she is becoming more adept at this with practice. Sunita is very quiet in class and rarely offers any verbal contribution to classroom discussions. The first story that I looked at with Sunita was the wolf story in English only. She was quite shy when working with me and did not seem to want to interact with me. We are now listening to the home language version of the crocodile story. Sunita seems much more relaxed in my company now. She is very confident in her home language of Sylheti and is keen to teach me some words in Sylheti. She joins in with the Sylheti translation, matching her tone and intonation to that of the translator. She is swaying side to side and smiling broadly - a very different ‘Sunita’ to the one who sits quietly in class, seemingly watching and listening but not participating. Here she is clearly enjoying the experience of hearing her home language, of being able to understand what is being said and of helping me to learn some new words of my own.

(Field note extract: December 2002)

Pupils reported preferring the sound of their home language to English. It sounded more melodic to them.

‘I like the sound of my language more than English, it sounds nicer’

(Desai, aged 5)

‘Arabic makes me feel warm and happy; it just sounds right to me’

(Hudi, aged 5)

‘It's like someone singing a baby to sleep, all nice and calm’

(Meera, aged 6)

Conversely, monolingual English pupils who heard the home language versions of the stories often commented on the 'unusual' sound of the home languages. One monolingual pupil - Katy aged 6 years, noted the contrast in rhythm and sound commented, *'That sounds funny!* However she was very positive about the different language skills of her peers and also acknowledged the benefits for a newly arrived EAL pupil which demonstrated her awareness of their different language needs. *'It will help Nassar because that's his language'.*

One particular pupil reacted in ways that were noticeably different from the rest of the children at Brownbrook school.

Samat appeared very distracted and seemed to find it difficult to concentrate on the story. He was constantly looking around the classroom rather than at the computer screen. This computer was located in the classroom and so Samat was using headphones to listen to the story, this made it harder for me to interact with him. We listened to the story in English and his home language but Samat seemed keen to leave the computer as quickly as possible. I mentioned this at playtime to the class teacher who replied 'Oh, don't worry, he is always like that, he is functioning at the level of a two and a half year old'. Interestingly, Samat scored 10/14 (delayed test 8/14) for the PGT in his home language and 6/14 (delayed test 4/14) for PGT in English only. His SCT scores were 0/15 for both stories as Samat chose to retell the stories in English and whilst he had some English language knowledge, was reluctant to retell the stories.

(Field note extract: May, 2003)

Reasons for Samat's behaviour are beyond the scope of this study. However, the PGT scores for the home language story in particular demonstrate that he had actually understood and retained more information than was perhaps expected.

The majority of pupils were very keen to use the computer based home language materials. I had wondered whether the 'novelty' of hearing the story may have decreased over the four occasions. However, the children appeared just as keen to listen on Day Four as on Day One. However, I did note that some of the children who had received a home language version of the story as their first story were less keen to listen to the second story which was in English only. In fact, I received several complaints from the children because I was not allowing them to listen in their home language!

The desire of EAL pupils to use their home languages openly in school is reflected within the survey results of the EAL service (CCC, 2002) which reports that the most significant suggestion for improvement made by the pupils themselves was for more home language support especially when newly arrived and ongoing in subjects such as Science and Maths.

An unexpected development of the study was that parents often came in to see the 'talking computer'. Children who had used the programme would bring their parents in after school to have a look. The parental responses were all positive, even if it was a smile or a comment such as 'good'. In fact, one parent asked where he could buy similar material as he had found it impossible to buy any home language computer resources. I also found that parents accepted my use of their first language with good grace and humour - even when I didn't get it quite right. This finding was in contrast to research which suggested that parents might perceive novice attempts as 'devaluing' the home language (Houlton, 1985).

The responses from Bilingual assistants were also generally very positive. On occasion, I was congratulated for my pronunciation. The individuals seemed genuinely pleased that their first languages were being openly used within the school context. One assistant did appear more reserved and gave me the impression that I was encroaching on 'her world'. She may have felt a little threatened or afraid that ICT could 'take over' her role. My genuine attempts to speak the home languages of the EAL pupils, created a link with the children. In many instances, it gave them the opportunity to be in a position of knowledge, to teach me. This small opportunity for EAL pupils to have their 'expertise' recognised and used was clearly a positive and affirming experience for them.

The thoughts of a key worker within a successful LEA in England.

As part of my initial fieldwork, I contacted an LEA Primary Advisor working within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. This LEA has been identified within OFSTED documents as significantly improving the achievements of Bangladeshi pupils. The Primary Advisor (Ms. Jones) attributed this success to a number of factors, including a positive ethos within the schools and genuine relationships with parents. She acknowledged the importance placed by parents on their children learning their home language prior to starting school. The current study also identified this parental concern. As one parent volunteer confided:

'I know I should have taught him some English before he started here but I was too busy teaching him our language. I knew once he started school he would be more interested in learning English than Arabic'.

Mrs. Hanif, a bilingual assistant at Redbridge school, spoke of the pressure imposed on some mothers to speak only in the home language at home.

'Some mothers, they came to school here, they know English, but the husbands don't like them to speak it at home. What can you do? It's very difficult...'

The Primary Advisor in Tower Hamlets also identified the importance of good quality and plentiful bilingual support and the use of culturally appropriate material. The use of the home language was a prominent feature within schools which were deemed successful. Ms. Jones informed me that the monolingual English teachers had all been provided with phrasebooks detailing key words in Bengali for them to use. Home language tapes and videos were also used on a regular basis.

She also felt it important to educate teachers not to judge. An example given was

'...just because children do not have toys at home- teachers think that they don't know how to play: when in fact they may know how to play but just not the 'English' way.'

With regard to my computer-based home language materials Ms. Jones made some evaluative comments. She felt that the idea was 'great in theory but the problem in practice will be related to what children do/ do not know in the home language.' This was an important point to emphasise and subsequent trialling and development of CAL materials and pictorial grids (see Chapter 4) bore this out.

It is important to acknowledge that the majority of EAL pupils within this particular London Borough speak Sylheti/Bengali and therefore Sylheti/Bengali-speaking support staff can accommodate the language needs of a large proportion of the school population. In contrast, within the LEA in this study, there are a diverse range of

languages present within each school. Therefore a broader range of languages need to be covered by the bilingual support staff to accommodate this diversity. The availability and cost implications of this have already been highlighted.

The following chapter, Chapter 7, details an alternative response to the language diversity present in four classrooms in two primary schools. The use of computer-based home language materials is considered to offer a cost effective way to integrate a diverse range of home languages within the classroom setting. Whilst computer-based materials are not considered a substitute for one-to-one bilingual support, they do offer the potential to become useful, 'inclusive' bilingual resources to enhance existing classroom practices. Data from the careful sequencing of Pictorial Grid Tests and the Story Component Test following exposure to two 'talking' stories, one with home language translation, for 40 EAL pupils are used. The analysis draws attention to pupil gains and also identifies some broader benefits for pupils and teachers. It highlights the potentially valuable role of computer-based home language resources to enhance existing Literacy Hour practices.

A decision was made to devote a separate chapter in Section Three of the thesis which makes explicit a clear chronology of the CAL intervention and the instruments used to assess its impact. The Pictorial Grid Test (PGT) and Story Component Test (SCT) are explained and the resulting data are analysed and discussed. This triple combination of juxtaposing method, analysis and findings in a stand-alone chapter was a pragmatic decision. It was felt that disentangling the three elements would impede clarity. In effect, the business of Chapter 7 is in addressing research question four, a key focus in the study.

CHAPTER 7

Chapter Seven

The CAL Intervention

This chapter focuses on the design of the CAL intervention element of the PhD study. It provides details of the sampling of pupils, the sequence of staged procedures and the analysis of the pupil level outcomes. Later sections reflect upon the operational features and design of the intervention and identify issues that became apparent in its implementation.

Method

Participants:

The pupils were drawn from ‘Redbridge’ and ‘Brownbrook’ primary schools. The initial sample comprised 55 pupils - 10 of whom were monolingual English pupils (5 boys and 5 girls) and 45 pupils with English as an additional language (20 boys and 25 girls) from two inner-city primary schools. The majority of pupils were five years old and were included within four reception year classes (one class was a mixed reception/year one class).

Five pupils were lost from the sample. Two pupils were absent on an extended holiday (one Arabic and one Somali pupil). Two pupils were ill (one Somali pupil and one Sylheti pupil) and one pupil refused to take part (a Somali pupil). The final sample therefore comprised 50 pupils.

The 10 monolingual English pupils were chosen by their class teachers as being representative of a range of vocabulary ability levels, low, medium and high.

The sample of pupils with English as an additional language comprised:

17 Somali pupils (9 boys and 8 girls)

12 Sylheti pupils (6 boys and 6 girls)

11 Arabic pupils (2 boys and 9 girls)

The pupils were aged between four and seven years. The ages of the pupils are shown in Table 7.1 below:

Table 7.1: The age range of the sampled EAL and monolingual pupils.

Age of pupils	Number
Four years old	9
Five years old	39
Six years old	1
Seven years old	1

The seven year old pupil was placed within the mixed reception/ year one class as she was only just beginning to learn English as an additional language.

Design

The aims of this intervention study were to test whether EAL children's performance on a measure of word comprehension (the Pictorial Grid Test; see below) was greater in an 'experimental' condition where the story was accompanied by translation into the home language than in a 'comparison' condition where it was presented in English only. The children's ability to retell a story was also assessed to identify whether retelling the story improved across four sessions to a greater extent when it was presented with the home language translation than without.

The design requires more than one story in case any difference found between conditions or lack of a difference might be due to characteristics specific to the story. For the same reason, it would not be appropriate to assign one story to the experimental condition and one to the comparison condition. The same story should be presented in both conditions. Ideally pupils would be assigned at random to different combinations of story and condition. However, the numbers of children available in the two schools does not permit this design, therefore a single case design was adopted where each individual participant is subjected to both the experimental and control conditions at different times (Franklin, Allison & Gorman, 1997). In this study the combination of story and condition was systematically varied across participating children. Thus, there are two stories, one about a crocodile and one about a wolf. Each EAL child hears one of the stories with home language translation (the experimental condition) and the other story without translation (the comparison condition). Participants were therefore either presented with the wolf story with home language translation and the crocodile story without, or conversely, the crocodile story with home language translation and the wolf story without. This means that each story

is represented in both the experimental and comparison condition.

In addition, the order in which participants encountered the experimental and comparison conditions was varied across participants to ensure that findings were not confounded by order effects, for example if the crocodile story always preceded the wolf story or the experimental condition always preceded the comparison condition. This arrangement produces four sequences of story presentation as displayed in Table 7.2 below. The pupils in the two schools were allocated to one of these four sequences by a random process.

Table 7.2. Sequences of story presentations

Sequence	Week 1	Week 2
Sequence 1	Crocodile story: English only	Wolf Story: Home language
Sequence 2	Wolf Story: Home language	Crocodile story: English only
Sequence 3	Wolf Story: English only language	Crocodile story: Home language
Sequence 4	Crocodile story: Home language	Wolf Story: English only

Within each sequence the story was presented on four occasions, once in a daily session. The following tasks were completed after the first and fourth occasion.

End of session 1: Re-tell story

End of session 2: No task

End of Session 3: No task

End of Session 4: Retell story and complete Pictorial Grid Test

In addition, the Pictorial Grid Test was also completed some two weeks later.

In summary, each individual pupil provided two story retellings for each story, yielding a total of four retellings. To illustrate this we can consider one pupil, say Ahmed. Ahmed was assigned to Sequence 1, where he was presented with the Crocodile story in English only during the first week followed by the Wolf story in week 2 where a home language translation was available. Thus he participated in the comparison condition followed by the experimental condition. During the first week Ahmed provided story retellings on the first and fourth day and completed the Pictorial Grid Test on the fourth day. The same pattern occurred in the second week for the other story. The scores that Ahmed obtained in the first week are assigned to the comparison condition and the scores in the second week to the experimental condition. Table 7.4 presents descriptive statistics on the Pictorial Grid Test for the four story versions: Wolf and Crocodile stories in English-only and home language. Ahmed's scores on this test would contribute to the fourth and first columns of the table.

To ensure that the participants were not familiar with the stories, they were each asked whether they had heard them previously, each story was outlined briefly. None of the pupils reported hearing the stories previously. The four class teachers confirmed that the stories had not been used in school.

In the days preceding the four day intervention sequence, the pupils' existing English language vocabulary was assessed using the revised British Pictorial Vocabulary Scale (BPVS-R) (Dunn & Dunn, 1997). A private quiet area was used with each child and the test took approximately ten minutes. The test consists of a number of pictorial grids. The individuals were requested to point to the picture that represented a specific

(spoken) word from a grid of four alternatives. This test was used to enable the pupils to be categorised on the basis of their scores into vocabulary levels (ranging from 'extremely low' to 'moderately high') for the purpose of subsequent analysis.

Materials and ensuring 'fitness for purpose'

In their study entitled '*Reading storybooks to kindergartners helps them learn new words*', Robbins and Ehri (1994) assessed the effects of listening to stories on children's vocabulary development. To do this, they utilised versions of the two stories, '*The Boy Who Cried Wolf*' (adapted from Littledale, 1975) and '*A Crocodile's Tale*' (adapted from Areugo & Areugo, 1972). Robbins and Ehri (1994) substituted eleven familiar words from the story with eleven words thought to be unfamiliar to children aged between four and six years of age. This established format was followed (with some minor modifications) in the CAL intervention design.

For the purpose of this study '*The Boy Who Cried Wolf*' and '*A Crocodile's Tale*' were edited so that they contained 390 and 419 words respectively. This was to ensure that the stories were of comparable length and that each target word was only present once within the story. In view of the developmental stage of the children, it was considered appropriate to reduce the overall length of the stories. The 11 unfamiliar words used by Robbins and Ehri (1994) were substituted for familiar words within the stories. It was however considered necessary to amend two of the original target words from '*The Boy Who Cried Wolf*' story (these were survey and duped) and four of the original target words from '*A Crocodile's Tale*' (these were marge, lament, query and procure) for words considered more appropriate to the British context. In addition, three words considered to be familiar to the pupils were also included to ensure that

some success was achieved within the Pictorial Grid Test. The target words from one story did not appear in the other story. Each target word occurred once within the story. The target words were not directly defined within the story but the meaning could be gleaned from clues in the text and pictures. The names used within the original stories were changed to more culturally appropriate ones. Thus for research purposes the stories were 'tailored' and sensitively adapted for use by a mixed audience of young pupils.

The following amendments were therefore made:

'The Boy Who Cried Wolf.'

The word 'survey' was removed from the study because it was not possible to use the word or its equivalent of 'watching' on only one occasion within the story (for consistency, each target word was to be heard on only one occasion within the story).

The word 'replied' was added instead. This word was featured in the original story but was not a target word. The word 'duped' was amended to 'deceiving' as this was considered more appropriate for the British context. Three words which were considered to be more familiar to pupils were also added, namely: forest, sheep and wolf.

'A Crocodile's Tale.'

In the original American study, 'marge' was used to refer to the river bank. However as this word is not usually associated with river bank in the UK it was thought appropriate to remove it from the study. It was replaced by the word 'assist,' which is featured within the original story. The word 'lament' was also removed from the target words as it was found difficult to depict this pictorially (for both the on-screen

illustrations and the Pictorial Grid Test). The word 'plenty' was added instead. In addition, the word 'query' was amended to 'enquire,' as this was felt to make more sense within the context of the story. The word 'procure' was amended to 'obtain.' In addition, three words considered to be more familiar to the pupils were also added, namely: river, monkey and crocodile. An attempt was made to keep amendments to a minimum and to try to ensure that substitutions were of a similar level of difficulty. It was not until the later process of data analysis that the comparability of individual words would be known.

The unfamiliar target words for both stories within this study are presented below.

Table 7.3: The unfamiliar target words used within the CAL intervention.

<i>'The Boy Who Cried Wolf' story</i>	<i>'A Crocodile's Tale' story</i>
Sheep	Crocodile
Wolf	Monkey
Forest	River
Hideous	Decrepit
Angling	Assist
Deceiving	Enquire
Abode	Plenty
Irate	Snared
Clamour	Consume
Toting	Discarded
Strode	Divulge
Chortle	Audible
Escorted	Release
Replied	Obtain

Multiple choice Pictorial Grid Test (PGT)

In line with the research design format used by Robbins and Ehri (1994), a post-test only format was utilised. This meant that the PGT was carried out following the intervention on the final day (Day Four). The PGT was also repeated some two weeks later. The post-test took the form of a pictorial grid. Three incorrect pictures and the correct picture were randomly located within the grid. The format of the grid was based upon the BPVS-R items and comprised of black-and-white line drawings. Where possible, these were taken from the BPVS-R but it was necessary to add certain pictures. These were all drawn in the same format as BPVS-R pictures.

An example of a grid from the PGT is provided below for the word 'discarded'.

Figure 7.1: An example of a pictorial grid



The individual pupils were presented with the relevant grids on the final day (day four) of each story intervention. The grids were presented in a random order. The format consisted of the researcher saying the target word, for example 'discarded' and then pointing to each picture in turn and asking 'Does it mean to throw away/ to paint/ to sleep or to build?'. The individual was asked to point to the picture that he or she

felt represented the target word. The pictures used within the grids were not from the story and therefore the children required an understanding of the word's meaning in order to point to the correct grid. On three occasions, pupils responded with 'I don't know' and in these instances they were encouraged to choose whichever item they thought was most likely. They were reassured that it did not matter if an incorrect answer was given. After each grid, each individual was praised with the phrase 'thank you' so as not to provide any clues as to the nature of the response. Scoring was recorded discreetly.

Story Component Test (SCT)

After listening to the story on Day One and Day Four, each individual was asked to retell the story. On Day Four, the SCT was completed prior to the children undertaking the Pictorial Grid Test. In a short individual interview each child was asked, 'Can you tell me what happened in the story?'. Each response was immediately recorded in writing. To ensure procedural consistency no verbal encouragement or prompts were given during the retelling process. Four story retellings (two from each story condition) were therefore obtained for each individual pupil. Each EAL pupil was offered the option to retell the stories in their home language. (It was anticipated that a recording would be made if this option was taken, and a subsequent translation into English created from a transcript). However, all pupils within the sample chose to retell the stories in English rather than their home language.

Rationale for chosen method of analysis

Different methods of analysis of story retellings have been used and reported in the literature. For example, Medwell (1998) judged the level of fluency and detail of story

retellings using a grading system of 'poor, reasonable, good and excellent'. However due to the requirement within this study to compare children's retellings from two stories (in contrasting conditions), this method was not considered to offer the level of detail required. It was considered more appropriate to follow the more nuanced format used by Ricci and Beal (2002). This method of analysis identified the main components of the story and then measured the children's ability to retell the story by counting the number of components that each of them had recalled. Ricci and Beal's story component approach therefore generated a numerical score for each pupil's four story retellings.

To prepare the ground for later analysis, both of the stories were scrutinised for elements or components which could be used to gauge 'retellings.' After careful content analysis and scrutiny of episodes in each narrative, fifteen key components were identified for each story (see below). The Story Component Test (SCT) was designed to measure the children's ability to recall the different components of each story. The story retellings for each pupil were scored for the number of components mentioned during the free recall of the story. The maximum possible score for each story retelling was 15; to achieve this score, all of the key components of the story would need to have been recalled (Appendix five presents the 15 story components used for each story). It should be noted that a conservative marking policy was used. If there was any ambiguity regarding whether a point was justified then a point was not awarded. The pupil's story retellings were also graded by an independent person 'blind' to the nature of the study. This individual examined my written notes of the pupil retellings and compares these against 15 pre-identified story components. Any difference in scores were then discussed and the final scores for each pupil jointly

agreed.

Procedure for the CAL Intervention

Children listened to the computer-based stories individually except for one occasion where two pupils had to 'double up' and work together, as insufficient time remained for them to work individually. The pupils from both schools were randomly allocated to one of four groups. Thus the group is a labelling device not a real human clustering of actual pupils. One story was heard in English only and the other story was heard in English and the home language. Pupils utilising the English only version were all encouraged to listen to each page twice if they wished. There were four possible conditions for listening to the stories as already detailed in Table 7.2.

In Week One, the allotted story was listened to for four consecutive days.

The meanings of the target words were discussed with the individual, using a consistent format at each session. For the home language conditions, the word was repeated in the home language as well as in English, to help the pupils associate their equivalence and meaning.

On Days One and Four, the pupils were asked to retell the story. Specific prompts were used for story retellings, these were: 'you are doing very well' and also 'what else can you remember?' Each EAL pupil was offered the option of retelling the story in their first language, which would have been tape-recorded for translation purposes.

On Day Four, the pupils were also asked to complete the Pictorial Grid Test (PGT). This procedure was repeated again in Week Two for the second story. The stories

were heard by the pupils over two consecutive weeks so as to control for any possible order effects. The timing was considered to be an important factor in the design of the intervention and data collection.

Delayed Pictorial Grid Test.

The PGT was completed again by all pupils some two weeks later in order to assess the influence of time on the individual's ability to identify the target words. The stories however, were not revisited again. The grids were introduced by asking each child whether he/she remembered the 'tricky' words from the original two stories that we had looked at on the computer. The grids were introduced in a random order and the individual pupil was asked to point to the picture that he/she felt represented the target word. The responses were noted carefully on a pre-prepared recording sheet.

Having explained the key features of the CAL intervention study, and described the sequences and tests that each individual pupil experienced, the following section presents a step by step analyses of the data generated.

Analysis of Pictorial Grid Test (PGT) Data.

EAL pupils

The resulting PGT pupil scores were analysed and compared for each individual and their group. The mean (and standard deviation) scores for the sample of 40 EAL pupils on the Pictorial Grid Test (PGT) and on the delayed PGT (completed two weeks later) are shown in the following table (Table:7.4).

Table 7.4: Mean and standard deviation scores for PGT and delayed PGT for both story conditions.

	Wolf story: Home language	Wolf story: English		Crocodile story: Home language	Crocodile story: English
<i>PGT scores</i> Mean: (Standard deviation)	10.33 (2.22)	8.11 (3.00)		10.14 (2.69)	9.21 (3.14)
<i>Delayed PGT scores</i> Mean: (Standard deviation)	10.26 (2.60)	6.76 (1.51)		9.11 (2.75)	7.00 (2.24)

Preliminary analyses showed that the effects of gender for the voice of the storyteller, story order, school and ethnic minority group were associated with no significant differences.

The hypothesis that the EAL pupils would achieve a higher PGT score after listening to the story with a home language translation available rather than in English only, was tested. Separate analyses were carried out for the two stories.

For the wolf story, a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out with scores on the PGT as dependent variable. The within-subjects measure was test session, comparing the PGT scores after Session 4 with the delayed PGT scores; the between-subjects measure was language version (comparing home language with English only - this is a between-subjects factor because different children heard the wolf story with the home language translation from those who heard it in English only).

The effect of language version is marginally significant ($F [1,38] = 3.835, p = 0.058$).

There is no effect of session, or interaction between test session and language version.

The analysis was then repeated controlling for EAL pupils' vocabulary level by including their BPVS-R scores as covariate. A significant main effect of language version was found ($F [1, 37] = 12.853, p < 0.001$). Neither the effect of test session (PGT or delayed PGT) or the interaction between session and story language was significant. In summary, for the wolf story, the home language produced better performance than the English version, and this difference was found on both the immediate and delayed Pictorial Grid Test results.

A similar repeated measures ANOVA was carried out for the crocodile story. Again, scores on the PGT served as dependent variable. The within-subjects measure was test

session, comparing the Session 4 PGT scores with the delayed PGT scores and the between-subjects measure was language version. A significant main effect for language version was found ($F [1,38] = 20.677, p < 0.001$). None of the other effects was significant.

The analysis was then repeated controlling for vocabulary using the EAL pupils' BPVS scores as covariate. A significant main effect of language version was again found ($F [1,37] = 19.981, p < 0.001$).

Monolingual pupils

The mean (and standard deviation) scores for the sample of 10 monolingual English pupils on the Pictorial Grid Test and the delayed Pictorial Grid Test are shown below in the following table (Table:7.5). Each individual heard both the crocodile and wolf stories. Five of the pupils heard the crocodile story in Week 1 and the wolf story in Week 2 and the other five pupils heard the wolf story in Week 1 and crocodile story in Week 2.

Table 7.5: Mean and standard deviation scores for the monolingual English pupils for the PGT and the delayed PGT.

	Wolf story	Crocodile story
<i>PGT scores</i>		
Mean	11.75	9.50
(Standard deviation)	(2.54)	(2.88)
<i>Delayed PGT scores</i>		
Mean	10.90	9.80
(Standard deviation)	(2.13)	(2.82)

The hypotheses that the PGT scores from the wolf story and the crocodile story would not be significantly different was tested. A paired samples t-test was conducted.

The effect of story was significant for the PGT test on Day 4 ($t(9) = 6.128, p < .0005$) but not significant for the delayed PGT on Day 4 ($t(9) = 1.492, p > .005$).

Having presented the results and analysis of the Pictorial Grid Tests the following section unpacks their meaning and highlights the potential benefits of a home language translation.

Discussion of results from the Pictorial Grid Tests

EAL pupils

The mean scores for both wolf and crocodile stories demonstrate that the EAL pupils who were presented with the story in their home languages correctly identified more of the target words in the grids than the EAL pupils who heard the story in English. The gains made were also relatively stable over time, as evidenced by the mean scores for the delayed PGT undertaken some two weeks later, the significant main effect of language version and the absence of a significant interaction between language version and test session. This was true for both stories.

After controlling for vocabulary levels, there was a significant difference between the PGT scores obtained for the home language versions of both stories and the English versions.

Therefore, listening to a story with a home language translation increased EAL pupils' ability to correctly identify unfamiliar English words when compared to a story presented in English only. These gains remained over time, indicating that the EAL pupils' had retained the meaning of the unfamiliar words following exposure to the stories. These findings suggest positive gains for EAL pupils who appear to have better opportunities to understand the narratives and details.

Monolingual pupils

The mean scores for both the wolf and crocodile stories demonstrate that the monolingual pupils correctly identified more of the target words from the wolf story than the crocodile story. Whilst the stories were considered comparable by previous researchers (Robbins & Ehri, 1994), minor amendments had been made. It is possible that one or more of the target words within the wolf story was easier for the pupils to identify than the target words within the crocodile story. Alternatively, the monolingual pupils may have found the wolf story more intrinsically appealing than the crocodile story. It is noted however that the difference is not significant for the delayed PGT undertaken two weeks later.

Interestingly, the mean scores for the EAL pupils who listened to the crocodile story in English was 9.21 (SD 3.14) whereas the mean score for EAL pupils who listened to the wolf story in English was 8.11 (SD 3.00). The EAL pupils therefore identified more unfamiliar target words from the crocodile story than the wolf story when received in English only. This is in contrast to the monolingual pupil scores. The context and nature of the crocodile story may have been more stimulating for the EAL children than the wolf story, although it is impossible to verify this speculation.

Of course, the small sample size of monolingual English pupils is considered too small for a rigorous statistical analysis. Future research of this type would require a far larger sample of monolingual pupils to explore this aspect of the research further.

Analysis of Story Component Test (SCT) data

EAL pupils

The mean and standard deviation scores on the Story Component Test for the sample of 40 EAL pupils are shown in Table 7.6 presented below, which separates out the results for both types of story conditions.

Table 7.6: Mean and standard deviations for both story conditions

		English only version	English only version	Home language version	Home language version
		Day 1	Day 4	Day 1	Day 4
Story Version 1 (Sequences 3 and 4)	Mean	1.81	2.10	3.95	5.24
	N	21	21	21	21
	(Standard deviation)	(1.60)	(1.41)	(2.99)	(3.79)
		Home language version	Home language version	English only version	English only version
		Day 1	Day 4	Day 1	Day 4
Story Version 2 (Sequences 1 and 2)	Mean	1.68	2.47	1.16	2.00
	N	19	19	19	19
	(Standard deviation)	(1.89)	(2.55)	(1.26)	(1.45)
Total	Mean	1.75	2.28	2.63	3.70
	N	40	40	40	40
	(Standard deviation)	(1.72)	(2.01)	(2.71)	(3.32)

The hypotheses that there would be a gain in pupils' SCT scores from session one to session four for both stories and that the gain would be larger for the 'home language' story were tested.

The data were submitted to a repeated measures ANOVA with gain scores (subtracting session 1 score from session 4 score) as the dependent variable, language version (home language/ English-only) as a within-subjects variable and story version (which story was in home language and which in English-only) as a between-subjects variable.

Table 7.7: Mean gain SCT scores for the English and home language conditions

	Gain in English	Gain in home language
Story version 1	.29	1.29
Story version 2	.79	.84

A significant main effect of language version was found ($F [1,38] = 4.332, p=0.044$). The main effect of story version is not significant ($F[1,38] <1.0$). The interaction between language version and story version is also not significant ($F [1, 38] = 3.509, p = 0.069$).

Monolingual pupils

The mean gain scores and standard deviations for the sample of 10 monolingual English pupils on the SCT for both stories are provided in the following table (7.9).

Table 7.8 Mean scores for the monolingual English pupils on the SCT.

	Wolf story Day 1	Day 4	Crocodile story Day 1	Day 4
Mean	2.00	2.70	2.60	3.30
(Standard deviation)	(1.41)	(1.16)	(1.65)	(1.25)
N	10	10	10	10

For the wolf story a paired sample t-test was conducted. The difference was nearly significant with a two tailed test, $t = 2.09$, $p = 0.066$ (this would have been significant with a one tailed test, predicting higher scores on Day 4). For the crocodile test the difference was significant, $t = 2.33$, p (two tailed) = 0.045.

Number of pupil interjections

The number of interjections made by pupils were noted during the assessment of the story retellings. However, a total of only three interjections were identified. Two children (one EAL pupil and one monolingual English pupil) used the phrase 'A big bad wolf' during their retelling of *'The Boy Who Cried Wolf'*. This demonstrated their familiarity with the language structure of a popular children's story. Another EAL pupil referred to a 'big bad crocodile'. Due to the small number of interjections, it was not possible to undertake any quantitative analysis of them. They do however,

demonstrate each pupil's enthusiasm and perhaps 'transfer' of earlier learning in relation to the phrase 'big bad!'

Discussion of results from the Story Component Test (SCT)

EAL pupils- how did they fare in the different story conditions?

The EAL pupils made significant gains over time in both the English only condition and in the home language story condition. This indicates that children who improved in one condition also improved in the other. Therefore listening to stories on four occasions in English or in the home language is likely to increase comprehension of story components for EAL pupils.

However, a closer analysis reveals that, overall, the gains made as a result of the home language input were greater than those gains made with the English only input. It is therefore suggested that listening to the home language translation enabled the EAL pupils to gain an increased awareness of the components of the story when compared to a story received in English only.

Whilst the differences are statistically significant, the mean scores indicate that the number of correct story components retold by individuals within the SCT were low for all versions. The low scores were however in line with findings by Ricci and Beal (2002) who carried out a free recall procedure with 66 six and seven year old children and reported similar mean scores.

It is important to note that both stories were retold by all pupils in English (of their choice). The scores on the SCT may therefore not adequately reflect the children's understanding of the stories, which may well have been hindered by the more typical

and routinised school requirement to verbalise responses in English. Had the children retold the stories in their ‘preferred’, stronger language, the scores may well have been higher.

Every attempt was made to ensure that the stories were comparable. The stories were originally used in the vocabulary acquisition study by Robbins and Ehri (1994) and were considered comparable. Minor amendments were necessary for this study. The appeal of the individual stories was taken into careful consideration during the design phase. The word length of the two stories was kept as similar as possible. The pictorial representations were created by the same book illustrator using the same imagery and graphical style format for both narratives. The results of this analysis demonstrate that the significant factor was the availability of a home language translation and was not dependent upon a specific story.

It should also be noted that neither story built upon the children’s existing ‘frame of reference’ with story locations and events that were inconsistent with their lived experiences. This may of course have impacted upon the ability of the pupils to relate to the contents of the stories.

Monolingual pupils- How did they fare?

The monolingual pupils made gains over time for both the crocodile and wolf stories, indicating that listening to a story on four occasions is likely to increase comprehension of the story for monolingual pupils. Each re-testing and the two re-tellings act as a means to revisit and revise the vocabularies and meanings.

Story retelling by EAL pupils

Retelling a story involves powers of memory, sequencing and description as well as the knowledge of language to enable verbalisation. Three levels of retelling were evident within this sample. At the initial level, individuals were only able to provide labels in English for certain items such as the characters 'boy', 'wolf', and 'crocodile'. It is suggested that this may be due to their early stage of English language acquisition. EAL pupils may therefore not have been able to fully verbalise their understanding of the story through the medium of English. To illustrate, one little girl who was in the 'silent phase' of language development attempted to convey her understanding of the stories by mime. For '*A Crocodile's Tale*' she shaped her hands like a crocodile's mouth and made a 'snapping', eating action. For '*The Boy Who Cried Wolf*' story, she fashioned her hands to look like claws and made a growling sound. As she was unable to verbalise her understanding in English, she failed to score any points on either story. However, her actions and non verbal communication demonstrated an awareness of the storylines. It is suggested that the use of her preferred language during the SCT would have facilitated the story retelling process. At the second level, certain individuals were able to structure the story in the correct order. Awareness of the story format was demonstrated by phrases such as 'At the beginning...' At the third level, individuals were able to structure the story correctly and reproduce elements of the exact text such as 'I can't hear you, come closer'. A small number of individuals also utilised target words appropriately during their retellings. For example, 'The crocodile he want to consume the little boy....you can't eat me I help you!'. In some instances the underlying moral of the stories was identified '... you mustn't tell lies'.

It is acknowledged that by utilising a points system for the scoring performance on the SCT, the richness of certain individuals' language was not fully rewarded. A point was awarded if pupils were able to identify the key elements of each component, no 'bonus' was awarded for the rich use of language evidenced, such as the utilisation of the actual target words or text within the pupil's own retellings.

It is acknowledged that the ability to retell stories is likely to improve as pupils' knowledge of language improves and also as a result of practice at retelling stories. The difference in individual abilities to retell the stories through the medium of English was evident within this study.

Whilst the pupils were offered the option to retell the story in their preferred language, none of the pupils chose to use their first language. There are a number of possible reasons for this. First, some pupils may not have felt comfortable speaking in their first language within the school environment (see Chapter 6 fieldwork findings). Second, the children were aware that I did not understand their first languages and so may have felt, despite my encouragement of home language usage, that I would prefer them to speak in English. Third, whilst I was able to transcribe their story retellings immediately in English, a tape recorded home language version would have required translation. Many of the pupils were keen to see how much I had written as a response to their retellings and liked to discuss how many lines they had managed to fill on my page. As this immediate sense of gratification would not have been possible with a home language version, it is possible that the children opted for the English language option.

Issues arising in the design of the CAL materials and implementation

An important theme within this thesis is that the home languages of ethnic minority pupils should be valued in their own right and not as mere vehicles for the improvement of English language skills. The value and respect accorded to the home languages should be highly visible. In addition to an audio home language translation, it was hoped that the home language text for each story could have been represented visually on each page of the talking books, above the English language text. The 'Clicker 4' software used within this study does enable more than one set of text to be presented per page. However, whilst this would have been straightforward for Somali, which uses an alphabetic script, presentation of the Arabic format was not possible without the relevant Arabic font. Unfortunately, this was not available with the software and despite attempts to obtain an alternative this was not possible within the time and financial constraints of this project. The other language used within this study, Sylheti, does not have a written form. It was therefore not possible to depict the language textually. An alternative would have been to provide a Bengali script but, after consultation with two Sylheti-speaking bilingual assistants, it was considered unlikely that the children would be familiar with this script and indeed, that it may cause some confusion for the children. Whilst visual representations of the home language texts were therefore not present within this study, it is strongly advised that the future development of bilingual materials contains textual representation for both the home language and English.

With a typical 'talking book', the user may turn the pages and by clicking on-screen objects gain the reward of sound or animation. In this instance, the computer based stories appeared quite similar to paper versions. Each page of the story was

reproduced with the English language text and the illustration on the computer screen. The text was accompanied by an audio narration, as if the book was being read aloud to the child. The child was able to control the length of time that the image remained on the screen and the number of times that each individual page was heard in each available language. For example, an individual may have clicked on the icon to hear the home language translation repeated. For the purposes of this study, animated features were not included.

The multimedia format used within this study was very simple, mainly to demonstrate that resources of this nature can be assembled by any individual with minimal computing knowledge or experience. It is acknowledged that more sophisticated features such as the highlighting of the text, as it was being read aloud, may have further increased the ‘consciousness-raising’ nature of the material.

The aim of the intervention was to increase pupils’ ability to identify English words by first hearing the story in their home language. Whilst it was not part of the project focus, it is suggested that the material may have resulted in vocabulary gains in the home language by some pupils. This was noted within fieldwork findings (Chapter 6) by the acknowledgment made by some EAL pupils that they now knew the meaning of certain words in their home language.

Ideally, during this intervention, pupils could have worked in pairs, enabling learning through talk as they discussed the meaning of the stories in their preferred language. This would have provided an extra context in which they could articulate, rehearse and learn language. A future CAL intervention might include this ‘paired’ approach

and also involve audio recordings of pupils talk as they engage with the material. However, for the purpose of the collation of results within this specific research design, it was considered more appropriate for each individual to listen to the stories on their own. Paired talk by pupils who share the same first language, may have increased their understanding of the stories and target vocabulary and this might have resulted in increased vocabulary ‘gains’ on the test. Of course, as mentioned earlier, pupils may well have interacted and spoken of the stories and used the vocabularies in their friendship networks and families thereby enhancing their scores.

If adopted for use within daily classroom practice, the home language versions of the story could be used in conjunction with existing literacy activities. In particular, the use of props and extension activities within the Literacy Hour would provide further opportunities to hear and use the target vocabulary. In addition, teaching staff could facilitate understanding by the use of a range of techniques such as open-ended questioning, discussion of new words and encouragement for children to participate in story discussions. The home language story translations would therefore become an integral and valuable element of EAL pupils’ literacy experiences within mainstream education.

This chapter has described one particular element of the PhD project which set out to gather a different sort of data. Whilst field note descriptions and qualitative data on the plight of EAL pupils and their busy teachers provide an important evidence base, it was felt that local LEA policy makers would value findings based on ‘hard’ numerical data. The intervention, albeit modest in scale, goes some way towards offering findings that demonstrate one possible practical form of help for EAL pupils.

The CAL intervention generated results to show that learning gains can derive from ‘talking books’ that speak a home language. Furthermore, such materials are not costly to create. It is hoped that LEAs and their EMAS services may usefully invest some expertise and funding into the development of similar materials.

CHAPTER 8

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

Introduction

This research project has highlighted the valuable, inclusive role that the home languages of EAL pupils can play within the mainstream classroom and in particular within the Literacy Hour. It has demonstrated the potential benefits of using the computer as a medium for stories with home language translations. Its distinctive contribution is its potential for raising awareness about the inclusion of EAL pupils in Wales, a country where the Wales Assembly Government are striving to implement inclusion policies and equal opportunities for learners of all ages and identities.

In utilising a mixed-methods approach this research has proceeded through two main phases, during which different emphases have been to the fore. During Phase One a review of the literature and preliminary fieldwork in the LEA highlighted the difficulties experienced by EAL pupils within the Literacy Hour and in particular the inner feelings of frustration at not being able to ‘keep up’ with the speed of interactions. Semi-structured interviews with class teachers and support staff together with classroom observations identified some of the challenges encountered by teachers in providing a differentiated curriculum for EAL learners.

The following stage, Phase Two, provided the opportunity to address the resource issues identified in Phase One by means of the design, implementation and systematic evaluation of the short-term effectiveness of computer-based home language materials. This Phase of the research sought to illustrate some of the potential benefits

of home language use within the literacy hour, namely an increased ability to identify the meaning of unfamiliar English words and the ability to retell stories in greater detail. The children's own perceptions of home language use within school were also elicited.

In addition to summarising the study findings, this closing chapter also discusses the implications for both policy and practice stemming from this research. Following this, ideas for future research projects which might further contribute to our understanding of EAL pupils are described in brief.

To conclude the study for the present time, this researcher steps away from empirical reporting and switches to an 'idealistic' mode to offer a vision for the future where the home languages of ethnic minority children are valued and respected and most importantly, integrated within the mainstream curriculum.

A discussion of project findings

Research question one set out to investigate how government policy relating to the National Literacy Strategy and in particular the Literacy Hour was translated into current educational practice within classrooms where EAL pupils were amongst the learners. This study has confirmed the validity of concerns raised by the DfES (2002a) and OFSTED (1998) that beginner EAL learners are at risk of social exclusion during the Literacy Hour unless specific measures are taken to prevent it. As Moore (1999) warns, the EAL learner who spends the majority of time in class understanding little or nothing is being denied access to the curriculum. Current policy recommendations relating to the Literacy Hour firmly place the responsibility upon teachers to ensure

that teaching is 'well matched' to individual EAL pupils' needs. Within this study, all of the teachers interviewed expressed their concerns that the current literacy hour format was not suitable for beginner EAL pupils. In particular, teachers were aware that the EAL pupils' lack of English vocabulary acted as a barrier to participation. They highlighted the difficulties of converting 'policy' into 'practice' and of providing suitably differentiated learning experiences for individual EAL pupils.

The second research question addressed the experiences of EAL pupils within the literacy hour and in particular the 'carpet session'. Fieldwork conducted in two schools across eight classes uncovered the frustration experienced by EAL pupils unable to participate fully due to the speed of interactions and the nature of the teacher-pupil discourse. The 'willingness to please' of many EAL pupils was epitomised by pupils raising their hands to answer questions even though they did not have the English language skills to communicate their answer. Observational and interview data rendered visible some of the coping strategies used by EAL pupils.

The third research question focused upon the strategies used by classroom and EAL support teachers to mediate learning for EAL pupils within the Literacy Hour. Teachers reported using a range of strategies to assist EAL pupils, including the use of visual aids and more detailed explanations. Classroom observation data identified the strategy of grouping beginner EAL pupils together for independent and group work. Recent observational research by John (2003) however, has acknowledged that this can lead to constraints on opportunities to model the English language and even lead to an 'impoverished' model of the English language. Within the two schools participating in this study, the main form of language support available to EAL pupils

was provided by EAL support teachers, often on a withdrawal basis. The support focused primarily upon key or target vocabulary instruction. The only home language support available was provided by bilingual classroom assistants. This was frequently allocated on an 'ad-hoc' basis and only available for some of the languages within the classroom, resulting in a 'double dose' of social exclusion for some EAL pupils whose home language remained unutilised in their learning. Due to the considerable demand for bilingual support, across the study LEA and within both schools, it was offered on a 'perceived need' basis and consequently focused upon pupils with no or very limited English language. The transitional and somewhat temporary nature of such initial support was clearly evident.

Teachers in the participating schools were found to have varying levels of 'openness' to home language use. Fieldwork findings identified that many teachers appeared to have a poor understanding of the language backgrounds of their pupils and limited knowledge of the benefits of home language use within school. All of the teachers appeared to welcome the use of home languages within their classrooms in theory but specified that this was a particular duty of bilingual assistants. The majority of teachers, however, did not consider bilingual support as a necessity, instead their comments suggested that it was a helpful 'add on': '...it is nice if you can get it'. This stance appeared to reflect their general lack of awareness of the wide benefits accruing from the use of home languages in their classrooms. Differing viewpoints were held regarding the use of home languages by pupils without the presence or 'supervision' of bilingual assistants. The majority of teachers did not allow pupils to speak in their home languages independently in class. Observational data revealed that this was forcefully discouraged such that the sample pupils in the CAL intervention expressed

anxiety and concern about displeasing their teachers. Only one teacher explicitly encouraged home language use. This teacher had also learned two of the home languages represented within his class and was considered to be an exceptional case. The remaining teachers had made no attempt to utilise home language words or phrases themselves, considering it outside of their remit to do so.

The presence of a bilingual assistant in the mainstream classroom was in itself no guarantee of bilingual strategies being used. Many instances were observed where bilingual assistants spoke solely in English to EAL pupils. Indeed, although the main responsibility for home language use fell to the bilingual assistants, they and the classroom teachers indicated at several points in the research, that they saw their main role as promoting the learning of English. This overriding belief of both teachers and bilingual assistants clearly determined day to day activities and classroom realities for pupils with EAL who often remained outside of the hub of classroom interactions.

All twelve class and EAL support teachers interviewed reported difficulties in differentiating the level of discourse and learning activities to accommodate the full range of abilities within their classes. Concerns were raised that they were not meeting the developmental needs of EAL learners primarily due to activities being pitched at an English language proficiency level rather than at pupils' cognitive ability level. In their discussions the teachers from both schools expressed a certain fatalism about 'short changing' those pupils who were categorised as 'English as an additional language'.

The final research question examined the extent to which the introduction of home language computer-based materials influenced EAL pupils' ability to identify unfamiliar words and to re-tell stories in English. The results of this small scale empirical study demonstrate that listening to home language story translations enabled EAL pupils to identify meanings of unfamiliar words in English. This helped them more than listening to a story solely through the medium of English. EAL pupils were also able to provide more detailed story retellings in English following home language story translations. In a very short period of time, statistical gains were identified following the use of home language materials. It is difficult to disentangle the reasons why greater gains were made by EAL pupils as a result of home language input. It is suggested that the incorporation of the EAL pupils' home languages within curriculum activities can send a powerful message that the school respects and values the children's existing language abilities. In addition, an ability to understand what is being said enables an individual to actively engage in the learning process. It is suggested that the use of the home language provided useful contextual information for the EAL pupils, enabling them to use their existing knowledge to further their learning in English. Children also reported their enjoyment of hearing and using their home languages within the school environment, although fieldwork findings highlighted pupils' initial concerns about whether they were 'allowed' to do so. A powerful aspect of the study was the observation of EAL pupils freed from the constraints of speaking in English. Fieldwork findings highlighted the experiences of two girls who appeared highly animated as a result of home language usage.

The medium of the computer has long been acknowledged as a motivational tool. Perhaps for the first time, beginner EAL pupils were able to take control of their

learning, both in terms of the pace of learning (by being responsible for page turning) and the verification of word meanings by reference to the home language. A key benefit of the computer-based materials was found to be the ease with which languages could be 'dubbed' onto the computer. This provided the opportunity for teachers to ensure that all EAL pupils receive home language input rather than just those 'privileged' to receive language support from a bilingual assistant. Computer Assisted Learning has the potential to reduce the exclusion of EAL pupils from the Literacy Hour and associated 'carpet episodes'. Of course the preparation of such 'Clicker 4' materials and 'Big Book' translations would initially be time intensive but time invested in the creation of CAL materials would have 'multiplier effects' for EAL pupils.

Overall, this study identified a general lack of awareness among teachers regarding the benefits of home language use within the classroom. All of the teachers reported receiving only minimal training in connection with teaching EAL pupils. None of the EAL teachers reported having specialist qualifications relating to their day to day work. There was a general perception that home language support from bilingual assistants was useful but not essential. All of the teachers were aware of some of the challenges faced by EAL pupils within the Literacy Hour and felt, to some degree, unable to provide appropriate learning experiences for beginner EAL pupils.

The introduction of computer-based home language materials was welcomed by the EAL pupils and also by parents who came to 'have a look'. The teachers were in general happy for me to use the home language materials for the PhD research project and readily adjusted their classroom routines to accommodate its usage. None of the

classroom teachers, however, enquired further about developing more home language resources, highlighting perhaps the importance of teachers perceiving a need for such resources and of having sufficient time for such endeavours. The intervention identified that the home language translations were a useful tool for EAL pupils who were able to utilise their first language to develop their second language knowledge.

The scope and limitations of this study

This research project, focusing on four classes, enabled some of the challenges facing both EAL pupils and their teachers, within the Literacy Hour, to be uncovered. It has provided greater understanding of the difficulties experienced by EAL pupils, attempting to make sense of decontextualised language and keeping up with the pace of discourse within the typical ‘carpet session’. Preliminary fieldwork findings served to inform the development of computer based home language resources for use within the second phase of the research. This doctoral research provided the opportunity to conduct a ‘real-life’ investigation within a mainstream school setting. The classrooms that I worked in are typical of many other inner city classrooms across the UK. The challenges to the validity of findings from research interventions conducted in such naturalistic settings have been acknowledged (see Chapter 5). However, despite these caveats, and the artificiality of the experimental sequence, the results and pupil outcomes are noteworthy. Nevertheless, issues and resourcing problems identified here are unlikely to be unique. This CAL intervention in which EAL pupils acted as their own controls provided the opportunity to use the home language materials within the day-to-day classroom ‘life.’

Constraints were placed upon the size of the sample used as a result of the availability of EAL pupils within the required age group from the three language backgrounds of Arabic, Somali and Sylheti. Time constraints negated the possibility of repeating the intervention with additional languages or alternative age groups. This small scale study, if it has done nothing else, has provided empirical material to provide insights into the experiences of EAL pupils within the Literacy Hour and in particular, the exclusionary nature of current literacy practices, which rely solely upon English language as the means of communication.

Difficulties encountered during this study

Chapter 4 presented a reflexive insight into the ‘highs and lows’ of the research process and in particular the cultural and linguistic naivety of this beginner researcher. The conduct of this enquiry has not been without problems. As Delamont (2002) and others (Coffey, 1993; Salisbury, 1994; Walford, 2001) have noted, the doctoral journey is a learning one!

I learnt early on in access fieldwork that the translation of English words into the home languages of Arabic, Somali and Sylheti would not be as straightforward as originally thought. There was often no direct word for word or phrase for phrase translation available, requiring a certain amount of creativity on behalf of the translators. This impacted on the feasibility of using certain topics such as ‘animals’ and ‘vehicles’ and resulted in the first major revision to the intervention design. It was subsequently hoped that the ‘Big Books’ featured within the Literacy Hour could be used for the home language translations. However, initial pilot work identified difficulties in finding resources which were considered comparable for use within the

intervention. The quest for a more rigorous design resulted in the use of two stories considered comparable in previous research focusing on vocabulary acquisition (Robbins and Ehri, 1994). The 'Big Book' resources currently used within the Literacy Hour were therefore only utilised during initial orientation work. However this study demonstrates the ease with which story materials, such as 'Big Books' can be adapted with home language audio translations for computer use using software such as 'Clicker 4.'

Research implications

At the heart of this study lies the desire to 'make a difference' by providing a practical solution for some of the problems encountered by EAL pupils within the Literacy Hour and in particular during the 'carpet session'. The computer-based home language materials were designed to enhance existing classroom literacy practices. A critical factor for the further development of home language computer-based materials is considered to be the dissemination of the findings of this study to a wider practitioner audience and in particular the local Ethnic Minority Achievement Service.

Implications for Practice

Moore (1999) and others have acknowledged that it is a major challenge for schools to provide work at an appropriate cognitive level for each individual pupil, but one that cannot be ignored or denied. Utilising the home languages of EAL pupils offers the opportunity to provide EAL pupils with the cognitively challenging work that they require. By encouraging pupils to use their preferred language in learning situations, an additive model of bilingualism is supported. This enables pupils to learn an additional language and cultural practices whilst at the same time, continuing to

develop those that they are already versed in.

The potential of home language use within mainstream classrooms and in particular the Literacy Hour has been a neglected area of research. This may well reflect the current 'linguistic myopia' which favours the sole use of English within linguistically diverse classrooms. This study has demonstrated the versatility of ICT as a low-cost medium for home language resources. ICT materials can accommodate every language within a classroom making its use fully inclusive. This study has therefore illustrated the benefits of home language computer-based materials both in terms of increasing 'access' to the curriculum and in demonstrating potential value for the languages of ethnic minority pupils. Cummins (1984), over 20 years ago, argued that home language use can provide EAL pupils with a 'voice' and ownership, enabling them to experience a sense of control within the literacy development process. It also provides a 'linguistic bridge' between home and school. The use of computer based home language materials offers a practical way of utilising the home languages of EAL pupils in addition to existing bilingual support and mainstream literacy practices. Teachers therefore need access to appropriate computer software and training to enable development of home language resources. In reality, however due to the demands on teacher time, it is suggested that a centrally driven National/ LEA-based initiative to develop such materials is more appropriate. These cost-effective 'inclusive' resources could then be provided for use within *all* schools.

Implications for Policy

EAL pupils are currently served by an education system which claims to be inclusive but is in fact indifferent and insensitive to the full range of language and learning needs of ethnic minority pupils (Moore, 1999). Whilst social inclusion is at the forefront of government policy, such policies have tended to be 'colour blind' and have therefore done little to improve the school experiences of EAL children (Gillborn, 1997a).

The DfES (2002a) acknowledges that inclusion does not just happen, it has to be planned for and that the starting point for EAL pupils should relate to their existing knowledge and experiences. One way of doing this is considered to be through the use of the home language as an integral part of the curriculum. This study has highlighted the low value currently placed on home language use by classroom and EAL support teachers in the participating schools. A critical factor for the increased use of home language materials within mainstream classrooms is therefore considered to be a change in teacher perceptions. Teachers must be able to appreciate the benefits of home language use for EAL pupils and for themselves. Without this, there is little likelihood that home language use will be adopted and integrated within mainstream classrooms.

Other researchers have identified professional development as a potential catalyst for change. Riley, Burrell and McCallum (2004) illustrate how an increased awareness of the factors influencing language development enabled teachers to refine and develop their existing classroom strategies to facilitate the language development of their pupils. In order to develop a more knowledgeable teaching workforce formal reviews

of existing provision for Initial Teacher Training and in-service training are required as a first step. Such reviews would identify the knowledge gaps in the ITT curricula. An increased awareness of the needs of ethnic minority pupils and a detailed understanding of second language acquisition should form an integral or even mandatory element of Initial Teacher Training. This would need to be sensitively implemented and build upon appropriate models of language acquisition and development. Narrow cognitive models, now deemed dated, still dominate a great deal of North American research on language acquisition but trainee teachers of the 21st century need more social approaches to language development (Gee, 1996). In-service training provision should therefore include a focus upon the socio-linguistic and socio-cultural models of learning a second language and provide a better understanding of the benefits of home language use within the classroom.

Teachers however need more than an awareness of issues arising from cultural diversity, they need to translate this awareness into practical and informed decisions on learning methodology, content and the selection of resources. It is questioned whether providing teachers with more time to reflect and a greater understanding of the needs of EAL pupils is in itself sufficient to trigger change to existing teaching practices and policies or whether the problem is more deeply rooted than this.

It is imperative to understand the importance of robust antiracist policies and the recognition, normalisation and celebration of diversity (Paxton, 2003). This goes beyond individual actions and depends upon societal changes. Yet in the six years following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, despite official recognition of institutional racism, race equality appears to have fallen off the government's agenda

(Richardson, 2003), as evidenced by the introduction of a raft of 'colour blind' social inclusion initiatives. A major concern identified within the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry was the stereotyping of ethnic minority individuals. Whilst there was not considered to be deliberate bias or prejudice on behalf of the white police officers, the existence of 'unwitting', 'unconscious' and 'unintentional' racism was found.

'Unwitting racism can arise because of lack of understanding, ignorance or mistaken beliefs...It can arise from unfamiliarity with the behaviour or cultural traditions of people or families from minority ethnic communities' (para 6.17).

This arises out of the uncritical acceptance of the 'traditional' way of doing things and does not take into consideration the changing needs of ethnic minority individuals and communities. It is argued that 'unwitting' racism was identified within this study within the teachers' assumptions that EAL pupils would 'just pick up' English language and within the failure to adjust policies and practices to meet the needs of culturally diverse school populations. Providing the same monolingual English curriculum to all pupils regardless of ethnic and linguistic background does not equate to providing equality of opportunity. A major challenge is therefore to address the subtle and concealed forms of institutional racism which are inbuilt and pervasive within the school culture. Minor adjustments to existing curriculum practices are not considered sufficient, radical transformation to the education system and curricula policies and practices is required. A curriculum is a 'cultural artefact' as it represents a set of choices about what knowledge and values should ultimately be transmitted to preserve the values and ideologies of the majority culture. In a democratic society however, the curriculum can act as a lever for wider social change by representing the views of minority cultures. Such curricula aim to reshape social values and attitudes.

Nunan, George and McCausland (2000) argue forcefully that a school committed to inclusive education welcomes diversity. It accepts that diversity brings with it a greater range of experience, prior learning and cultural values, which when used within educational settings, can enrich learning outcomes for all concerned.

Dr.Oakley in his Notes to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (para 5.6) acknowledges that the police service requires ‘an occupational culture that is sensitive not just to the experiences of the majority but to the minority also. In short, an enhanced standard of police professionalism to meet the requirements of a multi-ethnic society’. This can be likened to a need for an enhanced standard of teaching professionalism that no longer relies on traditional, ethnocentric and monolingual teaching practices.

To provide direction, the education system must undergo considerable change to ensure that equality of opportunity is provided to all pupils. Educational policy must explicitly state the benefits of home language use and encourage its integration within the curriculum. In Wales in particular, the current ‘linguistic parochialism’ which was reflected by the Commission for Racial Equality within Wales’ (CRE, 2004) reference to Wales as a ‘multicultural, bilingual country’ must be addressed. The value of all languages must be acknowledged and reflected in current educational policy and practice.

Future studies

This study has explored a number of aims and addressed the research questions set out at the beginning of this dissertation. Furthermore, like all doctoral research projects it has generated further questions relating to the generalisability of the findings to different age groups, home languages and curriculum subject areas. An interesting consideration is whether home language materials would also benefit EAL learners who are considered to be more advanced in their English language development. These questions can only be addressed by a longer term, larger scale study with a larger sample size encompassing EAL pupils from across the Key Stages 1 to 4. To do this effectively, it is suggested that a research team including bilingual individuals with 'local knowledge' would be required. The bilingual team members could provide valuable data by exploring the perceptions and experiences of EAL pupils in their preferred language. They could also provide the appropriate translations for the computer based materials. Indeed, a future large scale project which encompassed several 'home languages' and cross-matched pupil samples in a range of schools and classrooms would generate significant data sets to inform subsequent policy and practice developments.

Further research might also explore teacher perceptions concerning the sustained use of computer-based home language materials within class and could focus upon the factors which influence such use.

A review of the literature has highlighted the importance of schools developing and maintaining good links with parents. Additional research in this area could focus upon parental perceptions of home language use within the school environment and may

include specific home-school projects where parents help to develop and then use home language resources. These could include story books translated onto audio cassette and ‘starter’ kits developed to enable parents to discuss curriculum subjects with their children prior to the topics being introduced in class. For example, Science ‘starter’ kits may contain the materials and bilingual instructions necessary for a range of simple experiments for topics such as ‘floating and sinking’ and the ‘changing states of water.’ Clearly there are numerous ‘language linked’ interventions possible which might involve families, communities and EAL pupils all of which would help schools meet their ‘inclusion’ goals. The recent thrusts towards enhancing family literacies (Hannan, 2000) via school based initiatives could embrace such work though resourcing costs are recognised.

A vision for home language use: final comments

Claims for equality of opportunity within the education system can only be justified where all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language can understand what is being taught and what is required of them. It is considered unacceptable in modern society with technological advances in all spheres of life to be *unable* to provide bilingual classroom resources. To be *unwilling* to provide such resources is equally unacceptable and reflects the dominant nature of our monolingual monocultural society.

EAL pupils are currently served by an education system which claims to be inclusive but is in fact largely indifferent and insensitive to the full range of language and learning needs of its ethnic minority pupils. A ‘conspiracy of deafness’ towards the multilingual abilities of EAL pupils is evident (Marland, 1987). Yet the number of

ethnic minority pupils is growing: our schools are and will continue to become more ethnically diverse than ever before. Schools therefore need to rid themselves of the current 'linguistic myopia' and acknowledge and embrace what Marland (1987), some twenty years ago, referred to as the 'linguistic facts of life'.

This study comprised of a small scale intervention over a short period of time focusing on one area of the National Curriculum yet clear benefits were identified from the use of home language materials. It is suggested that professionally produced CAL home language materials in every subject area would have huge long term implications for the school experiences and subsequent success of EAL pupils. Whilst initially time-consuming to develop, such resources are likely to be of benefit for a considerable period of time.

In an ideal scenario, computer based resources covering the core and foundation subject areas of the National Curriculum would be available in every language required. The resources would be of benefit to EAL pupils with a range of language needs from beginner to more advanced language learners, enabling existing concepts in the home language to 'map over' to English. EAL pupils could then work alongside monolingual pupils but with the benefit of home language resources which would help create a more level 'playing field'. This would also enable teachers to more ably match learning experiences to cognitive ability levels rather than to English language ability levels.

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These computer-based home language materials could assist EAL pupils within a range of school settings, including inner city schools with high proportions of EAL pupils and schools where only one or two EAL pupils are located and who consequently are unlikely to currently benefit from bilingual support.

Whilst individual teachers and schools can make a difference by developing their own home language CAL resources, the potential to revolutionise the learning experiences of EAL pupils across the UK is in the hands of central government and the Local Education Authorities who need to take responsibility on a national level, possibly by pooling resources to develop these cost-effective materials.

Full inclusion requires profound social change and involves serious commitment to the task of identifying, challenging and removing exclusionary practices. Full inclusion within the education system may therefore be unlikely in the immediate future. However as Marland (1987) acknowledges, the fact that something cannot be done completely should not prevent as much as possible from being carried out. The development of home language computer-based resources represents a small step towards the greater inclusion of EAL pupils within the curriculum.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Information concerning the Inspection Framework in relation to EAL pupils

Inspection Reports.

ACCAC (2001, p.9) characterise school inspections as ‘...concerned with ensuring that pupils, students and trainees from all ethnic and linguistic backgrounds have equal access to education, training and employment opportunities, and to the guidance and support that they need to succeed’. In particular, Curriculum Inspectors must evaluate and report on the extent to which provision is ‘...socially inclusive by ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all pupils’ (ACCAC, 2001 p.59).

The effectiveness of each school’s provision in promoting equality of opportunity, access to the curriculum and pupil achievement are assessed in a number of ways including the analysis of school documentation, observations of classroom and other school contexts and discussions with pupils and staff (ACCAC, 2001).

Within Wales, the Education Sector is regularly inspected by Estyn (formerly OHMCI). A Framework of Inspection (Estyn, 2004) is used by visiting teams of School Inspectors to assist them in their scrutiny and analysis of each institution’s effectiveness.

The Framework’s criteria and guiding questions are broad and organised under seven headings and sections. I examined these for evidence of any EAL specific questions.

1.4 Do pupils succeed regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background?

You should evaluate:

1.4.1 how well different groups of pupils are performing.

2.6 Do teachers promote equality of opportunity and actively address issues of gender, race and disability equality?

You should evaluate how well teachers:

2.6.1 promote equal opportunities and challenge stereotypical images and views; and

2.6.2 treat all pupils equally, irrespective of their race, gender or disability.

2.7 Do teachers meet the language needs of pupils, including providing access to bilingual teaching?

You will need to evaluate whether teachers:

2.7.1 are aware of pupils' ability to speak more than one language;

2.7.2 appreciate the potential advantages of pupils being able to work bilingually;

2.7.3 make use of pupils' knowledge and skills in both languages to advance and enrich their understanding of both languages; and

2.7.4 plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their bilingual skills in subjects across the curriculum.

4.13 Does the school support and guide pupils appropriately taking account of their social, educational, ethnic or linguistic background?

You should evaluate:

4.13.1 the extent to which the school recognises the diversity of pupils' backgrounds; and

4.13.2 whether the school acts appropriately and effectively on this information.

4.15 Does the school promote good race relations across all areas of activity?

You should evaluate how well the school:

4.15.1 promotes good race relations

Continued...

Source: Guidance on the Inspection of Primary and Nursery Schools (Estyn 2004).

4.16 Does the school have effective measures to eliminate oppressive behaviour, including racial discrimination, bullying and all forms of harassment?

You should evaluate:

4.16.1 the effectiveness of arrangements for making sure pupils are free from any form of discrimination and harassment; and

4.16.2 how well the school monitors and responds to incidences of oppressive behaviour.

4.18 does the school recognise and respect diversity?

You should judge the quality of the school's recognition and respect for diversity by the extent to which it:

4.18.1 has a policy in place that is visible and actively promotes diversity and equal opportunities;

4.18.2 has an action plan that ensures delivery of the policy;

4.18.3 provides activities through which pupils can develop an understanding of diversity and equal opportunities and come to value the contributions of others;

4.18.4 guards against institutional racism by providing appropriate training for its staff and learning opportunities for pupils; and

4.18.5 monitors this area and, where necessary, takes action to address issues and resolve problems.

Source: Guidance on the Inspection of Primary and Nursery Schools (Estyn 2004).

Appendix 2: A sample of interview schedules

I/V schedule for interviews with class teachers.

Outline purpose of interview. Request consent to tape record.

Background information:

Perhaps I can start by asking you a few questions about your teaching biography:

How long have you been teaching?

Where have you worked previously?

Why did you choose to work at this school?

Have you been given any specific training for working with EAL pupils? If so, what/when/ perceived usefulness.

Have you received any specific training aimed at increasing the multicultural nature of the curriculum?

Do you receive any in-school support specifically related to working with EAL pupils? Is so, what/ by whom?

Can you tell me how many pupils within your class have English as a second language?

Which home languages do your pupils speak?

Bilingual support:

What do you consider to be the role of the bilingual assistant?

Can you tell me which pupils are receiving bilingual support?

Why are they receiving this support? In which subject areas? How often?

How is the work that the bilingual assistant covers during this time decided upon?

Are you able to monitor the progress of pupils with the bilingual assistant? In what ways?

How important do you feel home language usage is within the classroom?

Do you feel it is more relevant at certain times than others i.e at certain ages/ certain areas of the curriculum?

Are you happy with the bilingual support that you receive? (in terms of number children included/ time spent/ quality of instruction...)

EAL support:

What do you consider to be the role of the EAL teacher?

Can you tell me about the EAL support that you receive in class: what/ when/ how often/perceived usefulness?

Which pupils receive this help and why chosen?

The EAL teacher often conducts all or part of the literacy hour, is there any particular reason for this?

Are you happy with the level of EAL support that you and your pupils receive? (in terms of number of children included/time spent/ quality of instruction...)

If you could address EAL pupils needs from an unlimited fund of money what would you do? (How would you further support them?)

Classroom challenges:

What do you consider to be your role with regard to EAL pupils and how does this differ to your role re monolingual pupils?

Have you faced any specific challenges associated with teaching a multilingual class? If so, what? How dealt with?

Are there any particular areas of the curriculum which seem more difficult to teach/ 'get across' to EAL pupils than other areas?

Are there any particular areas that EAL pupils seem to find more difficult to understand/ participate in?

Do you employ any specific strategies to increase participation levels of EAL pupils within your class? Can you describe a successful approach?

Do you use any specific resources to help EAL pupils?

Are you familiar with any of the home languages yourself? How has this familiarity been achieved?

How would you define the language abilities in your class: fluent/ moderate/ beginner EAL and how many pupils from each 'category' do you have?

What do you consider to be the minimal skills required by EAL pupils to enable them

to participate at an acceptable level within class (What is an acceptable level?)

From your experience, how long on 'average' does it take for pupils to acquire these skills?

How is cognitive ability determined for EAL pupils (if tested: which language used)?

How possible is it to differentiate work based on cognitive ability as opposed to language ability?

How possible is it to pitch the level of classroom discussion at an appropriate level for the needs of both EAL pupils and monolingual English pupils?

What do you consider to be your role with regard to EAL pupils and how does this differ to your role re monolingual pupils?

How does EAL pupils' lack of English effect their ability to fulfil their potential within class?

Literacy Hour.

What do you consider to be the main advantages of the literacy hour?

What do you consider to be the main disadvantages of the literacy hour?

Do you feel that this format is beneficial for EAL pupils? Why/ Why not?

What do you feel is the most important element of the literacy hour?
In what ways do you feel that the 'running' (discourse/interactions) of the literacy hour would be different if there were no EAL pupils within the class?

What is the role of the Big Book?

How well does it serve its purpose?

How do you decide which Big Books to use?

How do you decide on paper activities to follow/how closely are they linked to Big Book?

How do you decide what the learning objectives for each particular week are going to be?

How do the objectives differ for EAL and monolingual pupils?

Do you use any specific resources for your material (e.g. 100 literacy hour resource book).

How closely do you feel you follow the CAL guidelines for the literacy hour? Could

they be improved?

Do you feel that the time element is right? (need longer/ less time).

How concerned are you if pupils do not finish their designated work? What happens re completion?

Are you able to assess whether pupils have met the learning objectives? If so, how?

How has the introduction of the literacy hour changed your working practices? Is this a good/ bad thing?

Do you feel that the Literacy Strategy is meeting its own overall objective i.e to increase literacy levels? If so, why/ why not?

Are there any changes that you would like to see made to it?

ICT

Do you use computers with your class?

- If not why not?

- If yes, how often, for what purposes, for all children within the class or specific individuals/groups.

- What software do you use?

Have you come across Clicker 4?

Have you had training for Clicker 4? If so, how long was the training for/ how useful was it?

Have you used Clicker 4 since? If yes, in what ways? If no, why ?

How do you feel about computer use within the class in general?

What are your thoughts about introducing the home languages via Clicker 4?

Do you have any reservations regarding its use for this purpose?

General questions:

In what ways do you try to accommodate the multicultural aspects of your class within your teaching?

Does the multicultural diversity of your class influence the way that you address celebrations, such as, Xmas and Easter? If so, in what ways?

(try here to probe as to whether teachers are aware that Muslim children do not receive visits from Santa/ tend not to celebrate Xmas etc).

Can you outline the assessments that pupils will undergo throughout the school year ?

Are any additional measures taken re EAL pupils (i.e. additional assessments/ use of home language etc).

What contact is usually had with parents of EAL pupils?

Is any specific guidance given to parents re literacy work at home etc? Do pupils take 'book bags' home and if so, are reading records available for completion by parents?

In your experience, have you found that a particular ethnic minority group is underachieving as a whole? If so, which one (s). Why do you think this is the case?

Any other comments you would like to make?

Interview schedule for interviews with EAL teachers.

Outline purpose of study. Request permission to tape record.

Background information:

Perhaps I can start by asking you a few questions about your teaching biography:

How long have you been teaching?

How long as an EAL teacher?

Where have you worked previously?

Why did you choose to work at this school?

Do you hold any specialist qualifications relating to teaching pupils with English as an additional language?

Have you been given any specific In-service training for working with EAL pupils? If so, what/ when/ perceived usefulness.

Have you received any specific training aimed at increasing the multicultural nature of the curriculum?

Do you receive any in-school support specifically related to working with EAL pupils? If so, what/ by whom?

What do you consider to be your role?

Do you have a specific focus for your work i.e. grammar, vocabulary and communication skills as opposed to academic content?

What type of support do you give i.e individual/ small group etc?

Which children are EAL support provided for?

Why are they receiving this support? In which subject areas? How often? How long is each session?

How is the work that you cover during this time decided upon?

Classroom challenges:

Have you faced any specific challenges associated with teaching a multilingual class? If so, what? How dealt with?

Are there any particular areas of the curriculum which seem more difficult to teach/ 'get across' to EAL pupils than other areas?

Are there any particular areas that EAL pupils seem to find more difficult to understand/ participate in?

Do you employ any specific strategies to increase participation levels of EAL pupils within your class? Can you describe a successful approach?

Do you use any specific resources to help EAL pupils?

Are you familiar with any of the home languages yourself? How has this familiarity been achieved?

How would you define the language abilities in your class: fluent/ moderate/ beginner EAL and how many pupils from each 'category' do you have?

What do you consider to be the minimal skills required by EAL pupils to enable them to participate at an acceptable level within class (What is an 'acceptable' level?)

From your experience, how long on 'average' does it take for pupils to acquire these skills?

How is cognitive ability determined for EAL pupils (if tested: which language used)?

How possible is it to differentiate work based on cognitive ability as opposed to language ability?

How possible is it to pitch the level of classroom discussion at an appropriate level for the needs of both EAL pupils and monolingual English pupils?

How does EAL pupils' lack of English effect their ability to fulfil their potential within class?

Literacy Hour.

I have noticed that you tend to undertake the literacy hour sessions, is there any particular reason for this?

What do you consider to be the main advantages of the literacy hour?

What do you consider to be the main disadvantages of the literacy hour?

Do you feel that this format is beneficial for EAL pupils? Why/ Why not?

What do you feel is the most important element of the literacy hour?

In what ways do you feel that the 'running' (discourse/interactions) of the literacy hour would be different if there were no EAL pupils within the class?

What is the role of the Big Book?

How well does it serve its purpose?

How is it decided which Big Books to use?

How is it decided which paper activities to follow/how closely are they linked to Big Book?

How is it decided what the learning objectives for each particular week are going to be?

How do the objectives differ for EAL and monolingual pupils?

Do you use any specific resources for your material (e.g. 100 literacy hour resource book).

How closely do you feel you follow the CAL guidelines for the literacy hour?

Do you feel that the time element is right? (need longer/ less time).

How concerned are you if pupils do not finish their designated work? What happens re completion?

Are you able to assess whether pupils have met the learning objectives? If so, how?

How has the introduction of the literacy hour changed your working practices? Is this a good/ bad thing?

Do you feel that the Literacy Strategy is meeting its own overall objective i.e to increase literacy levels? If so, why/ why not?

Are there any changes that you would like to see made to it?

ICT

Do you use computers with your pupils?

- If not, why not?

- If yes, how often, for what purposes, for all children within the class or specific individuals/groups.

- What software do you use?

Have you come across Clicker 4?

Have you had training for Clicker 4? If so, how long was the training for/ how useful was it?

Have you used Clicker 4 since? If yes, in what ways? If no, why ?

How do you feel about computer use within the class in general?

What are your thoughts about introducing the home languages via Clicker 4?

Do you have any reservations regarding its use for this purpose?

General questions:

In what ways do you try to accommodate the multicultural aspects of your class within your teaching?

Does the multicultural diversity of your class influence the way that you address celebrations, such as, Xmas and Easter? If so, in what ways?

(try here to probe as to whether teachers are aware that Muslim children do not receive visits from Santa/ tend not to celebrate Xmas).

What do you consider to be the role of the bilingual assistants?

Do you liaise with the bilingual assistants? If so, for what purposes?

How important do you feel home language usage is within the classroom?

Can you outline the assessments that pupils will undergo throughout the school year ? Are any additional measures taken re EAL pupils (i.e. additional assessments/ use of home language etc).

What contact is usually had with parents of EAL pupils?

Is any specific guidance given to parents re literacy work at home etc? Do pupils take 'book bags' home and if so, are reading records available for completion by parents?

In your experience, have you found that a particular ethnic minority group is underachieving as a whole? If so, which one (s). Why do you think this is the case?

Do you feel that the support given to EAL pupils is sufficient within the school?

What would your 'ideal' scenario be? If you could address EAL pupils needs from an unlimited fund of money what would you do? (How would this further support them?)

Any other comments you would like to make?

Interview schedule for Bilingual Assistants.

Outline purpose of the study. Request permission to tape record interview.

Background information:

How long have you been working here?

Do you work at any other schools?

How many hours per week do you work at this school?

Which languages can you speak?

Which languages do you use within the school?

Do you feel that the class teachers welcome home language use in class?

Do you think that home languages are used as often as they should be? Why/ why not?

What do you feel that the children gain from home language input?

What do you consider your role to be?

Have you received any formal training for your work?

How is your time at the school allocated between classes?

What type of support do you tend to give- individual/ small groups etc

How do you know what aspects of the curriculum to cover with individual pupils?

How often do you tend to work with the pupils? How long is each session?

Are there any specific areas of the curriculum that seem more difficult for EAL pupils to follow?

How closely do you liaise with individual teachers?

What sort of feedback do they tend to ask for?

What do you consider to be the role of the EAL teacher?

Do you liaise with EAL teachers at all? Is so, for what purpose?

Do you feel that the support given to EAL pupils is sufficient within the school?

What would your 'ideal' scenario be? If you had unlimited funds what would you do to further support EAL pupils?

How do you think pupils will react to the home language computer programmes?

Can you think of any possible difficulties that may be incurred?

Any other comments you would like to make?

Appendix 3: A copy of the observational checklist

Behaviour checklist adapted from Day, DE (1983)

Name of Pupil:

Date:

Scenario:

1) Task involvement: Student becomes absorbed in activities, completes games and tasks, attends appropriately to what s/he is doing.

<i>On-task behaviours</i>	<i>1/2/ 3/4 /5/6/7/8/9/10</i>	<i>Off-task behaviours</i>	<i>1 /2 /3/ 4/5/6/7/8/9/10</i>
Looking directly at teacher.		Looking away from teacher e.g. out of window	
Tracks teacher movements e.g. pointer on Big Book		Twiddling hair	
Legs and arms in appropriate position		Fiddling with shoe	
Other (specify)		Other (specify)	

Comments:

2) Resolves problems appropriately: engages in 'paired talk' / provides appropriate responses to questions.

Completes tasks: uses whiteboard and pen/ flashcards appropriately.

<i>On-task behaviours</i>	<i>1 /2 /3 /4 /5/6 /7 8/9/10</i>	<i>Off-task behaviours</i>	<i>1 /2 /3 /4 /5/6/7/8/9/10</i>
Engages in 'paired talk' /		Does not engage in paired talk	
Provides appropriate responses to questions.		Hand up/ no response Hand not up	
Uses whiteboard and pen/ flashcards appropriately.		Does not engage with resources	
Initiates and participates in verbal interactions		Does not initiate/ participate in verbal interactions	

Other: (specify)		Other (specify)	
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Comments:

2) Cooperation: Student engages in cooperative activities with adults and other children.

'On-task' behaviour	1/ 2/ 3/ 4/5/6/7/8/9/10	'Off-task' behaviour	1/ 2/3 / 4/5/6/7/8/9/10
Seeks participation with a child or adult: hand up to answer questions.		Does not participate	
Joins in group activities: joins in 'reading' of Big Book/ participates in front of class activities e.g. holding up flash cards		Does not join in group activities.	
Takes turns			

Comments:

Appendix 4: A copy of the letter of access sent to head teachers

Dear

Re: Our recent telephone conversation and my subsequent telephone conversation with

Firstly may I thank you for allowing me to undertake my postgraduate research within your school. As you may be aware, my research is being funded by the Economic and Social Research Council within the area of social inclusion and focuses upon increasing access to the curriculum for pupils for whom English is an additional language. In particular, I am keen to explore the effects of introducing the pupils' home languages via the medium of the computer, to support the literacy hour process. I have conducted preliminary fieldwork within another multilingual school where I have used the 'Clicker 4' package to design Arabic talking books.

As my research is part of a doctoral project, I now need to undertake a controlled study, which is designed to assess the impact of home language usage within one specific aspect of the classroom. I would therefore like to adapt a study carried out in America with monolingual pupils, which focused upon vocabulary acquisition as a result of listening to stories. The two stories used are versions of 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf' and 'A Crocodile's Tale'). They will be made into talking stories using the 'Clicker 4' computer package. Each English as an additional language pupil will receive one of the stories in English and one in English with a home language translation. Both stories will contain a range of unfamiliar words. My main analysis will then focus upon whether the home language version increases pupils' ability: a) to define the meaning of a larger number of unfamiliar words (using a pictorial grid test) and b) to provide richer more detailed story retellings. By including a sample of monolingual English pupils, I shall also be able to compare the overall gains of EAL pupils (with and without the benefit of the home language translations) and monolingual pupils.

With your agreement, the research will take the following format:

1) Assessment of the existing vocabulary levels of all sample pupils using the British Pictorial Vocabulary Scale. The sample will comprise of all pupils with Arabic, Somali and Sylheti as their first languages and a small group of monolingual English speakers (c.7 children) within the Reception year classes.

2) Each individual will work through both stories with me. Each story will require four consecutive days to cover and take approximately ten minutes per day. In addition, each pupil will be asked to retell the stories on days 1 and 4 and to complete a pictorial grid test based on the target words on day 4.

With your agreement, I would like to begin work within your school at the beginning of June. It is envisaged that the main part of my study will require my presence within each class for a period of two weeks.

I am aware that you may wish to advise the governing body of my study and also to inform parents of their children's proposed involvement. I am more than happy to present my findings to the board of governors/ parents in due course if you wish.

Thank you once again for providing me with this opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Cheryl Ellis
BA (Hons)

Appendix 5: Allocation of marks for the Story Component Tests.

Story Component Test: allocation of marks for scoring system.

‘A Crocodile’s Tale’

One point awarded for each correct component : maximum possible score of 15.

1) One day Matteo met a **crocodile** who was very upset because he was **snared** to a tree. “Can I help you?” asked Matteo.

2) “If you **release** me from this tree, I will give you a gold ring” replied the crocodile.

3) So Matteo untied the rope. “May I have my gold ring now, please?” he asked.

4) The crocodile answered “It is across the **river**, jump on my back and we’ll go and **obtain** it”.

5) So Matteo jumped onto the crocodile’s back. But when they were only half way across the river the crocodile said “ I don’t have a gold ring and I am going to eat you up!”

6) “ That isn’t fair!” cried Matteo. “You can’t eat me! I helped you!” The crocodile laughed “Most boys never get the chance to have a crocodile **consume** them!”

7) Just then an old teddy bear came floating by. “Let’s **enquire** of that teddy bear to see whether he thinks you should eat me or not” said Matteo. The crocodile agreed.

“Teddy bear, teddy bear” Matteo called “I found this crocodile tied to a tree, I freed him in exchange for a gold ring but he tricked me and wants to eat me “Do you think that is right?”

8) The teddy bear answered “I used to be a little girl’s best friend but when I became **decrepit** she **discarded** me into the river. People are not fair so why should crocodiles be? Go ahead and eat the boy”.

9) The crocodile opened his mouth to eat Matteo. “No, no, not yet!” he cried. He looked around and saw a monkey up a tree. “Let’s ask the **monkey** what he thinks” said Matteo . “Okay but hurry” said the crocodile “this is your last chance!”. “Monkey, monkey!” shouted Matteo “The crocodile is going to eat me!”

10) “I can’t hear you” replied the monkey “Come closer crocodile so that the boy’s words are **audible**”. The crocodile swam towards the bank.

11) Matteo began to tell the monkey the story but the monkey called “I still can’t hear you-come closer”.

12) As the crocodile swam nearer to the bank Matteo jumped to safety. “Oh thank you, monkey!” he said “You have saved my life!”.

13) "Maybe you can **assist** me now" said the monkey "Ask your father to plant more banana trees, so that there are **plenty** for everyone.

14) And ~~when~~ you see me hiding in the trees do not **divulge** my hiding place to your father.

15) "Alright" said Matteo " You helped me and so I will help you".

Story Component Test: allocation of marks for scoring system.

‘The Boy Who Cried Wolf’

One point awarded for each correct component : maximum possible score of 15.

1) Once upon a time, there was a shepherd boy called Adil who lived in a little stone house next to his sheep’s barn.

2) Every day he watched his **sheep** and every night he went to his **abode**, ate his dinner and fell asleep.

3) “Nothing exciting ever happens to me” thought Adil. “Today I will have some fun!” He began to **clamour** “Help! help! help! the wolf is going to eat my sheep!”

4) Some hunters who were walking nearby heard Adil and shouted “Don’t be afraid we’re coming!” They ran towards him, **toting** their great big guns over their shoulders.

5) “Where is the wolf?” they asked. “Follow me” said Adil and he **escorted** them around the lake. “There is no wolf” the hunters said. “Ha ha!” laughed Adil “I fooled you!”

6) The hunters were **irate** ‘You’ll never fool us again” they said and **strode** back towards the **forest**.

7) The next day Adil saw some fishermen **angling** in the lake. “I’ll have some more fun today” he thought. He began to shout “Help! help! help! The **wolf** is going to eat my sheep!”

8) The fishermen answered “Don’t worry we’ll help you”. They dropped their fishing rods and ran towards Adil.

9) “Where is the wolf?” they asked. “Ha ha!” **chortled** Adil “There is no wolf I tricked you!” “Well you will never trick us again” said the fishermen.

10) “Oh, that was fun!” said Adil “I wish I could do it everyday!”.

11) The very next day, Adil heard a **hideous** growl as he watched his sheep. Suddenly a great big wolf appeared! Adil was very frightened and ran for help- shouting “ Help! help! help!

12) The hunters and the fishermen came running to see what the noise was. “Quick come with me! A wolf is going to eat my sheep!” cried Adil.

“ Oh no” replied the men “You will not fool us again!”.

“But I’m not **deceiving** you this time, I’m telling the truth!” cried Adil.

13) “We don’t believe you” they **replied**. No one would help Adil. He went back to

the hill on his own, but all the sheep were gone.

14) “Hee Hee!” laughed the wolf “You told so many lies that no one would believe you when you told the truth.”

15) “The wolf is right” Adil thought. “I must tell the truth” and from that day on, he always did.