

**INVESTIGATING LEXICAL
UNDERSTANDING:
A STUDY OF EAL AND L1 PRIMARY
PUPILS**

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Abstract

The increasing multicultural and multilingual population of the UK has set new challenges for the education system. This study focuses on a particular aspect of this, namely pupils in schools in the city of Leicester who use English as an additional language (EAL). It compares their lexical understanding with that of their monolingual English-speaking peers, when both sets of pupils appeared to have attained the same surface proficiency in reading. This work also investigates teachers' awareness of any lexical comprehension gap that might exist for their EAL pupils.

These key issues could not be studied in isolation, so this research was set in a sociocultural framework. This drew together social and cultural strands to give a situational understanding of the target pupils in city schools. It encompassed their teachers' observations and perceptions through a series of thirty interviews undertaken with these practitioners. This was complemented by interviews with ten key management personnel from the Language Support Service undertaken to investigate the objectives of the Service, and how successfully these were implemented in schools.

The empirical research of this study was a Vocabulary Test undertaken with one hundred primary school pupils to test the key hypothesis that EAL pupils' lexical understanding was not as comprehensive as that of their L1 peers. Fifty of the pupils used English as an additional language, forming the EAL group of this study, and these were matched with fifty monolingual English-speaking pupils, the L1 group. The results of the Vocabulary Test substantiated this hypothesis for the target lexemes included in the test, and they also substantiated the additional hypothesis that mainstream teachers did not always fully recognise lexical misunderstandings that their EAL pupils might have.

The research was classroom-based, and incorporated some principles of action research. A key factor in the action research paradigm has been disseminating the finding to schools and to teachers to effect changes in classroom practice by increasing awareness of lexical difficulties that EAL pupils might have. For this study, the dissemination has taken the form of Vocabulary Workshops for school staff, and these are ongoing at the present time. The workshops are designed to help teachers enhance EAL pupils' understanding of lexis in English and their learning through English.

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Glossary of key terms

There have been frequent adjustments to the terminology relating to ethnic minority pupils and multicultural education. These reflect both a developing awareness of learner identities and changes in central government policy. The key terms are listed below in specific categories, first, those related to pupils, second, those related to population groups and, third, DfEE and literature terms..

Key terms relating to pupils

Bilingual - used to denote pupils operating in two languages, though not automatically fluent in both or either.

EAL – English as an additional language. This term was adopted by the DfEE in 1996 for official use in referring to pupils for whom English is not a first language. This acronym has been used throughout most of this research to refer to the target group of pupils, as identified according to Leicester LEA criteria used in the sample schools.

EFL - English as a Foreign Language. Not now used to refer to pupils in schools, but commonly refers to adult learners of English.

ESL / E2L - English as a Second Language. A former term for EAL pupils in local schools.

L1 – monolingual English-speaking pupils in schools participating in this study.

Key terms relating to population groups

Ethnic Minority – person or people from a different linguistic and/or cultural heritage than the main population group. It is used in this study to refer to the target group of pupils and their families from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Immigrant – person from overseas taking up residence in the U.K. Widely used in the past, it has come to have negative connotations.

Minority ethnic – this is the term favoured by the different cultural groups in Leicester, who argue that everybody has ethnicity, therefore ethnic minority is not correct. However, as DfEE documents and relevant literature commonly use “ethnic minority,” this is the term used in this study to conform with standard national practice.

Key terms used by the DfEE and in literature

EMAG - Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. This was the revised title given to Section 11 in 1999. It was revised within a year to EMTAG. .

EMTAG - Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant. This replaced EMAG in 1999 by including travellers in its remit.

LEA – Local Education Authority

OFSTED – Office for Standards in Education

QCA - Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

SATS – Standard Attainment Tasks. These are taken at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in primary schools. The expected norm for Key Stage 1 pupils is Level 2.

Key Stage 2 pupils are expected to attain Level 4.

Section 11 – Title given to the Language Support Service provided for pupils for whom English was not a first language. It originated from Clause 11 of the Local Government Act of 1966, and kept this title until 1999.

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CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW AND GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This introductory chapter gives an overview of this study. It outlines the aims, significance and limitations of the present research and sketches relevant background to the local context in which the study was conducted.

The growth of the ethnic minority population of the UK has set new challenges for the education system. This research explores issues relating to the language learning of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) in schools within the local context of the city of Leicester. It grew out of the researcher's post as a language support teacher working with EAL pupils and their teachers in the classroom situation. This daily interaction in the teaching and learning situation prompted key questions about EAL pupils' lexical understanding and attendant issues. Do these children know some meanings of crucial vocabulary items encountered in their reading, but not others, which are very familiar to L1 pupils whose first language is English? Do their primary teachers overestimate EAL pupils' knowledge of vocabulary? As a result, this research project was undertaken to investigate these issues.

To investigate the hypothesis that there are significant differences in the understanding of key lexemes and lexical units in reading texts between pupils having English as an additional language and those whose first language is English, one hundred pupils were tested using a self-designed vocabulary test. Fifty of these children were L1 pupils and fifty were EAL pupils. These pupils were put into L1/EAL pairs by their class teachers. Each pair was matched by their teacher as being at the same level of reading ability. It was critical to the study that this pair matching was undertaken by the teachers, as the second key proposal of this study was that teachers were not always aware that differences in lexical understanding between the two groups might exist, but might presume that because both pupils in each pair were assessed as having the same general surface proficiency in reading then they were also understanding vocabulary in the text at the same level. By matching the children for reading ability, the teachers were effectively giving evidence that in their judgement both the EAL and the L1 pupil in each matched pair *was* reading and understanding at the same level.

To give a broader understanding of teachers' knowledge about their EAL pupils' cultural backgrounds, their observations about these pupils, and the type of support they felt would be most useful, a series of thirty interviews were undertaken with mainstream practitioners. These were complemented by ten interviews with key management personnel from the then Section 11 Language Support Service (now subsumed under the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant), which had responsibility for providing support to local schools. The resulting data were analysed to provide key points from teachers, who had day-to-day responsibility for their EAL pupils' learning, and key objectives from the Section 11 management for improving EAL pupils' proficiency in English and raising their educational achievement. These interviews were significant within this study to give a contextual understanding of the specific issues relating to EAL pupils that were investigated in the research so that they were not studied in isolation.

Rationale for the study.

The current research attempts to go some way to fill an acknowledged void in British EAL research. Data from the 1991 census (the most recently available figures) show that Leicester is the authority with the highest percentage of ethnic minorities outside the London area. This means that there are many schools that have varying percentages of EAL pupils for whom it is necessary to provide language support teaching for English. In some schools this proportion is very high, although there is little or no research to ascertain the detailed language needs of the pupils apart from the figures compiled through a general needs analysis. Academics agree that overall there is a lack of research on the EAL school population in the U.K. (Rampton et al 1997, Cortazzi- personal comment.) Most quoted research in this area has been from North America, e.g. Cummins, (1984, 1996) Lantolf & Appell, (1994) Swain & Lapkin, (1982, 1995). Although this is valuable, it does not allow for an appropriate transfer of theory, policy and practice because of situational differences and population differences. The current research is locally contextualized, and addresses issues relevant to the school population of Leicester. Such issues are also likely to be relevant to other local authorities within the U.K. with a large ethnic minority population.

At a more specific level, it has been noted that lexis in second language acquisition is an under-researched area, particularly so in the case of young EAL pupils in British schools (McWilliam, 1997). This study investigates lexical understanding, and its attendant links

with reading comprehension, with a sample of these pupils. It is argued that this is significant because if pupils are unaware of the meaning of key lexical items in texts, or have misconceptions, then this could affect their development of concepts and delay their learning.

At a local level, Leicester has been rated in the bottom ten of the national school league tables for achievement (Guardian Education, December 7th 2000). The city's OFSTED report of 1998 attributed this to both the city's underprivileged white population and to the high ethnic minority population, with the implication that large numbers of EAL pupils may affect low league table placement presumable because of language-related issues. This gives further credence for research into EAL pupils' performance, which this present study has set out to investigate. The research can also contribute to the current debate about ethnic minority underachievement at a national level (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996), especially if it demonstrates that there are comprehension gaps between EAL and L1 pupils of which their teachers may be unaware.

The particular focus of this study in investigating possible difficulties in EAL pupils' use of English that are not easily identifiable by their teachers is also becoming a current national concern. The QCA document, "A language in common: Assessing English as an additional language" (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2000) notes that in an analysis of SATS results for English at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, EAL pupils achieved lower scores than the monolingual sample. Critically, for the purposes of this study, the document notes, "*Across all key stages pupils who are assessed by their teachers as relatively fluent speakers of English still find some aspects of the test difficult*" (ibid p.9); though which aspects and the nature of the difficulty are not specified. This statement correlates with the additional hypothesis of this study, namely that teachers are not always aware that EAL pupils who are reading the same texts as their monolingual peers and displaying the same surface decoding ability may not have the same understanding of key lexical units in those texts. If the findings of this research give concrete evidence of this, it will be useful in identifying one key area of difficulty that EAL pupils may have. It will also allow feedback to be given to teachers about specific difficulties that their EAL learners may have.

The QCA document further states that, "*Even when EAL pupils are attaining the same level as monolingual pupils, closer inspection of their scores within the level may be*

needed to reveal whether or not the attainment is secure” (op cit). It is argued that this study undertakes a systematic and close inspection of the lexical understanding of both L1 and EAL primary pupils, and if the findings uphold the research hypothesis it may clarify some pedagogical issues centred around EAL pupils and their teachers.

The researchers' background

After ten years as a classroom teacher, combining school practice with ongoing professional development, the researcher taught overseas in Africa for two years. This led to an interest in multicultural education, and upon returning to the U.K. it was a natural course of action to join the then Section 11 Language Support Service. This particular role led to personal perceptions about what can be termed “comprehension gaps” in EAL pupils’ performance in reading in local schools. A further perception was that class teachers were largely unaware of this gap, and assumed that their EAL pupils’ reading comprehension matched their reading in terms of decoding ability. These initial perceptions were the starting point of this research, and were further refined as the work took shape. This was undertaken on a part-time basis, in conjunction with school practice, thus combining the roles of *teacher* and *researcher*: the researcher was investigating such “comprehension gaps” in the classrooms and schools in which she was also a teacher.

The idea of the “teacher as researcher” was seminally advocated by Stenhouse in the 1970s. Stenhouse believed that curriculum development should belong to the teacher. This was followed in the 1980s by Schon’s influential theory of the reflective practitioner (Schon, 1983). The current study was undertaken by a teacher-researcher. Though combining these roles is rewarding in terms of both personal and professional development, it is by no means an easy path to follow. These issues are discussed more fully in Chapter Six of this study, whilst the key research questions are presented in the next section of this chapter.

Key Research Questions

The current research was qualitatively driven, but with a quantitative element, as discussed in Chapter Six. The initial perceptions from which this study originated, indicated earlier, developed into the following key areas of inquiry.

- **Do EAL pupils have less understanding of key lexical units in everyday classroom texts than their monolingual peers when both are assessed as reading at the same level of proficiency?** If this proves to be the case, it will give substance, at the lexical level, to the QCA concerns about EAL pupils' attainment referred to earlier. It will have implications for EAL pupils' development of concepts and their learning across the curriculum.
- **Are teachers aware that differences in lexical understanding might exist between the two groups of pupils?** While this question is to some extent related to the first, it is conceptually independent; teachers' awareness that differences are possible may be independent of actual differences or similarities between EAL and L1 pupils' lexical understanding. If teachers are unaware of their EAL pupils' misunderstanding of key lexical items in texts (if the answer to Question 1 is affirmative), then they will not put the appropriate strategies in place to support vocabulary learning. This may affect both EAL pupils' learning of English and learning through English.

Background to the study

Since the 1960s there has been an unprecedented increase in the ethnic minority population of Leicester. Large-scale immigration began with the influx of Asian refugees from Kenya and Uganda. Prior to 1968, there were 33 pupils from African Commonwealth countries in Leicester schools. In 1968 the number of pupils from Kenya alone had risen to 1,077 and the cumulative number of immigrant children was 5,884 (Marett, 1989). By 1999, ethnic minority pupils made up over 40% of the total school population in the city (EMTAG, 1999). This gives evidence of the scale of immigration into the city within a generation, with obvious implications for schools and for teachers. Data from the Survey of Leicester of 1983 and the 1991 census also illustrates the changing ethnic demography of the city. Moreover, considerable numbers of pupils from overseas are continuing to arrive in Leicester, including more than 800 Somali children during 2001 (EMAG data).

The unforeseen arrival of large numbers of pupils who had English as an additional language in the 1970s took the local education authority by surprise. These were largely Gujarati-speaking Asians forced to leave Kenya and Uganda. Local schools were “bending under a flood of immigrants” (The Times Educational Supplement 27.11. 1970, cited in Marett, 1989). There were insufficient school places for these new arrivals and expediency measures were taken to provide for their education. Few mainstream teachers had any experience or knowledge about teaching children who had English as an additional language. The need for these pupils to acquire English was felt to be met best by withdrawing them from the mainstream and coaching them in English (Marett 1989).

As the EAL school population increased, there was a growing perception about the need to introduce multicultural education into city schools, though this was not a universally held principle. Dr. Terry Allcott (personal interview) recalls that in a public meeting in 1978, the then Deputy Director of Education stated that it was the policy of the authority *not* to have a policy for multicultural education. However, riots in the city in 1981 brought the issue to a head. Allcott maintains,

“I feel that the 1981 riots were crucially important, seminal in fact, in forcing the Authority to face up to the realities of multicultural education” (ibid).

National and local pressure groups were also instrumental in prompting the LEA’s 1982 statement on multicultural education (Allcott, 1992). In the wake of this, an Advisor for Multicultural Education was appointed, a resource centre was opened, and a major INSET initiative was begun to encourage schools to implement antiracist and multicultural policies and practice. According to Allcott (ibid) “the course concentrated on centralising the issue of antiracismand looked at the institutional and the curricular implications of any given school or college adopting an antiracist policy” (p. 175). Certainly the course was well attended. Allcott (ibid) states that: “By the time the course was terminated at the end of the 1987-88 academic year, every secondary school in the LEA except one had had at least one participant attend the course, and some has several. In addition, approximately 95% of primary schools had attended” (p.177). It would appear from Allcott’s account that there was less focus on EAL pupils’ development of English than on the issues of antiracism and multiculturalism. This may have been because these policies needed to be in place before

successful English language support for EAL pupils could be undertaken. Arguably, it could also be a lack of awareness about second or additional language learning. However, at a local level, the LEA had begun to address some issues arising from its diverse school population. Funding for this had been available since 1966 from the Section 11 grant.

At a national level the Government provided, and continues to provide, extra funding for local authorities with a large immigrant population. This was traditionally known as the Section 11 Grant because of its origin as Section 11 of the Local Government Act of 1966. These funds were made available for local authorities to support the cost of employing additional staff on projects designed to help members of ethnic minorities of New Commonwealth origin to overcome linguistic or cultural barriers that might impede their access to mainstream services and facilities. Although this grant was largely spent on education, before 1992 it was not always used for the specific purposes for which it was meant. The support was often put into mainstream teaching, rather than being targeted as intended on ethnic minority pupils.

The chequered history of Section 11, including its implications for education, has been termed “A Comedy of Errors” (Dorn & Hibbert, in Troyna, 1987, p. 59). Because local authorities were able to claim funding without defining a precise specification of how it would be spent, there were many anomalies in its use. Dorn and Hibbert (ibid p. 63) claim that this resulted in authorities being able to “employ large numbers of unidentifiable teachers with no specific brief beyond that of ostensibly being an addition to the staffing complement of “immigrant schools”. Garnett (personal interview) gives a personal recollection of this situation occurring when he worked in an inner-city comprehensive school. There was what he describes as a “panic” because the school had an additional member of staff paid for by Section 11 funding. He relates:

“The panic was because someone, somewhere, wanted to know who it was. The deputy head explained that it didn’t matter who it was, so long as there was a name. So the bloke who taught history was nominated, the form from the Education department was filled in, and nothing changed.”

Concerns about the misuse of funding from the National Union of Teachers and the Swann Report of 1985 amongst others resulted in a thorough review of Section 11 in 1990, and, at a local level, the subsequent emergence of a professional, effective and accountable Language Support Service in the LEA with a brief to support teachers and schools both in

raising EAL pupils' proficiency in English and in giving these pupils equal access to the curriculum. The scale of the Service can be gauged by the fact that 232 full-time equivalent teachers, bilingual assistants and home-school liaison staff were appointed or reappointed. Eight project managers were given a management role. They were key figures responsible for organizing the way the Service worked with and for schools, and gave support to mainstream teachers. They were also responsible for raising the expertise of their teams by providing relevant in-service training. Interviews with these project managers are included in this study because of their key role in directing support to EAL pupils and their teachers in schools.

The new Section 11 Service gave the prospect that the language learning needs of the city's EAL school population could now be better met. Moreover, by the mid 1990s, when the present study was in progress, the language needs of EAL pupils could be seen in the context of the National Curriculum with the associated SATs, and the ranking of scores for English of schools and the local education authority. There was a clear perception that EAL pupils might have lower scores that could consequently lower the ranking of a school. This provided an additional pragmatic argument for EAL support.

The present study is set in the background context outlined above. This chapter next presents an overview of the study.

Overview of the Study

The literature review of this study begins with Chapter 2, which reviews the writings of Bakhtin and Vygotsky, and the more contemporary sociocultural theories which have developed from these. Those relating to education and schools in particular have been included. These theories will be used to frame an analysis of how the target lexical units are read, negotiated and constructed in teacher-pupil interaction. This is followed in Chapter 3 by a review of some key principles relating to first and second language development.

The chapter begins with an outline of first language development and reviews some major theories in the field. Selected key principles of second language acquisition are subsequently discussed, followed by a major section on the work of Cummins. This contains a rationale of why his ideas are believed to be particularly relevant to this study.

The focus of Chapter 4 is on how children acquire vocabulary, and develop concepts. Lexical acquisition in both first and second language is reviewed. This leads into an analysis of the views of Vygotsky and Piaget about the development of concepts in children, and to what degree each relates to the current research. The importance of concept development and how it may impact on children's learning is further discussed by reference to the work of Halliday and Matthiessen (1999).

Differing practices in language socialization are embedded in the UK's increasingly multicultural population, and this is an emerging area in educational research. It can be argued that this knowledge is critical for teachers, and can be used to inform school practice. Chapter 5 gives a review of some relevant overseas studies, and then focuses on contemporary studies in the UK, and their importance in fostering a greater understanding of pupils' culturally diverse home literacy practices.

The methodology underpinning this study is discussed in Chapter 6. This chapter traces the initiation of this research to ideas about the role of the teacher-as-researcher that are allied to aspects of action research. The development of the research design, and how this was implemented in schools, is detailed. This chapter addresses the advantages and disadvantages of teacher research by documenting the particular successes and difficulties that were encountered during this particular study. It is concluded with a discussion of the limitations of the research.

Chapter 7 gives an analysis of the interviews that were undertaken with the Project Managers of the Section 11 Service, now the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG). This is followed by an analysis of the interviews conducted with mainstream teachers working in city schools. The objective of the first set of interviews was to investigate what type of provision the Project Managers envisaged for supporting EAL pupils and their teachers in local schools, and how they wished to implement this. The second set of interviews with practitioners were undertaken to gain an insight into teachers' beliefs and expectations about their EAL pupils, and also their experiences with, and observations of these children.

A key question in this study is whether overall EAL pupils experience more difficulty with understanding lexemes and lexical units in reading books than their monolingual peers who

are assessed as reading at the same level. A Vocabulary Test, devised specifically for this study, was used to test this hypothesis. The results of this test are presented in Chapter 8, followed by an analysis of pupils' responses to the lexemes that were used. The Vocabulary Test results are then compared with the same pupils' results for the Standard Attainment Tasks in Reading and Reading Comprehension. This chapter also presents the results of the questionnaire that was distributed to teachers to measure their estimation of the comparative understanding of key lexemes in school reading texts between EAL pupils and monolingual pupils.

Chapter 9 concludes the study by giving a summary of the main findings, discussion and conclusions. The results of the Pupils' Vocabulary Tests provide the first summary. These are then linked to the Vocabulary Workshops for teachers, which form part of the "action" of this study in disseminating the results. Following this section is a summary of the key points arising from the interviews with teachers, and next, those arising from the interviews conducted with the Project Managers with responsibility for the Language Support Service then known as Section 11.

Limitations of the Research

The aim of this research has been to provide a situated study of EAL pupils and their teachers in local schools. There has been a specific focus on lexical comprehension gaps observed in these pupils which, it is argued, their teachers are unaware of in many instances. There are, however, general limitations to this study (specific limitations will be further critically addressed at the end of Chapter Six). It is small scale, involving primary pupils and teachers from one local education authority, and testing one hundred pupils. Although set in a broad framework, the main focus of the study was directed towards pupils' lexical understanding of key items in reading texts, and did not include language skills in curriculum areas other than English where lexical difficulties are also likely to occur. This was also personal and individual research, undertaken by a teacher working with most of these pupils, and as such, might lack the more complete objectivity of, for example, group research where a number of researchers investigate the learning of pupils of whom they are not teachers. However, it is argued that despite such limitations, this study is useful because it investigates the under-researched field of EAL pupils in British schools, and addresses issues that, it is argued, have the potential for influencing these pupils' learning across the curriculum.

The following chapter begins the literature review of this study. It discusses the sociocultural theories of Bakhtin and Vygotsky, and more recent developments of these in educational studies.

CHAPTER TWO: BAKHTIN, VYGOTSKY AND RECENT SOCIOCULTURAL THEORIES RELATING TO LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION.

Introduction.

The social-interactional aspects of language development and language in education are seen in the intellectual lineage of the works of Bakhtin, Vygotsky, Wertsch, Wells, Halliday, Daniels and others, discussed below. Together, the research, thinking and writing of these scholars gives a comprehensive view of the role of social contexts and adult-child and peer interaction for language development and gives a theoretical context for the empirical work undertaken in this study. Much of this work focuses on the classroom, whilst some of it focuses on literacy. However, the work of the scholars mentioned above is rarely related systematically together. The following section attempts this, with particular reference to the key research questions of this study.

Because of the seminal influence of Bakhtin and Vygotsky on current ideas about language and education, some of their original writings are reviewed first. A key rationale for beginning this literature review by examining the ideas of these two writers is to go to the sources of a major contemporary influence in much Western pedagogy which, arguably, underpins current approaches to the role of dialogue and social interaction in language and learning. This is followed by a review of more recent works that have been influenced by either the sociocultural ideas of Bakhtin or Vygotsky, or by both of these scholars.

The sociocultural theories separately put forward by Bakhtin and Vygotsky are acknowledged as being highly compatible (Wertsch, 1991; Hicks, 1996; Wells, 1999). Both theorists give a central role to language in the cognitive and social development of the individual, which is initially experienced in external speech activities and social interactions before being internalized in the formation of the thinking self. In these theories, meaning is socially constructed through language. This will have an impact on the acquisition of literacy, which is a focus of the present study in the investigation of children's interactions with texts. There is increasing interest in literacy as a semiotic tool in sociocultural studies (Lee & Smagorinsky 2000; Cummins, 1997, 2000; Hicks, 1996; Wertsch, 1991; Bruner, 1990). The following issues are regarded as central to these studies (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000).

- The importance of speech in relation to learning
- The distinct semiotic potential of different kinds of tools and signs

- The distribution and negotiation of knowledge within social groups
- The ways in which literate practices occur and evolve outside traditional schooling and an appreciation of the complexity of such practices.

Sociocultural theories offer a framework for explanations to fit the current research, which examines perceived differences between groups of pupils engaging with texts in the classroom situation, and their teachers' beliefs about their pupils' level of understanding of classroom discourse, which is primarily, in this study, pupils' understanding of key lexemes in texts.

The pupils studied in this research were competent users of language, one group being monolingual English speakers and the other using English as an additional language. Before they began formal schooling these children would have been speech participants in discourse contexts involving a variety of social uses of language, and would have had considerable pre-school experience in using language for cognitive tasks such as labelling or requesting (Bruner, 1983). However the social and cultural base of this language development would have been quite different across the two groups in some instances, if only because the linguistic practices and ways of speaking would be different in different ethno-linguistic contexts. The home is perceived to be the key domain in individuals' literacy lives and central to the development of a sense of social identity (Gee, 1990; Heath, 1983). Through participating in social activities at home and in institutional settings, such as the mosque, the church or playgroups, these children would have been cognitively apprenticed (Rogoff, 1990) into ways of using language that related to the particular social setting and the particular culture of their ethnic group. For half of the pupils, this target language would not have been English. Thus, socialization patterns of literacy learning could have different emphases between the L1 (English) and EAL groups. There might equally be much variation in literacy socialization between EAL pupils of different language and cultural backgrounds.

The children involved in this study who were using English as an additional language (referred to as the EAL group) had a surface proficiency in English, which, it is argued, masked their lack of understanding of key vocabulary items. The theories that seem to give the clearest explanations for why this might be the case are sociocultural theories. This is because they explain the links between language and thought, and the social and cultural derivation of language from the heritage group of which the individual is a member. Yet

for pupils and teachers to become engaged in joint activity to facilitate the construction of meaning critical to cognitive development, then teachers need to be informed about their pupils' actual level of current understanding.

Other disciplines in social sciences do not offer such a compatible framework for this study as sociocultural theories are found to do. In the field of psychology, for example, studies of child development, largely stemming from Piaget's work, do not give adequate explanations to match the key research areas. Piaget (1956) maintained that development occurs in universal stages in the individual child when that child is at the correct stage of readiness. It was widely accepted that this natural stage-by-stage progression could not be accelerated (Gauvain & Cole, 1997, Inhelder & Chipman, 1976). This led to ideas such as "reading readiness". If a child was slow to learn to read, then this could be explained in developmental terms, i.e. the child had not yet reached the correct stage of development to enable her to begin the reading process. Whilst this view has long been challenged (Donaldson, 1978) it retains a lingering influence on primary practice. The wide influence of Piaget's development theories on school practice in the 1960s and 1970s can be seen in the series of Black Papers produced between 1969 and 1977 (Darling, 1994; Fisher, 2002). However, this development theory does not explain why one group of pupils might show significantly greater understanding of key items in texts, as an average stage of development in pupils would be statistically probable across either group, i.e. each group would have a similar number of pupils at similar stages of development. Child development theories would not therefore give any viable reasons for one group having a higher level of understanding than the other group.

Another discipline that can be discounted is that of psycholinguistics. There are two main reasons for this. First, psycholinguistics, the study of human language processing, is based on studies of the individual, (e.g. Nelson, 1989; Clark & Clark, 1977), whilst the current research is based on groups of pupils. Second, psycholinguistics is largely directed towards the "linguistically mature monolingual adult" (Garman, 1990 p. xiii), whilst this study focuses on young children. There is the sub-discipline of developmental psycholinguistics, which has paid attention to children's semantic development (i.e. Villers & Villiers, 1978), conversational competence (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1983) and to genre development in such genres as oral narrative (Peterson & McCabe, 1983). Generally, however, such studies have not taken more than a single cultural or linguistic group into account. The exceptions to this (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) compare children's language responses to

discourse/narrative and to socialization contexts across cultures, but these can be considered later (cf. Chapter 5).

Whilst this study emphasizes the validity of sociocultural theory to the current research, there is also an appreciation that academic disciplines overlap. For example, theoretical work in psychology, linguistics and education has been drawn together in what has been termed sociocognitive inquiry, and sociocultural theory has developed from anthropology and sociolinguistics (Hicks, 1996). Many scholars see a need for stronger links between disciplines, e.g. Wertsch, (1991), Wells, (1999), to give a more informed and wider perspective to educational research. A number of academics have, in fact, engaged in cross-disciplinary inquiry. Bruner, (1990), Gee, (1990, 1992), Moll, (1990), and Daniels have all combined the fields of psychology and education in social studies of literacy. Vygotsky, whose theories form the basis of sociocultural theory, was himself a psychologist, who studied different cultural groups in Russia and Uzbekistan. All of these disciplines also impact on schools, which provide the setting for this study.

Schools are sociocultural institutions that children have to attend (Street & Street, 1995). Pupils bring with them a knowledge of a range of discourses that have been derived from their home and their communities, but sociocultural theories show why, in some instances, these may not fully match those required by the school. Schools have been described as socially powerful institutions that tend to support dominant literacy practices (Kress, 1988; Saxena, 1991). It can be assumed that each pair of pupils in this study were judged by their teachers as having equal access to the dominant literacy practices of the school through reading, as the teachers had matched each pair of pupils as being equally proficient in this skill. If this proves not to be the case as a result of the Vocabulary Test undertaken with pupils in this study, then it will have implications for teachers and their practice, at least in the instances of the schools and teachers investigated in this research.

Cazden (1988) has pointed out that there is no parallel in the adult world to the linguistic and interactional structures of classrooms. Much of the formal classroom discourse is directed by the class teacher, whose aim will be to create a social environment conducive to learning through regular activities and discussion frameworks. However this a complex situation rather than a systematic one, with much overlap of formal and informal discourses, and with diverse teaching styles presented by teachers and even more diverse learning styles seen in pupils. This study investigates whether teachers are aware of this

diversity in their pupils, (specifically regarding the knowledge and understanding of vocabulary), who have not been socialized in the dominant literacy practices of the larger society. In obvious instances, where pupils are new to English, teachers will be aware of the child's language learning needs. However in the day-to-day activities of the busy classrooms discussed above, this study argues that more subtle difficulties that exist may pass unnoticed because of pupils' apparent proficiency in English. This argument will be supported (see Chapter 3) by reference to the work of Cummins (1984, 1996) who shows that there may be misleading differences between the oral proficiency of social language and the written proficiency of academic/curriculum language. If the Vocabulary Tests show any significant differences between pupils who use English as their first language and those who have another first language, then sociocultural theories show a way into understanding these differences. A key figure in this school of thought is Bakhtin, and his writings are discussed in the following section.

2.1. Bakhtin's ideas

The work of Mikhail Bakhtin and his colleagues has become increasingly influential in academic disciplines. Gardiner (1992) notes that since the late 1970s the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and the 'Bakhtin Circle' has generated an enormous amount of interest in the scholarly world (p.1). Morris (1994) comments on "... the diversity of areas and range of disciplines across which it is invoked." She cites literary studies, philosophy, semiotics, cultural studies, anthropology, feminist and post-colonial studies, Marxism, ethics, and Russian and Slavic studies. (p.1). In the field of education Wertsch (1991), Wells (1999) and Cummins (2001) have all integrated Bakhtin's theories into their own writing. These educationalists all have an interest in schools and in second language acquisition, which are key areas of this work, so their increasing interest in Bakhtin provides another reason for reviewing these ideas in this section of the study.

The "Bakhtin Circle" was comprised of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov. A vexed question of authorship pertains. As Morris (ibid.) notes, the works first attributed to Volsohinov and Medvedev are now taken by many academics to be Bakhtin's own writings. For Morris, among others, the issue is unresolved. "In 1973 it was suddenly claimed that texts written during the 1920s and signed by men who were no longer alive had been largely written by Bakhtin. At the present time, most of these uncertainties and disputes appear unresolvable." (p.1). For the purpose of this study, authorship will be acknowledged as given in the text, whilst the philosophy will be referred to as Bakhtinian.

For this reason, the review of Voloshinov's "Marxism and the Philosophy of Language" comes under the Bakhtinian heading.

Morris points out that the influence of Bakhtin has been seminal because of his "innovative and dynamic perception of language" (ibid. p.1). This gives links with Vygotsky, who also developed social theories of language that are discussed later in this chapter. Language in use by pupils in the social context of the classroom is central to this study and therefore the ideas of Bakhtin and Vygotsky may be very relevant. Both of these scholars are further linked as they were working in the Marxist Soviet Union, and engaged in socialist perspectives of academic disciplines. Because of the "Cold War", their work did not reach the West until it was translated in the 1970s, and, as discussed further in this chapter, was received with extreme interest by educationalists. This section investigates why this interest was generated and what relevance it has to the key research questions of this study.

An initial argument is that Bakhtin's theories have particular relevance to this study because the research undertaken has a key focus on language, and on EAL pupils in the classroom. A primary concern is the gap in reading comprehension noted by the researcher when interacting with these pupils, and the observation that this did not always seem obvious to their teachers. Bakhtin's ideas are therefore used to examine some social and cultural aspects of language, and it is argued that these can give an insight into the causes of the difficulties some EAL pupils have when engaging with texts in school. First, Voloshinov's (1973) work, "Marxism and the Philosophy of language" is reviewed. This is followed by an analysis of some of Bakhtin's key theories that are shown to be particularly relevant to this study.

Marxism and the Philosophy of Language

The larger part of this work is devoted to a critique of two schools of thought about language, first, individualistic subjectivism, and second, abstract objectivism. The first school, individualistic subjectivism, is derived from the ideas of von Humboldt, (ibid p. 49). The main tenet here is that "the individual creative act of speech" (Vossler, cited by Voloshinov, ibid p.51) is the basis of language, rather than phonetic, grammatical and other structural forms.

The second school, abstract objectivism, defines linguistics as the system of the phonetic, grammatical and lexical forms of language. This forms a rigid framework that is universal

for all utterances. A key figure here was Saussure. He believed that language was too heterogeneous to be analysed other than by linguistic rules. Saussure separated it into three elements, first, language (language-speech) second, langue (language as a system of forms) and third, parole (the individual speech act of the utterance). Voloshinov summarises Saussure's main theory as being that "languages stands in opposition to utterance in the same way as does that which is social to that which is individual" (p. 60).

Neither of these two philosophies addresses the social and interactive aspects of language. In individualistic subjectivism the focus is on the individual, whilst abstract objectivism focuses on language as a system. In constructing his own social theory of language, Voloshinov undertakes a critical analysis of both these schools of thought about language. Some of his key points are extrapolated and used to support the arguments of the current study.

Voloshinov considers "human language the most fundamental and the most characteristic of that which is human about man as a species" (ibid. p.3). He describes it as a "continuous generative process implemented in the social-verbal interaction of speakers" (ibid p.98). He puts a key focus on the analysis of the speech act as verbal interaction, and also on the significance of the word as a sign within such interactions. Voloshinov interlinks the word with both experience and meaning. "What makes a word is its meaning" (ibid p.26). This is a focal statement for this study because it directly relates to the research questions, i.e. Do EAL pupils understand the meaning of lexical items encountered in their reading as well as their L1 peers? Are teachers aware of any gaps in understanding that their EAL pupils might have when they are negotiating word meanings? The link he makes between word meaning and experience is critical and can be related to schema theory. It can be argued that the experiences of the monolingual L1 group of pupils will be different from those of the EAL group of pupils from a different linguistic and cultural heritage. The pupils' varying experiences will therefore affect their perception of the word, and ultimately shape its meaning. In other words, L1 and EAL pupils may often be mediating the word from differing social, linguistic and cultural perspectives. This study argues that in many instances their teachers may not be aware of this and may assume *all* pupils have similar social, cultural and literacy practices at home. This assumption may be stronger in instances where families have been resident in the U.K. for some time. If the results of the Pupils' Vocabulary Tests show that there is a difference in understanding between the two

groups of pupils, then the sociocultural ideas discussed here can be used as an explanation for this.

Further ideas from Voloshinov also provide a theoretical background to this study. In a discussion about the social realms of speech, Voloshinov links the individual with a particular social realm, which can be translated as a particular social group. Considerable importance is attached to these social groups, in which the individual is subject to the cultural norms and expectations of the group. These social laws outweigh individualism. Even when the sign (or word) is manifested in the form of inner speech in the individual, i.e. thinking, it is dominated by the social sphere of the larger group. This has implications for constructing meaning in terms of both the inner and the outer sign, or by thinking and speech. Both are influenced by the system of ideology to which they belong. An implication for this study is that many of the EAL pupils involved may be operating within two culturally and linguistically disparate systems, namely that of the home and that of the school. This situation becomes more complex when multiple heritages are considered, or second or third generation pupils, where the disparate systems may overlap or merge, but are still likely to be separate in some contexts.

Voloshinov implies that complete understanding between participants is dependent on the speaker and the listener belonging to "the same language community," and "to a society organised along certain particular lines" (ibid p. 46). These conditions are "absolutely essential for bringing psychophysiological complex into relation with language" (ibid p. 47). Similar ideas occur with Clark's (1992, 1996) theory about "common ground". They also relate to Schumann's (1978) acculturation model of second language acquisition.

Clark (1996) argues that language is a joint or collaborative activity in which participants engage to accomplish some social process. In the classroom this "social process" would be teaching and learning. The use of performance metaphors is enlisted to consolidate this argument. He writes about 'arenas of language use' and 'theaters of action', (p.xi) in which speakers perform. These metaphors are effective in emphasising language as a social process, in which two or more participants are involved.

Clarke puts meaning at the centre of this process. For this meaning to be mutually understood, the speech participants must hold the relevant 'common ground', which is defined as "a foundation of information that is shared by the participants" (1992, p.xvii).

Common ground would include the knowledge, beliefs and assumptions held as norms by the speakers. It can be argued that all humans share much common ground, and that there are more similarities than differences between ethnic groups (see Cole, 1998). However, there will also be considerable cultural variations between these groups in their collective schemata relating to history, literacy practices, literature and art, social customs, and others. Thus, though there will always be some universal principles common to all groups, such as those relating to moral behaviour, other domains will be disparate. In the situation where the speech participants are members of different heritage groups, their common ground will be limited to the shared information that they hold. When the speech participants are members of the same cultural group, their common ground will be much greater. This has obvious implications for this study in terms of pupil-text interaction and pupil-teacher interaction. The common ground between the L1 pupils and the texts in British classrooms will be in most instances greater than for EAL pupils. Similarly, the common ground between L1 pupils and teachers is also likely to be greater. It is an argument of this study that teachers may often be unaware of this lack of common ground. This is developed in the next point.

As Clark (1992) points out, whilst physical and linguistic co-presence are single, time-bounded events in speech interaction, community membership is what he terms "an enduring state of affairs" (p. 70). The place and time may change, but the influence of the participant's cultural background will always be a factor in the speech interaction. This has links with the current study that is examining the relative understanding of vocabulary in English texts by young members of different cultural groups. It is argued that pupils from a cultural heritage that is outside the mainstream are likely to have less understanding of these texts than their monolingual peers. To use Clark's terms, these pupils have less common or shared lexical ground of context or of particular meanings. As he notes, "The intrinsic context for a listener trying to understand what a speaker means on a particular occasion is the common ground that the listener believes holds at that moment between speaker and the listeners he or she is speaking to" (ibid. p. 67). *Mutatis mutandis*, these arguments would also apply to EAL pupils reading texts in English, where the latter may be written on a predicated common lexical ground that, in fact, is not common.

Another point arises here, namely that of teachers' beliefs. This study argues that teachers are not always aware of the actual level of comprehension of their EAL pupils, in particular those who appear to be reading proficiently. Clark refers to the *listener's beliefs* about

common ground in the previous statement. This study argues that teachers hold particular suppositions, or beliefs about their EAL pupils' 'common ground', whereas, in fact, this is more limited than some teachers are aware of. Clark's ideas corroborate those of Voloshinov, and can be used to support the arguments of this study.

When related to this study, if the EAL pupils are found to have more difficulty with reading comprehension than the L1 pupils, then both sets of ideas go some way towards clarifying why this should be the case. The conditions Voloshinov sets for complete understanding will not always exist. Clark puts forward a similar argument. It must be noted that the pupils in this study were engaging with text as their 'speech participant', but the same criteria would apply. Minority group EAL pupils will not belong to the same language community as L1 pupils or their teachers, and this has implications for making meaning, and ultimately for understanding.

Teachers' perceptions also form part of this research. They teach EAL pupils across a range from those with little or no English language acquisition to those categorised as fully fluent. It is evident that they will recognise the language learning needs of pupils new to English. They may be less likely to recognise the needs of pupils with a surface proficiency in English (c.f. Cummins' discussion of BICS and CALP reported in chapter 3). The ideas put forward by Voloshinov and Clark can be used to explain why these pupils may have comprehension gaps in the understanding of English texts, and also to further knowledge about the complexities of social speech groups.

Voloshinov's critical analysis of these two schools of language provides further ideas about the significance of sociocultural influences on language in use. They can be used in relation to the present work to present possibilities why, overall, EAL pupils' comprehension of English texts is perceived to be more limited than that of their L1 peers when both groups appear to have the same surface proficiency in reading.

Voloshinov argues that abstract objectivism treats language as a fixed, unchanging system, whereas in fact language is constantly changing. It is subjective because it only exists within the consciousness of members of a particular community at a particular time. This view would be widely accepted today by many linguists (e.g. Coleman and Cameron, 1996; Baker and Jones, 1998; Tarone and Yule, 1989).

In questioning whether abstract objectivism takes into account the speaker's subjective consciousness, Voloshinov makes one of the key points of his argument. What is central is the context in which the utterance is situated. It is this that will give the utterance a specific meaning relevant to the 'given concrete situation' (ibid. p.68). The relative roles of the speaker and the listener/understander are critical within this context. Understanding does not rely solely on the speech participants knowing a common linguistic form. What it does rely on is the context in which the utterance is situated. "In other words the understander, belonging to the same language community, also is attuned to the linguistic form not as a fixed, self-identical signal, but as a changeable and adaptable sign" (Voloshinov 1973, p.68).

This statement has definite implications for the multilingual classrooms in which the current research was undertaken. Again, the issue of misunderstanding can be raised because not everybody belongs to the same language community, though they may share a language such as English. Moreover, this may be a highly complex situation, including pupils from multiple heritages, and British-born pupils with their roots in another culture. Not only may some EAL pupils be less familiar with the abstract form of language, they are also unlikely to be "attuned" to the context and situation in the same way as a member of the indigenous language community.

Voloshinov equates mere recognition with the signal, not the sign, for recognition does not automatically imply understanding. 'The process of understanding is on no account to be confused with the process of recognition' (ibid p. 69). Only the sign can be understood. This fine signal/sign differentiation is one that can be applied to EAL learners in classrooms. It could be argued that some pupils at some time *recognise* rather than understand because they belong to a different language community. It is stressed that '...words are always filled with content and meaning drawn from the behaviour of ideology' (ibid. p. 70). If we accept that language as classroom discourse is linked with this system of behaviour or ideology, it again has implications for EAL pupils within the education system, who do not belong to the main language group.

Voloshinov's critique of individualist subjectivism also raises some relevant points for discussion. He queries the way in which expression is defined by this school, and he argues that there are two elements to expression. First, there is the inner something which is expressible, and second is the outward object to which it relates. The individual gives inner

shape and definition to the expression, which is externally identified for others through the medium of the sign. Voloshinov again emphasises the primacy of the social context for the expression. It is determined by its 'immediate social situation' (ibid p. 85). This is compounded by the need for an addressee, for, 'The word is orientated toward an addressees' (p. 85). We do not speak into a vacuum. We always address another, even if they are not physically present. A 'social purview' is referred to in this context. '...We presuppose a certain typical and stabilised social purview towards which the ideological creativity of our own social group and time is oriented' (ibid. p. 85).

This gives scope for discussion. In considering EAL learners, they clearly do not belong to the same social and ideological group as the majority group of L1 pupils. There can be difficulties compounded by belonging to different culture groups with different ideological backgrounds and different systems of social ethics, art, science and religion, all subsumed under the language-need label of EAL. This would seem to be reiterated in Voloshinov's further statement:

"I give myself verbal shape from another's point of view, ultimately, from the point of view of the community to which I belong" (ibid p. 86).

Voloshinov brings many of his points about individualistic subjectivism to a similar conclusion. "... the whole route between inner experience (the 'expressible') and its outward objectification (the 'utterance') lies across social territory" (p. 90). "The organising centre of any utterance, of any experience, is not within, but outside - in the social milieu surrounding the individual being" (p. 95). Here again the emphasis is on the bond between the individual and his or her sociocultural background.

However, the complexity of the situation must be emphasised again. Some EAL pupils are recent arrivals, whilst other EAL pupils have been in the UK for some years. Many are of second-generation migrant families, and in legal and many sociocultural aspects, they are British. Other EAL pupils are of multiple heritages. This means that the term "EAL pupil" covers a complex range of linguistic needs, and an even more complex range of identities. It can be argued that such complexities may increase English language difficulties for these pupils, as they will be operating within multiple social systems rather than dual ones.

Voloshinov's work, in rejecting abstract objectivism and individualistic subjectivism, considers what the content of a philosophy of language should be. A key focus is dialogue. This is a recurring theme in Bakhtinian thought. Voloshinov is not looking at dialogue in the narrow sense of the word, but in a broad context. He argues that dialogue exists not only with the spoken word, but also within the written word; thus the text engages the author and the reader in dialogue. This has implications for classroom texts. The author is engaged in dialogue with the reader, in this case the child. There is a verbal interaction even within silent reading, i.e. as dialogue in the reader's mind. This has implications for the present study, where children's responses to the word within the text are examined, compared and contrasted. Their responses, as tested in this study, can be construed as their dialogic role, and this may differ between L1 and EAL pupils. Bakhtin develops many of these arguments in his concept of dialogue, which is discussed in the following section.

Bakhtin's concept of dialogue

Dialogue is Bakhtin's key theoretical construct (Holquist, 1990; Wertsch, 1991). Most of his other theories stem from this. The emphasis on dialogue is reiterated in its key place in recent representative titles of works about Bakhtin. Bakhtin's own work is translated as *'The Dialogic Imagination'*. Bakhtin's biographer Holquist has written *'Dialogism - Bakhtin and his World'* (1990). Michael Gardiner is the author of *'The Dialogics of Critique: M.M. Bakhtin and the Theory of Ideology'* (1992). Morson has edited, *'Bakhtin: Essays and dialogues on his works'* (1986). Recent examples of dialogism being incorporated into language and education studies are found in Wells' (1999) work *'Dialogic Inquiry'*, and Cummins' (2000) *Language, Power and Pedagogy*.

The central role given to dialogue is illustrated in the following statement from Bakhtin.

"The single adequate form for verbally expressing authentic human life is the open-ended dialogue. Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth (1984 p. 293).

As Holquist points out (1990, p. 40) in general use "dialogue is a synonym for conversation; the word suggests two people talking to each other". However, Holquist notes in Bakhtinian terms, it exceeds 'conversation', or 'two people talking to each other'. It covers human communication in all its forms, verbal, non-verbal and written communication.

Bakhtin argued that language was the central force of social life. He worked towards developing an "interdisciplinary approach to the study of sociocultural life as it is constituted in and through forms of symbolic interaction" (Gardiner, 1992, p. 2). The study of 'texts' or 'systems of language' could not be taken out of their social context, because it was in such a context that they were generated. It is in human communication that "discourse lives an authentic life" (Bakhtin, 1984 p. 293). Linguistic study cannot be complete if it attempts no more than an examination of the formal structure of language, which Bakhtin describes as its 'dead husk'. Language is a 'living concrete totality' that does not exist in isolation, and therefore cannot be studied in isolation.

As noted previously, Bakhtin's construct of dialogue has been incorporated into works by Wertsch, (1991), Wells, (1999) and Cummins, (2001) among others. Dialogism has therefore become integral to the field of language and education studies. It also relates to the neo-Vygotskian concept of constructing knowledge to be discussed later. It is particularly relevant to this study when viewed as pupil-teacher dialogue and pupil-text dialogue. This point is developed further in a discussion of Bakhtin's ideas about heteroglossia and the implications this has for teachers and for pupils.

Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia is part of the larger philosophy of dialogism. Holquist writes, "Dialogism assumes that at any given time, in any given place, there is a set of powerful but highly unstable conditions at work that will give a word uttered then and there a meaning that is different from what it would be at other times and in other places" (1990, p. 69). Bakhtin stresses that all utterances are heteroglot. They exist at a given moment of time in a particular spatial environment with a plurality of "verbal-ideological and social belief systems" (1981, p. 292). This is particularly relevant to the present study, as Bakhtin's ideas about heteroglossia can be related to the problems some EAL learners have in English classrooms. This is illustrated in the following statement from Bakhtin:

" Language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth" (ibid.).

These heteroglot languages come together and co-exist in "the consciousness of real people", they 'evolve' (ibid.). It is from the different strands of heteroglossia that individual perception arises, which, for the purposes of this study means that pupils and teachers in classrooms may be constructing meaning from different aspects.

The concept of heteroglossia fits well with multicultural and multilingual classrooms. In contemporary works, this concept is translated as the "complexities of the classroom" (Erickson, cited in Hicks, 1996), the "inherent messiness" of the classroom (Hicks, 1996) and the "crowded busy interactive classroom" (Cazden, 1988). Heteroglossia can explain contradictions and difficulties that EAL pupils may have in English classrooms. There are some complex issues that can be discussed in this context. In his statement on heteroglossia, Bakhtin mentions 'contradictions'. This study argues that such contradictions do exist between what EAL pupils understand, and what their teachers believe these children understand, in terms of lexical comprehension. If the Bakhtinian perspective is taken that language is heteroglot, 'from top to bottom', then the use of this concept may help to give a clearer understanding of how and why misunderstandings will occur in many ways, but particularly, for the purpose of this study, between the EAL pupil and the teacher, and the EAL pupil and the text.

Bakhtin's emphasis on the decentralising centrifugal forces of heteroglossia, known as the carnivalesque, can also be applied. We live in a constantly evolving society that is increasingly multicultural. This is a centrifugal force pulling against centripetal forces of tradition and authority. If we view this in terms of education on a macro level, and school on a micro level, it has implications for many areas: the curriculum, teacher education, and texts, to name but a few.

Bakhtin's ideas about what he calls "the word" are also relevant to this study. This could be translated as a key word in a text or in an utterance that gives it a particular meaning. Aitchison (1994) has termed such words *content* words as distinct from *function* words that have no meaning, but are syntactically supportive.

In formal language studies the word is isolated. Its interaction with other words is not acknowledged. It is 'simply the potential for speech'. The dialogic nature of the word is ignored. Bakhtin (1981) refers to this as the 'alien' word in contrast to the 'living' word. He argues that the living word does not possess one single static meaning, for no living word

relates to its object in a singular way. The word relates to its object within a dialogical frame and, as a result, meaning and understanding, or reception of the word, is governed by this socio-verbal frame.

To illustrate his point, Bakhtin draws a parallel between the word and a ray of light. The ray takes on different colours and hues, and reflects shades of light, and this can be compared to the word, being subjective to a different polyphony of meanings and nuances in its dialogized use. For the purposes of this study, this can be related to words in classroom texts that the children read. Understanding these words requires a negotiation of meaning within a particular context, and it is argued that some EAL pupils may have difficulty with reading comprehension because the context may be less familiar to them than to their L1 peers.

Wertsch (1991) explores the 'literal meaning' of the word and he points out this is such an obvious concept that it has been accepted per se with little concrete definition, even within encyclopaedic works on semantics such as Lyons (1977). Crystal's *Encyclopaedia of the English Language* (1995) has a reference to Saussure, but not to Bakhtin or Voloshinov.

There are problems surrounding the Bakhtinian idea of the multi-faceted word. The major one is that of the word taken out of context. Goffman (1976) notes "the common-sense notion... that the word in isolation will have a general basic, or most down-to-earth meaning" (p. 303). The word as a label is in opposition Bakhtin's translinguistic analyses, which focus on the utterance as "the real unit of speech communication" (Bakhtin, 1986 p.7).

These ideas about literal meaning versus contextual meaning can be discussed in relation to the present study. First, in the classroom texts used in this research, the target words on which both sets of pupils were tested required contextual knowledge, and it is argued that this context would be likely to be more familiar to L1 pupils than EAL pupils. Second, in schools generally, the word out of context would only be likely to appear in spelling lists, sight vocabulary lists and such like. The curriculum overall is taught within a context, not by sets of words. This study argues that it is the comprehension of what words mean within specific curriculum areas and in texts that is important to pupils' learning.

Another relevant concept for discussion is that of "voice". Bakhtin's concept of the voice is defined by Holquist and Emerson (1981, p. 434) as, "the speaking personality, the speaking

consciousness". Clark and Holquist (1984) explain this further. "An utterance, spoken or written, is always expressed from a point of view (a voice), which for Bakhtin is a process rather than a location. Utterance is an activity that enacts differences in values; on an elementary level, for instance, the same words can mean different things depending on the particular intonation with which they are uttered in a specific context." (p. 157).

The concept of voice is more than vocal-auditory sounds. The individual brings her own persona to her voice among a polyphony of voices. This has links with schema theory (Carrell, Devine and Eskey, 1988; Bartlett, 1932). Schemata are constructions, patterns of knowledge and ways of interpreting on the basis of previous experience. A given schema would be important in influencing what we bring to the utterance or the text.

The voice does not only belong to vocal utterances, but it also appears in texts. Texts can be multi-voiced, with a polyphonous range of voices. The key point developed from this argument is that EAL pupils may not have the same understanding of these texts as their monolingual peers, because of a difference in voices from their cultural and social backgrounds and experiences. They may not recognise the required understanding of the meaning of a key item in a text, and the understanding that they have may not be recognised by their teachers.

For the voice to have meaning, it must have an addressee, another voice with which to come into contact. Communication requires a speaker and a listener. The speaker and the addressees are linked in a chain of communication. They are not always both physically present as, for example, in the case of the text and the reader. Bakhtin gives some examples.

"This addressee can be an immediate participant-interlocutor in an everyday dialogue: a differentiated collective of specialists in some particular area of cultural communication, a more or less differentiated public, ethnic group, contemporaries, like-minded people, opponents and enemies, a subordinate, a superior, someone who is lower, higher, familiar, foreign, and so forth. And it can also be an indefinite, unconcretized other." (1986, p. 95).

Bakhtin's exhaustive list can be applied to the school situation. A polyphony of voices exist here. The child will be engaged in teacher-pupil dialogue, pupil-pupil dialogue, and also

with text, in an author-reader dialogue. For the voices to be meaningful, two-way communication must exist. However, some problems with the two-way communication idea exist in relation to younger pupils. The teacher is more skilled and knowledgeable than the pupil. The teacher is also in authority and needs to maintain control. Crucially, the teacher has greater, more powerful, conversation rights. Critically, from the point of view of this study, the teacher may not appreciate some pupils' difficulties with lexical understanding and the pupils may be reluctant to challenge either the text or their teachers.

The concept of voice and multivoicedness leads on to social languages and genre. Bakhtin gives examples of social languages (or social speech types) as being "social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific socio-political purposes of the day." (1981, p. 263).

For Bakhtin, every utterance uses a social language, and this social language influences the voice of the speaker. Another Bakhtinian theory comes into play here, that of 'ventriloquation' (Bakhtin, 1981). This is where the individual ventriloquates, or speaks through a social language. The words of the utterance are universal, and "half someone else's" (1981, p. 293). The individual must appropriate the utterance and make it his own.

Social languages can be compared to schema, but whereas schema theory is individualistic, social languages are generic. In relation to this study, it can be argued the EAL learner may be able to ventriloquate the social language of the classroom, but not to fully appropriate it and 'make it his own'. In other words, the child can 'mime' the social language, but does not, in all instances, have a true understanding of the implicit meaning. It can also be argued that classrooms teachers are not always aware of this possibility. They may simply accept the child's ventriloquism at face value, and not understand that the child's understanding can range from superficial but incorrect to varying degrees of truer understanding. The vocabulary test given to pupils in the present research was undertaken to examine this assumption.

A concept related to social languages is that of speech genres. Bakhtin defined it as follows:

"a speech genre is not a form of language but a typical form (a type) of utterance; as such the genre also includes a certain typical kind of expression that infers in it. In the genre the word acquires a particular typical expression. Genres correspond to typical situations of speech communication, typical themes, and, consequently, also to particular contacts between the meanings of words and actual concrete reality under certain typical circumstance."

(Bakhtin, 1986 p. 80)

Bakhtin stated that we use speech genres without being aware of it. Every utterance we make is generic. " Our repertoire of oral (and written) speech genres is rich. We use them confidently and skilfully in practice and it is quite possible for us not even to suspect their existence in theory" (1986 p. 78).

Teachers in the primary phase are familiar with genre in the context of writing as it is an element of the National Literacy Strategy. They are less likely to be familiar with the concept of speech genres. Bakhtin points out that we use these skilfully and almost unconsciously. They are part of our schemata. Because teachers are unlikely to have detailed knowledge of speech genres, they may be unaware of the difficulty EAL pupils may have in interpreting and/or using the particular speech genres of the classroom. This also applies to text. In addition to text being part of a particular genre, there will also be a polyphony of voices within the text that have their own speech genres. In Bakhtinian terms, we can argue that it may be easier for the monolingual English speaker to unconsciously assimilate these genres than for the EAL speaker.

Other relevant Bakhtinian ideas are those of theme and meaning. It is useful to examine these (Voloshinov, 1973) as they relate to the vocabulary tests undertaken with first language English speakers and EAL pupils as part of this study. As Voloshinov points out, "The problem of meaning is one of the most difficult problems of linguistics " (1973, p.99). There is a fine distinction between theme and meaning. Voloshinov relates the theme to the significance of the utterance. The theme is set by the particular situation in which the utterance occurs as well as by its linguistic form. The meaning, however, consists of the reproducible and self-identical aspects of the utterance. It can be classified by its various linguistic elements. Voloshinov summarises the distinction: "There is a complex, dynamic system of signs that attempts to be adequate to a given instant of generative process. Theme is reaction by the consciousness in its generative process of existence. Meaning is

the technical apparatus for the implementation of the theme." (1973, p. 100). The two elements are interdependent, therefore theme cannot exist without meaning and meaning cannot exist without theme. The alliance of theme and meaning provided one reason for setting a contextual vocabulary test for children as a key part of this research. As Voloshinov states, "Any true understanding is dialogic in nature" (ibid p.102). It was believed to be important that the pupils had access to a whole text, because this would strengthen the dialogic context.

A whole-text, contextualized approach to reading has been dominant in schools over the past two decades (Smith, 1978; Meek, 1982). However, in English in the National Curriculum and the National Literacy strategy, sight-word reading has been reinstated, though the importance of context remains undisputed. There is evidence for this in the fact that a text for whole class collective reading provides the major source of a class's literacy activities for a week.

The issue of context is an important one. As the researcher's experience shows, both L1 and EAL pupils may be able to read the word, but may not be able to give a correct definition of its meaning, even within a whole book context. It can be argued that for either group a decontextualized reading of a word (or sight vocabulary) does not mean that the child understands the word. This has implications for the generating of new knowledge, as discussed by Wertsch (1991), and also for learning to take place.

Classroom texts, and reading schemes in particular, can be evaluated in the light of Bakhtinian notions about the subjectivity of the word. Voloshinov refers to this as the 'interrelationship between meaning and evaluation' (ibid. p.103). He states that no word exists in isolation, for it is always subject to value judgement. A word must be interpreted, and this brings into play 'evaluative accent' and 'expressive intonation' (ibid. p.103). Voloshinov uses a classic example of this in quoting from Dostoevsky's *Diary of a Writer*. This extract shows how one word can have six different meanings within one particular setting (see Appendix 9). To develop this argument and relate it to the current research, a comparison has been made with a simple text from the early stages of a reading scheme that is widely used in schools.

If we transpose Dostoevsky's example to reading schemes in schools, variations in meaning can be examined. An example is an early reader entitled '*Look*'. This is the only word that

- appears in the text. On each page it appears with a different picture cue. The single word 'look' can be interpreted in many different ways. The child will already have encountered this word in a variety of contextual uses. It can be used as an imperative, i.e. "Look here" or "Look this way", but this holds more than one concept, for it can mean not only to direct one's eyes, but also one's attention. 'Look' can be used as a noun, as in 'a look', and an adjective, i.e. 'a looking glass'. Accent and intonation may lead to confusion between *look* and *luck*. It can indicate annoyance as in "Look!" These six different uses of a single word match Dostoevsky's list. Theme and meaning will come into play here, for the concept of the single word *look* will vary according to its situation and context. The inflection of the utterance 'look' will also shape its meaning. This may result in difficulties in comprehension for many pupils in schools, but, arguably, the difficulty is likely to be greater for EAL learners.

A key point that emerges is that although apparently complex, Bakhtin's ideas, do, in fact, relate to school practice. Bakhtin's writings give an interactional and dynamic approach to language and language teaching. Though he does not specifically address children and schooling, his ideas are increasingly influential in shaping Western educational philosophy. Bakhtin's ideas can usefully be conjoined with those of Vygotsky, who was very much involved in pedagogy. Vygotsky's ideas have been criticised by some academics as being static (see Wertsch, 1991, for discussion). By combining his approach with the more dynamic one of Bakhtin, a more balanced approach to sociocultural interactive theory can result.

2.2. Vygotskian Perspectives.

A growing number of writers are combining the theories of Bakhtin with those of Vygotsky (Daniels, 1996; Hicks, 1996; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000; Wertsch, 1991), though to date Vygotsky's theories are the more widely disseminated among educational academics. As noted by Hirschkop and Sheppard (1989), detailed analysis of Bakhtin has been largely literary in focus until recently. In the present study the ideas of both are used under the superordinate of sociocultural theory to offer explanations of how and why children may be mediating lexical items based on their cultural background or schema, and their teachers' unawareness of this.

Both Bakhtin and Vygotsky lived and worked in the Marxist Soviet Union, but though they were contemporaries, there is no evidence that they ever met. Just as the authorship

question of the Bakhtin circle is debated, so is the Vygotsky/Bakhtin relation, (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991), but it is not taken up here.

It is useful to investigate why Vygotsky's theories have been evaluated as the most potent influence on development theories since the beginning of this century (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991). He has been seen as having "a powerful impact on Soviet psychology and has recently begun to be understood and utilized in the West" (Wertsch, 1985, p.1). Vygotsky's work has been so influential that Asmilov (in Daniels, 1996) warns against canonising him.

Wertsch and Triviste (in Daniels, 1996) discuss why Vygotsky's ideas have been so influential in western academic disciplines. The re-publication of his writings in Russian have been translated into English, and become more widely accessible. There has also been increased communication between Russia and the West, and a number of eminent Soviet scholars have become émigrés. Moll (1990) points out that Vygotsky's ideas are relevant to current issues in education and the social sciences. They provide a theoretical framework for initiatives in education following decades of Western preoccupation with individualism and atomism that had resulted in an over-reliance on Piagetian theories of child development in educational practice. This did not prove as successful as anticipated, so Vygotsky's sociocultural theories were grasped as a new basis for action.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theories set a framework in which learning is situational. It is bounded by context and by culture, and it is mediated by language. This has considerable implications for EAL pupils who may have to negotiate the culture of learning in the new classroom in a second or additional language. In other words, these pupils have to engage with language and literacy socialisation practices different from those of their home culture, and also to undertake this in a language that is not their mother tongue. This can impact on their learning, for Vygotsky states that higher mental functioning in the individual originates from social interaction. Human action is mediated by tools and by signs. In common with Bakhtin, Vygotsky stresses the pre-eminence of the verbal sign, speech.

Vygotsky's statement on the social origins of mental functioning is a key one in his theory.

"Any function in the child's cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First, it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category and then within the child as an intrapsychological category." (1981b, p. 163)

These ideas have been extended and applied by scholars such as Wertsch (1985; 1991), Newman et al. (1989), Moll (1990), Rogoff (1990), Dixon-Krauss (1996) and Smith et al (1997). They have also been developed into social constructivist theories of teaching and learning. These are distinct from the Piagetian-based radical constructivist approach. Both share a common theme of students constructing knowledge as opposed to receiving it, but interpret the way in which the knowledge is constructed differently. In the radical constructivist approach, pupils learn independently of their peers through action on material. Knowledge acquisition is seen as private construction as the individual attempts to rationalize the world. Discovery and investigative approaches are part of radical constructivism. The child learns by activity and through experience. The child will make mistakes in his explorations, but this is seen as part of the learning process. The lack of speech interactions in these situations, however, might cause difficulties for EAL pupils. In learning English they would not be practising enough in the target language, nor would their misunderstandings always be clear to their teachers because of limited speech interactions.

In contrast, the social constructivist approach emphasises pupils engaged in constructing knowledge through social interaction with the teacher or their peers, or with both. There is less emphasis on interaction with materials (though this is a necessary element) and more on social interaction with others. The teacher has a key role. She mediates the child's acquisition of knowledge in a sociocultural context using language as a tool. However, where the teacher and the pupil have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, misunderstandings can arise with, for example, key lexical items, as argued in this research. This Vygotskian approach has been studied and written about by Edwards and Mercer, (1987); Newman et al. (1989); Norman, (1992); Wells and Chang-Wells, (1992); Mercer, (1995); Wood, (1998).

Hicks (1996) gives a nice definition of this process of recognising the social element of the classroom.

"The Piagetian metaphor of the lone child interacting with an objective, logical world, struggling to overcome her initial egocentrism and irrational thought, has given way to an image of a socially responsive child participating in recurrent joint activity mediated by the uniquely human means of communication: language."

(p. 104)

The focus on language in the above statement relates to the current study. For true communication to take place through speech interactions, there must be understanding between the pupil and the teacher and/or the pupil and the text. This study proposes that this is not always the case. Moreover, interactive teaching and learning is currently being promoted as good practice in schools through, for example, activities in Literacy and Numeracy, but it is doubtful whether many teachers are informed about the rationale for this.

In common with Bakhtin, language was a key concern of Vygotsky's. His *Thought and Language* (1962) has been influential in shaping perspectives on the links between speaking and thinking, and in developing the idea of inner speech. The first function of speech is social, used for interaction and contact within the child's social context. As her experience widens the child begins to use external signs for problem solving, such as using her fingers for counting. The stage of egocentric speech develops, where the child begins to verbalize, or speak out to herself. On the basis of his experiments with Luria, Vygotsky summarised that egocentric speech becomes internalized and develops into inner speech. It "grows out of its social foundation by means of transferring social, collaborative forms of behaviour to the sphere of the individual's psychological functioning" (1934/1962 p. 45). As Dixon-Krauss (1996) points out, with the development of inner speech, the child gains a crucial psychological tool for structuring thought.

Vygotsky's ideas about word meaning can be compared to those of Bakhtin.

"The sense of a word... is the aggregate of all the psychological facts emerging in our consciousness because of this word. Therefore, the sense of the word always turns out to be a dynamic, flowing, complex formation which has several zones of differential stability... As we know, a word readily changes its sense in various contexts. (1934/1962, p. 305).

Both Bakhtin and Vygotsky therefore give a dynamic role to language. Vygotsky also argues that the intralingual situation of inner speech can enhance the word's meaning; "In inner speech the word, as it were, absorbs the sense of preceding and subsequent words, thereby extending almost without limit the boundaries of its meaning" (ibid.). If this is related to second language learners, then it can be argued that negotiating the meaning of words may be limited by the pupil's proficiency in the target language, which in the case of this study, is English.

The zone of proximal development

Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) has had a significant impact on Western constructs, including internalisation, semiotic mediation and concept development (Dixon-Krauss, 1996). Vygotsky defined the ZPD as the distance between the child's "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving" compared to the advanced level of "potential development as determined through problem solving" with the support of adults or more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86).

The crucial fact of the ZPD is the emphasis it puts on teaching. In the education practice based on Piagetian developmental theory, the teacher's role could be seen as that of a facilitator. In Vygotskyian theory, the teacher has a dynamic and interactive role with the child to extend the child's abilities. The teacher's role is to precede and lead the child's development by ascertaining and working within a child's ZPD.

"What the child can do in co-operation today he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it; it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as the ripening functions." (Vygotsky, 1962, p.100).

However, for this to be successful, the teacher must be aware of the child's true level of proficiency. A key hypothesis of this study is that the teachers of the EAL pupils involved are not always aware of these children's language-learning needs, particularly in the understanding of key lexical units. It is believed that this is sometimes masked by the child's superficial proficiency in English. One way of addressing this issue is dynamic assessment, which is discussed below. Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD developed in the context of intelligence testing for entrance to elementary school in the USSR (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991). He was interested in both instruction and assessment. Daniels (1996)

points out that "The focus on process as well as product in assessment has become embedded in the range of techniques now called 'dynamic assessment' (p. 4). Dixon-Krauss, (1996) notes that Vygotsky's definitions of the zone entail an interdependent relationship between instruction and assessment. Certainly, in contemporary educational debate it has led to a huge rethinking about both teaching and instruction. Here again the issue of EAL pupils operating in a second language arises, with the importance of language in the learning situation emphasised.

Wertsch (1984) has written that teaching within the zone of proximal development starts from the Vygotskian precept that learning develops from external social interaction to internalised and independent cognition. What begins as other-regulated progresses to self-regulated performance. The child's learning is developed by social interaction within a socially-situated context. The teacher is a mediator, using primarily language, to aid the child's development. It is quite critical, however, that the teacher is informed about any misunderstandings that the child may have, and this study argues that in some instances relating to EAL pupils' lexical understanding the teacher is not knowledgeable.

Wertsch (1980) has also coined the term 'semiotic flexibility' in writing about the ZPD. He focuses on adult-child dialogue. The adult initially supports the child with very explicit directives. As the child makes progress with his or her learning, the adult withdraws the explicit support, and reduces this to hints and suggestions. This is an early statement of 'scaffolding', as discussed below and also later in this study.

The teaching support service for EAL pupils follows a similar model. Support is targeted at pupils at the early stage of English language acquisition, and as they progress, the support is systematically reduced. There is a line of thought, which argues, however, that the child's English language acquisition may be superficial and she will still need support for full development (see Chapter 3).

Cole (1990) and Griffin and Cole (1984) have developed some insights about ZPD that are useful for teachers. The teacher supports the child in both cognitive and social development. The type of support provided by the teacher will vary according to the activity in which the child is involved. He or she will not be supported in a unidirectional mechanistic progression. Rather the support will be fluid, and at times will revisit concepts as well as developing new ones.

Dixon-Krauss (1996) identifies three key elements in the teacher's role in the ZPD, which are similar to those proposed by Cole, and Griffin and Cole, discussed above.

1. The teacher mediates or augments the child's learning. She provides support for the child through social interaction as they co-operatively build bridges of awareness, understanding and competence.
2. The teacher's mediational role is flexible. What she says or does depends on feedback from the child whilst she is actually engaged in the learning activity.
3. The teacher focuses on the amount of support needed. Her support can range from very explicit directives to vague hints.

The zone of proximal development has been developed into 'scaffolding' theories (Greenfield, 1984; Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976)) which are discussed later in this chapter. These pedagogical approaches give initial support or a scaffold for tasks. When the learner can perform these independently the support or scaffolding is removed. Such constructs are helpful when considering ways of supporting EAL learners, who may require scaffolding to support their English language acquisition. Such constructs also highlight the difficulty if there are gaps in comprehension of lexical items between teachers and EAL pupils: potentially, planks of the scaffolding may be of different sizes and some may be inadequate for the scaffolding process to be as effective as the teachers hope.

There are however, some criticisms of the ZPD that are addressed by Wertsch (1991) and Wells (1999) later in this chapter. These relate to its dyadic nature, i.e. a teacher engaged with one pupil, where this patently will not be the situation in mainstream classrooms. This has led to the development of ideas about 'whole class' ZPD activities, (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999) and to academics linking and developing Vygotsky's ideas with those of Bakhtin.

The interest and debate Vygotsky's ideas have generated in the field of education is followed up in the subsequent section 2.4. Vygotsky's ideas are increasingly being combined with those of Bakhtin, as in the work of Wertsch (1991) and Wells (1999), to increase and develop sociocultural theory linked to educational practice. Section 2.4 of the

literature review selects some of these on the basis of their relevance to this study, in that they address the teaching and learning of EAL pupils in schools, or that the ideas contained in these works are relevant to the issues addressed in this research.

There are, however, criticisms of both Vygotsky and Bakhtin to be considered first. Though they both worked in the Soviet Union in the first half of the 20th century, there is no evidence that they ever met (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991). Their theories have been combined by Western academics to produce a sociocultural approach to education.

2.3 Criticism of sociocultural theory

A clear difficulty surrounding Bakhtin's ideas is that they are "complicated by difficult questions of attribution, censorship and a thirty-five year interruption in publication history" (Dentith, 1995 p xi). This was largely owing to the Marxist regime in which Bakhtin lived and worked. It raises questions as to how far his work was influenced by Marxism and the acknowledged pro-Marxist politics of his circle (Morson & Emerson, 1990; Brandist & Tihanov, 2000). This can lead to the argument that his ideas are not commensurate with education in the modern Western society, and the obvious question of their relevance to the present study. However, although Bakhtin's close colleagues Voloshinov and Medevyev were fundamental Marxists, it seems that Bakhtin's approach was more ambivalent (Holquist, 1986, Dentith, 1995, Bell & Gardiner, 1998). Moreover, most of his writing does not involve the fundamental issues of Marxism, and further, the relevance of the debate can be questioned. As Dentith (1995, p. 19) points out, "canonical questions or questions of orthodoxy are really only ever interesting if they serve substantial questions". What is important is what emerges from his work to encourage thought and debate about the nature and use of language incorporated into academic works, which have been reviewed as part of the present study, and their relevance for schools, pupils and teachers.

A further criticism of Bakhtin is that his writings are dense, expansive and repetitive (Holquist, 1986; Clark & Holquist, 1984; Morris, 1994; Dentith, 1995; Bell & Gardiner, 1998). These characteristics, however, have been justified as "reflecting a philosophical and critical attitude in favour of argument by accumulation and averse to theoretical synopsis" (Dentith, 1995 p. xi). It remains a criticism however that his work has "a cryptic and highly allusive style which has not encouraged a wide multi-disciplinary readership" (Bell & Gardiner, 1998 p. 3). In contrast, Morris (1994) writes about "the accessibility of

ideas". The definition of accessibility in this context is unclear. If this is taken to mean understanding, this is debatable. The ideas of Bakhtin and his circle are complex and not open to easy interpretation. They require careful study, particularly Voloshinov's "*Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*". This work is written in the prose style of the 1920s and contains many fine distinctions of meaning. It is therefore *not* accessible in terms of being easily understood. Teachers, for example, involved in day-to-day classroom practice would have little opportunity for intensive study of such work.

If we look at "accessibility" in terms of being available or usable, this is also contentious. Few in the education world outside academia are familiar with the writings of Bakhtin. It can be said that his influence has filtered down and has been disseminated in the promotion of dynamic and socially-constructed methods of language teaching, and constructs such as genre, which is included in the National Literacy Strategy. These tend to be presented to teachers in a transmissional mode, with no reference to the source. It is unlikely that many mainstream primary teachers know of Bakhtin, so the issue of accessibility in this context is overstated.

The point that the style of Bakhtin's writing has until recently discouraged accessibility leads to the argument for more cross-over in academic disciplines, which is voiced in contemporary work (e.g. Wertsch, 1991; Dentith, 1995; Hicks, 1996; Bell & Gardiner, 1998; Wells, 1999). Dewey had argued for this as early as 1901, pointing to the need for a broader framework to encompass cultural, historical and institutional influences on mental functioning rather than trying to study it in isolation. Dewey however was speaking against the flow. Western education was pre-occupied with individualist theories and subsequently with the developmental theories of Piaget. As Rogoff (1990, p. 4) has noted, "an emphasis on the individual has characterised decades of research carried out by American investigators studying children's intellectual milestones, I.Q, memory strategies and grammatical skills". Rommetveit (1979) describes these disparate and individualist studies as taking place "in vacuo". Wertsch (1991, p. 3) points out that "debates have all too often devolved into arcane internal arguments of little interest to anyone but those directly involved. This is a sorry state of affairs for the social sciences and for academic inquiry in general". For many years Bakhtin's ideas were largely used in literary criticism (Hirschkop & Shepherd, 1989; Morris, 1994; Dentith, 1995; Bell & Gardiner, 1998; Brandist & Tihanon, 2000). They are now being used more widely in academic disciplines and in educational studies. In the case of the present research they offer explanations as to why

differences between varying groups of pupils are perceived to exist. There are, however, challenges about divisiveness in Bakhtin's work, which could have implications for multicultural classrooms.

Further criticisms could be related to issues of divisiveness that might be construed from Bakhtin's ideas about social groups. If this criticism were to be developed, it could be argued that it does not support integration within the classroom, as well as within the larger society. Moreover, powerful educational institutions, including schools, may support dominant literacy practices (Street & Street, 1995; Saxena, 1991), which would disadvantage pupils who were not members of the dominant group. To counteract such criticisms, Bakhtin's own writings can be used as evidence. These works show that interactive dialogue is at the centre of Bakhtin's thinking. This involves engaging with others and "does not invite us to cancel what historically separates us, but rather to understand the other's historical specificity as fully as possible" (Dentith, 1995 p.3). A strength of the approaches based on interactive dialogue is that, unlike transmission models, they assume some exchange of ideas to construct or modify concepts into activity. This would be important in EAL contexts where learners may bring different literacy practices to school. Rather than simply ignore these or treat them as problematic, a dialogic approach suggests a dual exploration of such practices by teachers and students together. This dialogic approach with EAL learners is more likely to be successful when teachers have some knowledge of home or other literacy practices. This would be a particularly useful message for the teachers of the pupils involved in this study if the results of the Vocabulary Tests show there are differences in understanding between groups of pupils, and if teachers' knowledge of theories about dominant literacy practices was increased.

A key criticism from the point of view of this study relates to opinions about "a superficial appropriation" of Bakhtin, and an "add Bakhtin and mix" mentality (Bell & Gardiner, 1998 p. 7). It is easy to see why such criticisms could be levelled at the present work. It is undertaken with young pupils in schools, and veers towards action research more than traditional research. It also "mixes" Bakhtin's ideas with those of Vygotsky. Some key points can be made to support the use of these ideas. A starting point is to refer to a previous statement by these two authors where they deplore the fact that "academic boundaries in Western post-secondary educational institutions still retain a depressing resiliency" (ibid p. 2). They advocate more interdisciplinary study and argue that Bakhtin's ideas need to be adapted and adaptable. It can be argued that this is contradicted in their

later assertions about superficiality and mixing. In fact, more and more academics are joining the ideas of Bakhtin with those of Vygotsky in educational studies (Wertsch, 1991; Hicks, 1996; Wells, 1999; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000; Cummins, 2001). This rapidly developing lineage sets a firm precedent for any research which follows this line of investigation. A further argument is that theories which remain reified and are seen as the property of academia contribute little to educational and social enquiry. Voloshinov (1973) noted that the products of intellectual study could only be kept alive if they were incorporated in use in society. Another point is that both Bakhtin and Vygotsky focused on interactive constructs. This gives credibility to their ideas being put into practice in the active social context of the school and being utilized by teachers, teacher-trainers and educational researchers.

There are also criticisms of Vygotsky to be addressed. The fact that his theories have become so popular is itself a drawback. One critic warns that the accolade given to his work may result in “canonization” and this may inhibit critical enquiry (Asmolov, cited in Daniels, 1996). There is a parallel here with the popularity of Piaget’s ideas on child development which widely influenced educational policy and practice in the 1960s and 1970s (Fisher, 2002; Mukherji & O’Dea, 2000; Bybee & Sund, 1982). This warning needs to be considered if a balanced view of schools and children’s learning is to be taken. To disregard Piaget’s findings about child development and replace them ad hoc with Vygotsky’s ideas would not allow a broad and balanced perspective on education. Some educational psychologists are now arguing for a synthesized interpretation of Piaget and Vygotsky (Saloman, 1993; Smith, Dockrell & Tomlinson, 1997). They point out that whilst Piaget and Vygotsky had different ideas about child development and the role of speech in development and learning, they also had ideas in common, e.g. the importance of action and activity. The key point that emerges here is that in using Vygotsky’s sociocultural approach to pupils’ learning, the valuable insights of Piaget should not be disregarded.

Other writers maintain that Vygotsky is misunderstood in the West, where the range and depth of his arguments are not fully appreciated (Burmenskaya, cited in Daniels, 1996). This point of view is in line with Valsiner’s findings (Valsiner, cited in Daniels, 1996). Valsiner analysed the dissemination of Vygotsky’s ideas by researching the number of citations made in books and in journals. Of the 1,373 citations that he found, 1,129 referred only to two of Vygotsky’s works, which were “Thought and Language” (1962) and “Mind

in Society” (1978). The narrowness of this range caused Valsiner to term these references as being “canalised”. He also pointed out that both of these works suffer from translation difficulties, and that “Thought and Language” is presented in a shortened version. As a result of these findings, Valsiner concluded that the developmental psychology being developed in the West based on Vygotsky’s theories is regarded as being dubious in Russia. However, although it is true that Vygotsky’s writings may not have reached the West in their original form, his main precepts have been studied carefully by Western academics and in some instances in the original Russian, e.g. Cole (who translated the 1978 edition of Vygotsky’s *Mind in Society*), and Van der Veer & Valsiner (1991). In some way the arguments of the purists parallel those opinions discussed previously about the perceived misappropriation of Bakhtin’s ideas. However, counter arguments run strongly, and justify the appropriation of Vygotsky’s ideas as a tool (Wertsch, 1991; Wells, 1999) to support educational theory in the West.

Some dissentors, however, accept very little of Vygotsky’s theories. Particularly stringent criticism comes from Johnson Laird (1986). Johnson Laird finds a lack of rigor in Vygotsky’s ideas and states that his perspective must be brought up to date in the computer age and used to put forward a viable theory that can be modelled in a computer programme in the same way that the weather can be modelled. An obvious question here is if can this ever be possible in human research (Cole, 1996; Wood, 1998). Johnson Laird does, however, pick out some weaknesses in Vygotsky’s ideas.

“He failed to formulate a proper theory of elementary mental processes; he overlooked the role of syntax in language; he proposed a radical discontinuity between evolutionary and cultural processes that is incompatible with anthropological evidence. Vygotsky was an artist trying to construct a scientific psychology in an era when the only language for theories was the vernacular.” (p. 879).

Wells (1999) makes some similar points to those put forward to Johnson Laird. He notes that Vygotsky did not propose a complete theory of education, and even if he had, this would not be commensurate with the very different society of today. This can be related to Johnson Laird’s point about computer-analysed studies. However, Wells points out that that Vygotsky’s theories should not be taken per se as a solution, but rather as “a powerful tool for mediating further understanding and action” (1999, p. xii). Wertsch, (1985, 1991)

and Bruner (1990) refer to concepts, context knowledge strategies and technologies as mediational tools that are used to construct meaning, whilst Cole (1996) refers to artefacts. This key point, made by Wells, Wertsch, Bruner and Cole, supports the argument taken in the present work. Vygotsky's ideas, aligned with those of Bakhtin, are used as a tool to understand why pupils from different sociocultural backgrounds are perceived to have different levels of understanding of lexical items encountered in texts. If the hypothesis of this study is substantiated, then action will be taken to inform teachers about this. This will give them greater understanding of the complexities of pupils' needs in the context of the classroom, which the teachers can direct into action to support their pupils.

The notion of computer-based educational inquiry seen as a requisite by Johnson Laird is dismissed in Bakhtin's writing (1986). He holds the perspective that the complex areas of learning and education are something to be understood rather than analysed causally through scientific inquiry (Hicks 1996). This is another instance of where the ideas of Vygotsky and Bakhtin overlap.

Further critical points against Vygotsky's theories relate to paradoxes. Paradoxes in Vygotsky's account of development are noted by Wertsch, (cited in Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000), and John-Steiner and Meehan (ibid). Wertsch points out that Vygotsky (1987) wrote apparently contradictory accounts of how meaning is constructed in human thinking. Wertsch ascribes this to the influence of conflicting philosophical heritages on Vygotsky, and he maintains that these conflicts are still prevalent in Western society. He concludes that any analysis of Vygotsky involve tensions which need to be acknowledged in order for clear thinking about questions of meaning to take place. This reiterates the previous discussion about the need for Vygotsky's ideas to be used as a tool to formulate solutions to problems, rather than being taken as absolute solutions.

John-Steiner and Meehan (op cit) identify a further paradox relating to Vygotsky's account of internalisation. They question how new knowledge can be created if all knowledge is social in origin. To find answers to this query they studied cases of advanced creativity, including Einstein. They cite examples where subjects discussed how they built upon each other's ideas. Through "cognitive pluralism" (John-Steiner, 1995 op cit), which entails working from a collaborative base, new knowledge can be constructed interindividually. As a result of their inquiries they argue that internalization is not the opposite of creativity, and in some instances it can be an integral part of it. This work is a further example of where

Vygotsky's ideas are scrutinized and developed to further thinking about human mental processing.

Vygotsky's construct of the zone of proximal development has also been subjected to rigorous critique. Ball, (cited in Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000), points out that teachers need to know their pupils current level of attainment as a prerequisite for planning their progress in the zone. Wertsch, (1991) and Wells (1999) also comment on its dyadic nature, i.e. a teacher engaged with one pupil, whereas this will rarely be the case in mainstream primary classrooms, where teachers have to cater for the needs of thirty or more pupils. This has led to the further development of Vygotsky's ideas, such as "whole class" ZPD activities (Cortazzi & Jin, 1998).

This review of criticisms of Vygotskian ideas has shown that even adherents of his theories do not claim that he put forward "a fully articulated theory of education" (Wells, 1999 p.xii). What does emerge is a consensus of opinion, apart from that of Johnson Laird, that his theories provide a "powerful tool", (Wells, *ibid*) for the development of social and interactive educational inquiry. In some instances, these have been modified through the studies that have drawn on them (Newman et al, 1989). Other academics note, "Vygotsky's tenets become salient to subsequent generations through a process of transformation. They have been adjusted in relation to the social problems of the diverse cultures they have been called on to help understand" (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000 p. 4).

They are also seen as suggesting new and powerful opportunities for innovative forms of inquiry (Hicks, 1996). A similar perspective comes from another academic, who writes that the development of Vygotskian precepts into "an ever more social and coherent theory of the formation of mind still has some way to go" (Daniels, 1996).

The continuing development of Vygotsky's theories in their application to educational studies is manifested in the way they have been joined with those of Bakhtin. In the instance of this study, the combined ideas of Vygotsky and Bakhtin give an insight into why minority groups in city classrooms are perceived to have less understanding of key lexical items in texts than their peers, and why their teachers are not aware of the extent of misunderstanding which might exist.

Several reasons can be put forward to justify why sociocultural theories provide an appropriate framework for this study. First, the schools that children have to attend are

themselves sociocultural institutions (Street & Street, 1995). Within these schools all children are taught in English, (South, 1999) and the curriculum is largely geared towards the dominant culture (Street & Street, op cit; Cummins, 1997, 2001). Many pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are taught in a language that is not their mother tongue, and have to access a curriculum which has a different cultural perspective (Gee, 1990). Where pupils are new to English, as in the case of new arrivals to the country, teachers will know there are language and cultural differences to be addressed. In other instances EAL pupils may have a surface fluency in English, and it may appear to their teachers that they have the same access to the curriculum as their monolingual peers, whereas this may not be the case (see Chapter 3). Sociocultural theories put forward explanations for differences in understanding observed between these two groups in the classroom situation, not only in terms of language proficiency, i.e. how well the pupil speaks English, but also about the social and cultural derivation of language and how this can affect meaning.

Another reason why sociocultural theory was found to be relevant was that the present research investigates groups of pupils. Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) formed the first group, and monolingual British heritage pupils formed the second group. The collective notion of the group and its sociocultural history and legacy is an integral part of sociocultural theory (Cole, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Moll, 1990; Rogoff, 1990; Wertsch, 1985, 1991). Within the classroom context, most of the teaching is likely to be directed at the “average” group of pupils (though differentiation is accepted to be good practice). One of the reasons why a questionnaire for teachers was compiled after the pupils’ Vocabulary Tests had been completed was to identify if the teachers connected with the current research had an “average” notion of an EAL group of pupils, and made any general assumptions about their understanding of vocabulary in English. A further issue centred round the group is that large-scale immigration into Leicester from social groups outside Europe did not occur before the late 1960s. Since then there has been a growing awareness about multicultural education and inclusive education, but the sociocultural perspectives of these minority groups and their home literacy practices are not generally known to teachers and others involved in mainstream schooling (Gregory, 2000; Edwards, 1996, 1998). The “group” is an integral part of this study, and this explains why sociocultural theories are utilized in this particular context, rather than theories from other disciplines such as psychology or psycholinguistics that deal with the individual.

A further reason for using sociocultural theories is that the research questions emerged from the researcher's observations of pupils and teachers in multicultural classrooms. Teaching and learning within the school is a socially situated activity. This study encompasses schools, teachers and pupils and investigates an aspect of literacy practice undertaken in classrooms, which is then related to home literacy practices and sociocultural perspectives on a wider scale. This research therefore has key characteristics of sociocultural investigation in that it involves dialogic inquiry and the construction of meaning.

It is therefore argued that sociocultural theories potentially give answers that fit the research questions of this study. Importantly, they have also been developed to provide strategies to support pupils in the construction of meaning within texts, if the results of the research show that EAL pupils have more difficulty with reading comprehension than their L1 peers. The ZPD is a key example, as it gives a construct for improving pupils' attainment. Before it can be utilized, however, the teacher has to be aware of the pupil's present level of lexical understanding. The results of this research can be used as a tool to raise teachers' understanding of their pupils' needs. This leads to the further point of collaborative inquiry as an educational goal, in which teachers view their work as a means of learning (Sarason, 1990). This was manifested in this study through the teachers providing matched pairs of EAL/L1 pupils for the Vocabulary Tests, participating in interviews, completing questionnaires, and attending post-research INSET. Their role in the present inquiry has been a collaborative one with the researcher, in which all participants extended their learning. The constructs of scaffolding, and "activity" in activity theory, have also developed from sociocultural theory, and they provide teachers with strategies they can use to support their EAL pupils' learning. Both are discussed in the following sections.

This section has reviewed the theories of Vygotsky and Bakhtin and has put forward an argument for their relevance to the key research questions of this study. Their original ideas have been developed in more contemporary studies, which are discussed next in two sections. First is a review of constructs that have been developed from sociocultural theory, followed by a second section that reviews works of sociocultural theories that have been applied to education.

2.4 Developments from sociocultural theory

The construct of scaffolding.

The concept of scaffolding put forward by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) is derived from Vygotsky's ZDP. It is a particularly useful construct for the present study, which investigates EAL pupils' need for support in English language development, and also investigates teachers' perceptions about this.

The term 'scaffold' refers to various supportive strategies that an adult or more capable peer will use to help the child's learning, especially in the initial stages (Wood & Middleton, 1975). These mentors intervene when and where it is necessary to assist the child in reaching his or her goal, and where the child cannot do this unaided. Scaffolding takes place within a social context and mediates the child's construction of knowledge, therefore it is not transmissional, but rather a supportive construct. The initial support may be extensive, and for any particular area of learning, but this support is gradually withdrawn as the child becomes progressively independent in the learning activity, or activities, involved. The adult hands over responsibility to the child. Thus the notion of 'handover' is involved. The scaffolding is removed and may be used elsewhere to assist the same child in some other area of learning.

Mercer (1996) also addresses scaffolding in school practice, but in his work he changes the term *handover* to that of *appropriation*. A subtle distinction can be noted between these two lexemes. *Handover* implies the dominance of the adult who is scaffolding the child. The adult is in control, and hands over to the child when the adult believes the child is ready. In contrast, the use of *appropriation* puts a greater focus on the child's role in the learning process, and suggests that the child has been an active participant in appropriating the new knowledge. Donato (in Lantolf & Appel, 1994) also stresses the child's role in his statement, "scaffolded performance is a dialogically constituted inter-psychological mechanism that promotes the novice's internalisation of knowledge co-constructed in shared activity" (p. 41).

Donato's (op cit) studied collective scaffolding in second language learners, with the objectives of examining how students co-construct language learning experiences within the classroom, and to examine how second language development is brought about on the social plane. The idea of 'scaffolding' has mostly been set in an expert-novice situation, such as parent and child (Wertsch, 1979), teacher and student (Wong-Fillmore, 1985) or

master and apprentice (Greenfield, 1984; Singleton, 1989), whilst more current theories discuss guided participation and learning apprenticeships (Rogoff, 1990). As a result of his research, Donato concluded that second language learners were adept at providing scaffolded help for other EAL students within the classroom. Moreover, it emerged that through the collective activity of peer scaffolding, learners were able to expand their own second language knowledge as well as supporting the linguistic development of their peers. Donato argues that the learners themselves offer a potential for developing learning, as in Vygotsky's original proposal not only adults, but more able peers can be instrumental in advancing a child's ZDP.

The disadvantage with Donato's work in relation to this study is that it was undertaken with adult learners who were all foreign students of English, whereas the present research investigates young primary pupils. It does, however, offer some ideas for teachers about ways in which peer group scaffolding can be utilized in the classroom, particularly as the results indicate benefits for the scaffolders as well as those being supported. It is evident that adult learners would be more proficient at setting up scaffolding activities than the young children who participated in this study. These pupils would need the learning activity scaffolded by the teacher before they themselves were able to act as scaffolders. However, many classroom activities in the primary phase offer scope for collective scaffolding, particularly where mixed EAL/L1 groups are involved.

An example of scaffolding in practice can be taken from Bruner's (1978) work. In a study of mother-infant dyad, Bruner noted "the mother will often support the child in achieving an intended outcome, entering only to assist or reciprocate or 'scaffold' the action." He demonstrates how the mother scaffolded her child's speech. She responded to the child's limited utterance by expanding it with a longer reply that provided a linguistic and semantic model for the child's speech development:

Child: "Mommy, birdie!"

Mother: "Yes, there's a bird outside on the fence, isn't there?"

(ibid p. 245)

Bruner (1989) posited that two significant conditions must exist if successful learning is to take place. Firstly, the learner must be willing to try, and secondly, the teacher must provide a scaffold. Thus the attitude of the learner is crucial, as is the teacher's knowledge

of the learner's current capabilities and the support that is required to extend his or her learning.

We can note here that pupils from Asian cultures are commonly acknowledged to be willing pupils. They would therefore fit Bruner's first criterion, in general terms. The second criterion, however, is debatable. A hypothesis of this study is that teachers may not always be aware of the scaffolding that these pupils require. Some of the teachers questioned said that their EAL pupils had little problem with English language acquisition and the understanding of vocabulary, yet this study argues that this is by no means always the case. Such responses occurred in inner-city schools, where Asian pupils were often regarded as more able than their peers, though there were instances of similar statements from teachers in other schools.

Rogoff (1993) has investigated cultural differences in scaffolding, and believes that this construct is more applicable to Western cultures than to other societies, as "the pedagogic mode of finely-tuned support inherent in the scaffolding metaphor may be especially suited to child-orientated, academic tasks that are common in Western culture since this form of communication does not characterize adult interactions everywhere" (p. 33). This again points to the need for teachers to be more knowledgeable about the diversity of home social and literacy practices of their pupils (cf. Chapter 5). They need to be informed so that they can provide relevant learning experiences that make productive use of what ethnic minority pupils bring to school with them from the cultural and literacy practices of their homes.

Rogoff (1989) has also noted that the term scaffold might seem to imply a rigid structure that is adult dominated and does not involve the child. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976), however, use the term as a flexible construct that can be adjusted to match the needs of the child's ongoing activity. When a particular goal is reached, the adult hands over responsibility to the child. Thus the scaffolding is flexible, as it reduces in proportion to the child's acquisition of the knowledge or behaviour being learned until the child achieves independence in the particular task.

Scaffolding obviously does demand involvement from the learner, at the level of paying attention as well as joining in verbally and ultimately taking over, but the learner may often initiate the scaffolding interaction, e.g. with a request for help or an indication of "being stuck".

Schaffer, (in Daniels, 1996) criticises the concept of scaffolding by stating "it is no more than a metaphor - a vivid one, but one that does not explain the problem of internalisation, i.e. how a child becomes self-regulated after a period of other-regulation" (p. 270). Further criticisms come from Stone (1993). Stone points out that, at a simplistic level, scaffolding can become a transmissional didactic activity with the child in the role of a passive receiver. This may sometimes be the case, but the criticism misses the point made about child involvement and learner initiation. It may occur in schools where teachers do not understand that scaffolding is a "subtle phenomenon, one that involves a complex set of social and communicative dynamics" (ibid p. 180). However, as argued previously in this study, educational theories need to be accessible to teachers in their daily teaching if they are to be of value in raising pupils' attainment, otherwise they are likely to become defunct (Voloshinov, 1973). If some academics believe teachers misunderstand and misuse the scaffolding construct, then teachers should be provided with more INSET and greater opportunities for professional development to put these theories into action.

Despite these criticisms, scaffolding is a practical and useful concept for classroom teachers. That scaffolding is a metaphor in itself should not mean that it does not leave positive functions for teachers. As Cortazzi and Jin (1999, p. 153) argue, some teachers use scaffolding as a ubiquitous term for any kind of teacher help, yet the metaphor of scaffolding, as used in INSET and teacher education courses, has itself scaffolded many teachers' understanding of the crucial role of language in learning through interaction. This gives a case for researchers and teacher educators to scaffold teachers' developing understanding so that they can appropriate the uses of scaffolding both as a term and as an activity. Bruner himself has related scaffolding to learning (1989). It seems that more classroom practitioners are familiar with the construct of scaffolding than they are with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, on which it is based. The National Literacy Strategy features scaffolded activity in the form of guided reading and writing. The term 'scaffolded learning' is becoming more frequently used in schools.

Scaffolding may be termed a metaphor, yet it is because it is a 'vivid metaphor' that it is valuable and can be easily translated to supporting learning activities within schools. It provides a particularly useful construct to meet the needs of EAL pupils, who may often need additional support with their English language learning. As Cortazzi and Jin (ibid) show, there are many productive uses of metaphors among educators. Thus the counter-

argument can be raised that, rather than dismissing scaffolding as a metaphor, the real question is to examine how the metaphor is being used among teachers, and what its functions are in teachers' discourse.

Activity Theory

Activity theory originated from Vygotsky's (1925/1975) early work in which he suggested that socially meaningful activity could be an explanatory principle in human development. This original idea was developed into activity theory by Vygotsky's colleague, Leontiev (Leontiev, 1981). It can be defined in terms of 'sociocultural settings in which collaborative interaction, inter-subjectivity and assisted performance occur' (Donato and McCormick, 1994, p. 455). The school is one particular activity setting, and its purpose is the provision of systematic instruction. The classroom is seen as a collaborative community where action takes place. The activity will have a subject, and object, actions and operations. The subject will have an object or goal to achieve and will take action to achieve this through supported or collaborative operations. The subject will then internalise, or appropriate, the learnt goal. This is not a static process, as the activity will be reactivated when new learning goals appear. Studies in activity theory have been undertaken by Coughlan and Duff, (1994, cited in Mitchell and Myles, (1998); Platt and Brooks, (1994) and Donato and McCormick (1994).

Activity theory is relevant to the current work as it is a tool that can be used to support EAL pupils in their acquisition of English through joint collaborative action with teachers and with peers to achieve particular goals in their learning. They can then appropriate this knowledge, e.g. in terms of increased proficiency in an aspect of English language, and re-activate the strategies to achieve new goals. However, the required self-reflection within this theory is open to debate when considering young children. Researchers in the field emphasise the significance of the participant's individual actions even when involved in collaborative inquiry. For example, as a result of their study with college students of French, Donato and McCormick (1994) conclude that, "From a sociocultural perspective, the classroom culture can, therefore, be designed to move students beyond thoughtful consumption to reflective construction of language learning strategies." (p. 463). It can be argued that the young children involved in this study will not be at a developmental stage of maturity which would enable them to engage in either "thoughtful consumption" of language or "reflective construction of language learning strategies". This is a situation

where neo-Vygotskian constructs such as activity theory need to be mediated with other theories of child development.

Further criticisms of activity theory exist. One critic notes that Leontiev failed to develop several of Vygotsky's ideas. He did not emphasize the importance of social interactions, or the development of word meaning in ontogenesis (Minick, cited in Daniels, 1996). The lack of inquiry into word meaning is particularly relevant to this study because it investigates young pupils' lexical understanding. These gaps in the construct are therefore quite critical. Moreover, applied research in the field has been small-scale to date so it is difficult to monitor its effectiveness (Mitchell & Myles, 1998). Another disadvantage is that setting goals or targets can "distort teaching and learning" (Hopkins, 2001). In some instances teachers may be just teaching to the goal, and missing other opportunities to develop their pupils' learning.

A key point that arises from the critique of these developments in sociocultural theory is that they need to be disseminated clearly to teachers to enable teachers to have a full understanding of the principles involved. If teachers are informed and knowledgeable about scaffolding and activity theory, and are also made aware that some EAL pupils may have underlying difficulties with key lexical items in texts, then, it is argued, competent practitioners can utilize them as tools to support pupils in their learning. This leads to the following section, where some relevant applied sociocultural studies in education are reviewed.

2.5. Sociocultural studies in education

The sociocultural studies in education which were reviewed for this study had a central theme of the joint construction of knowledge through dialogic activity in which language was a key tool, e.g. Wertsch, 1991; Hicks, 1996; Dixon-Krauss, 1996; Wells, 1991; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000. Another feature that emerged from the review was that researchers in the field adapted and developed the original ideas of Vygotsky and Bakhtin in their work with teachers and pupils in schools.

Wertsch (1991) was one of the earlier academics to combine the theories of Vygotsky and Bakhtin and relate them to schools in a sociocultural approach to mediated action. He refers to three major ideas shared by both Vygotsky and Bakhtin. The first of these is that an understanding of human mental functioning needs an understanding of the semiotic

devices that are used to mediate this functioning. Second, it is linked to communication, and third, it needs to be understood through a genetic or developmental analysis. He argues that cultural, historical and social processes lie at the root of all human thought and communication. He takes the theme, common to both Bakhtin and Vygotsky, that the individual is shaped by these sociocultural processes. As argued previously, this will mean that some EAL pupils in schools in the U.K. will have had different sociocultural and language socialisation experiences which may affect their complete understanding of classroom discourse, and also of texts in these classrooms. Moreover, their teachers may not be aware of these pupils' difficulties.

Wells (1999) follows a similar argument to that put forward by Wertch (ibid). In a dialogic approach to research in teaching and learning, he draws on the ideas of Bakhtin (1986) in addition to those of Vygotsky. He points out that many contemporary researchers in a variety of disciplines are turning to Bakhtinian theory. These include Harste, (1994), McMahon et al. (1997), Nystrand for English; Cobbs (1995) and Lampert, Rittenhouse and Crumbaugh (1996) for maths; Gallas (1995) for science, and Wereriff and Mercer (1997) for the use of computers in the classroom. This is relevant to the present research as each of these areas appears in the curriculum, and the research findings are likely to impact upon schools. Wells extends his theme of dialogic inquiry further by incorporating Halliday's ideas. Halliday (1978) and his colleagues developed systemic linguistics. Halliday argues that there are two strands to language, language as behaviour and language as knowledge. Language as behaviour is a social concept that includes dialects and accent. Language as knowledge is extended by the concept of register, which is the functional orientation of language used to mediate formal learning. Social meaning is central to Halliday's conception of both language as behaviour and language as knowledge. This centrality of social meaning is reflected in Halliday's constant modelling of language operating with three intertwined overarching functions; ideational, interpersonal and textual. Crucially, these metafunctions hold for all levels of language from the lexical/semantic through grammar (lexico-grammatical levels), and through discourse and cultural/ideological levels. The interpersonal is therefore a constant strand in Halliday's model, linking the word to the text to social and cultural contexts (Halliday, 1978, 1993). This makes his ideas particularly relevant to the current study, as it is to Wells' work. Halliday's central focus on language in relation to higher mental functioning mirrors Vygotsky's theory of learning and development. Halliday argues that, "the ontogenesis of language is at the same time the ontogenesis of learning" (1993, p. 93). When this focus on the link between language

and learning is related to the present study, it has implications for EAL pedagogy. If EAL learners are being taught in a second language, their level of proficiency in English will be quite critical in relation to their level of learning. Moreover ideas such as those of Vygotsky (1962), Bakhtin (1981) and Clarke (1992; 1996) point to the importance of a shared culture in understanding meaning within any given dialogic situation, which would include the classroom and EAL learners within it. Halliday believes that there should be a partnership between theory about a language, and language in use. Because of his awareness that theoretical linguistics can become reified, he argues that this theory should be used to complement dynamic language use. This point has arisen previously in the present study in arguments about the misappropriation of academic theory by practitioners (Voloshinov 1973). However, teachers are professionals who have a “situational understanding” (Elliott, 1993) of their pupils and classroom activities, and are thus able to assimilate and put into practice developments in educational theory when they are informed about these. This is manifested in the interactive dialogic school-based research activities undertaken with teachers and their pupils by both Wertsch (op cit) and Wells (op cit).

The importance of *collaborative activity* and *language* in learning situations are a key characteristic of school based sociocultural studies. This is in contrast to a *transmissional* mode of teaching. As a result of their research, writers including Gee (1990), Wertsch (1991), Daniels (1996), Hicks (1996) and Lee & Smagorinsky (2000) question the validity of a transmissional mode of teaching. This can be clarified by looking at Reddy’s (1979) work.

Reddy (1979) deals with human communication in terms of transmission of information, and illustrates this by using a conduit metaphor. This transmission mode is linear and uni-directional. The active sender encodes a message that he sends to a passive receiver, who decodes the message. The standard diagram of the conduit metaphor is reproduced below.



Figure 2.1. Reddy's Conduit Metaphor (in Wertsch, 1991, p.72).

In the conduit metaphor, the receiver is passive. This can be related to the classroom situation in terms of didactic teaching, where the pupils are recipients of a curriculum delivered by the teacher rather than engaged in active learning. Learning styles can also be passive. Children from many Asian cultures, such as those pupils studied in the present research, are often acknowledged by their teachers to be passive learners. This may have a cultural source (c.f. Chapter 5). In many groups, the teacher is the figure of authority (Hofstede, 1980; Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1988; Cortazzi and Jin, 1994). The pupil's role is one of listener and receiver. To interrupt or question the teacher is to commit a solecism. This, in fact, goes against current ideas of dynamic learning and the joint construction of knowledge. It can be argued that the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) can be presented in a transmission mode. If the pupils are not actively engaged in their own learning, then they become passive receivers. Indeed, INSET for teachers on the NLS can follow this model. It can be presented as a formula, or even as a panacea, with no reference to the educational theory supporting it or to the particular needs of EAL learners. Teachers may, therefore, transmit to pupils along univocal lines what has been transmitted to them. It can be argued that this prohibits good classroom practice in language and literacy skills. It can also be argued that the common transmission metaphors for learning, like the 'conduit' metaphors, can limit the conceptualisation of alternatives. It is evident that a dialogic mode of communication and a transmission mode of communication will result in different teaching styles in the classroom. The dialogic mode will obviously meet the needs of EAL pupils better as they will be engaged in productive speech activities that will enhance their proficiency in English and their attainment across the curriculum.

Lotman (1986) asserts that both modes can be found in any modern society. However, one or the other will dominate in specific historical eras, or in particular activities. It can be argued that the current structure of education in the U.K society leans towards the hierarchical and transmissional. A National Curriculum has been imposed, followed by a National Literacy Strategy and a Numeracy Strategy, with little dialogue with teachers. The authoritative voice of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) is dominant, and conducts rigorous school inspections. Teacher training has replaced teacher education. There have also been various attempts to bring in apprenticeship types of teacher training, though these have not been very successful. INSET can also be transmissional instead of interactive.

relevant in the case of some EAL learners in schools who may need a lot of encouragement to speak in a group situation, as observed by teachers interviewed during this study.

The concept of a participant framework for classroom discourse has been introduced by Goffman, (1974, 1981, *ibid.*) and developed by Goodwin, (1990, *ibid.*). The participant framework encompasses purposeful teacher-directed activities, and what Goffman (1981, *ibid.*) terms 'animation', whereby a speaker animates himself or another through the speech act. By constructing a shifting participant framework the teacher can "revoice" a student's contribution. This means that the teacher can repeat the student's utterance (or writing) by extending it or rephrasing it, adding emphasis and other criteria. The purpose of revoicing is to assist the students in expanding their thinking. The student is the originator of the contribution and the teacher becomes the animator. This role can also be taken on by a peer or peers.

This concept of revoicing has a number of goals that could usefully be applied to EAL learners. The teacher can effectively credit a pupil for his or her participation, and is also able to improve or reframe what the pupil had offered, so that it maximises the learning experience of the whole group. Pupils can be introduced into particular cognitive and linguistic practices by being placed into specific roles in the group discussions. It can also allow them to see both themselves and their peers as valued participants in the joint construction of knowledge. If there are indeed lexical gaps of understanding between some EAL pupils and their teachers, as is argued in this study, revoicing may be one solution since the gaps are noticed because the technique allows children to see other meanings in use for target vocabulary.

The participant framework can also be extended by variations. An example of this is when the teacher encourages a group of peers to support one pupil in the group in a scaffolded situation. Goodwin (*ibid.*) maintains that this type of frame is a key resource "for accomplishing social organisation within face-to-face interaction" (p. 10). Peer interaction is also used in Toma's (1996, *ibid.*) study. Toma suggests that Japanese children are primed to use "speech frames" early in their education. These speech frames provide explicit models of language. Because of this early experience, Japanese children are familiar with referring to other individual's ideas, and to use them in constructing their own ideas. All of these strategies could be used by teachers as tools for supporting children's

learning. However, the first step is to disseminate them to teachers in a form that is useful for classroom practice. This is an issue that is addressed by Dixon-Krauss.

Dixon-Krauss (1996) makes the valid point that whilst Vygotsky's ideas have been adopted by academics, they have not been widely disseminated to classroom practitioners. Moreover, they are often couched in academic discourse instead of clear explanatory language that relates to classroom practice. This limits their use and application in teaching and learning in schools. To remedy this, Dixon-Krauss worked with teachers to use Vygotsky's ideas as a cohesive conceptual framework and an operational model for literacy instruction and assessment in the classroom. The teachers took Vygotsky's ideas and put them into practice in their teaching. This resulted in a volume in which contributions were written by teachers who mediated Vygotsky's theories into classroom activity. Each of these is evaluated and related to the appropriate theory. This presentation of Vygotsky's ideas is very relevant to teachers and can be applied to EAL learners as well as L1 pupils. There is some disadvantage in that it is set in the context of schooling in the USA, but it remains an accessible work for practitioners. It also provides a model for teachers to follow in the U.K.

A relevant issue that Dixon-Krauss discusses is Vygotsky's view of concept development, which, she believes, has received little attention because it is difficult to understand. Vygotsky wrote that signs are used in human mental activity. "In concept formation, that sign is the word which at first plays the role of meaning in forming a concept and later becomes its symbol." (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 56). The stages of concept development are listed in the diagram below:

TABLE 2.1. Stages of concept development (In Dixon-Krauss, 1996, p. 56)

Heaps	Random categories
Complexes	Concrete factual relationships among diverse objects
Potential Concepts	Transition from concrete, spontaneous to abstract, scientific concepts
Genuine Concepts	Abstract, systematised knowledge common to a culture

Vygotsky stresses that concept-formation is not a uni-directional transmission from adult to child. It develops through adult-child discourse as the child passes through the stage of

potential concepts. The word functions as the cognitive tool. The child internalises concept formation through a process of abstract synthesis, which Vygotsky described as the key to higher mental activity. Abstract synthesis involves three stages:

1. abstracting certain traits
2. synthesising these traits
3. symbolising them with a sign

Dixon-Krauss asserts that Vygotsky's ideas about concept development highlight the significance of vocabulary knowledge in relation to reading comprehension. A pupil who fails to comprehend the key words that convey the meaning in a text will not make sense of the whole text because he or she does not have the correct tools to engage in abstract synthesis when reading. This is a key argument of the present research that investigates EAL pupils' reading comprehension, so Dixon-Krauss's conclusions are very relevant. She also recommends activities to support children's concept development, such as pre-reading discussion, concept mapping and word webs (see also Mc William, 1998). This applied research is useful for teachers with EAL pupils who may have conceptual language barriers. It is also particularly relevant because it appears in a text written by teachers for teachers.

Another relevant strand of Dixon Krauss's work is a study of collaborative learning and thinking. A Vygotskian approach to collaborative learning and thinking was examined with a group of twenty-five learners. These pupils were mixed ability, so activities are constructed where more able peers support other pupils. The classroom thus became a community of learners. The idea of a community of learners can be used to counter arguments that Vygotskian theory concentrates on dyads or small groups. The collaborative learning situation was found to assist children's acceptance of differences of both ethnic background and physical disability. Research by Slavin (1990, cited in Dixon-Krauss) also found that collaborative group interaction improved racial harmony. It therefore offers wider benefits to teachers and pupils, such as social inclusion, in addition to the enhancement of learning.

Further ideas about the multicultural classroom are examined in a Vygotskian approach to assessment and instruction. Vygotsky advocated that both assessment and instruction should be dynamic. Existing intelligence and achievement tests are criticised as being

biased towards white, middle class pupils (Stanley, 1992, cited in Dixon-Kraus, Cummins, 1997). This argues for a new approach (Collier, 1988; Au, 1993, *ibid*). It also ties in with Wells' (1999) statement that teachers have to be aware of the increasing diversity of the school population. Wells argues that where teachers respond positively to change, and are willing to use dialogic and constructivist methods, this can be successfully negotiated, citing research in the field undertaken by Englert, 1992, Green and Dixon, 1993 and Roseberry et al. 1992. The education system needs to cater for EAL pupils across a whole range. Some may be recent arrivals whose knowledge and skills may not be apparent if they are unable to communicate in English. This may lead to them being wrongly assessed as low ability learners (Cummins, 1996). There are however, many research projects providing innovative responses to the needs of these learners. (Moll and Greenberg, 1990; Allen, 1993, *ibid*). Many teachers in UK schools will be familiar with such situations. Other situations may arise when their surface proficiency in English leads teachers to believe their understanding is greater than it is, which is a key concern of the present study.

The studies reviewed so far have put the main focus on teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom situation, but Ball's (2000) work takes a different angle. Ball undertook a project to improve trainee teachers' developing perspectives on the strategic use of literacies to enhance the teaching and learning of pupils in urban schools. Ball based her work on Orfield and Reardon's (1993 *op cit.*) observation that teachers need to be more fully prepared to teach the diverse pupil population of city schools. She used a sociocultural framework in applying Vygotsky's theory of internalisation and the ZPD together with Bakhtin's ideas about dialogue, utterance and voice to develop trainee teachers' ability to become effective practitioners in these schools. The targeted teachers undertook external activities including assigned readings on theory, interactive discussions, writing assignments and practical teaching experience. Ball noted that there was a change in the targeted trainee teachers' discourse practice over time that was in line with Vygotsky's theory of internalization. The programme that they had undertaken *externally* became *internalized*. This encouraged the self-reflection and growth that, Ball argues, would enable the developing teachers to become effective practitioners in multicultural urban schools.

Ball's study reflects the argument made in the present work of the need to raise teacher's awareness about the language learning needs of their EAL pupils. If the research questions of this study give affirmative answers, then Ball's work gives one model that could be

applied to teacher training and also used as a basis for continuing professional development to develop local teachers' perspectives of literacy.

This section has reviewed some applied sociocultural studies in education. Though criticisms of sociocultural theory have been addressed earlier in this chapter, some further criticisms remain that are relevant to these applied works.

Gee (1996) discusses out what he calls "some dilemmas" related to sociocultural theory and current debates in education. A key dilemma is the tension between explicit instruction and activity-based learning. This issue has arisen previously in this chapter in the discussion of teacher-transmission via collaborative learning practices, but Gee has further points to make. He argues that these two perspectives are not always a division between those on the right of the political spectrum and those on the left. Though the right are traditionally associated with a "back to basics" pedagogy, there are also arguments for explicit instruction from the left, e.g. Bernstein (1975, 1990) and Delpit (1986, 1988, 1993). These have been amplified by the genre movement originating in Australia, which argues that if children are left to discover or construct their own knowledge, and not taught directly, this disadvantages those pupils whose home literacies are different from those of the school. This reinforces the power structure of privileged groups in society. Similar observations have been made by Heath (1983), Street & Street (1995), and Cummins (1997). Gee also notes that some explicit instruction is obviously necessary. The key issue is when and how this can be "efficacious".

Gee points out that this requires "theories of learning, of classroom practices and of the nature and structure of the sorts of knowledge we want people to acquire" (p. 271). Vygotsky put forward general theories that dealt with all three, albeit in a general way, in "Thinking and Speech," (1987). The construct of the ZPD involves an adult or more capable peer guiding the child through a learning zone. This is far removed from individualist discovery learning theories. In sociocultural theory, learning occurs through activity and guided support. However, if Vygotsky's ideas are taken alone they leave questions about what Gee (ibid) terms "critical literacy", namely the resources and meta-knowledge of systems that are necessary for critique. Gee turns to Bakhtin's ideas about the heterogeneous nature of the multi-voiced classroom to develop Vygotsky's ideas, as, he notes, many others have done. In Bakhtin's view, any situation "is always a heterogeneous mixture of different and often conflicting voices connected to different social groups and

different histories, different interests and desires” (p. 280). Though this helps in an understanding of the multicultural classroom for the purposes of the present study, it also leaves the dilemma of exactly what is worthwhile knowledge. If the child appropriates in the zone of proximal development the goals, norms and representations held to be desirable, then this poses questions about how it would be possible to critique the system and have a meta-awareness of it without actually exiting the system itself. Gee admits that he has no answer to the dilemma he has raised, and suggests that it is one that plays below the surface of many sociocultural studies in education.

More general criticisms of sociocultural theory exist. Mitchell and Myles (1998) point out that sociocultural theories in second language learning are relatively new in the field. A key criticism is that they do not address language as a formal system. Studies to date have been relatively small scale and have generally employed interpretative research procedures, which are affected by some of the usual difficulties of naturalistic research. Mitchell and Myles cite studies by Donato and McCormack (1994) and Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) and note that clear causal results have not been proved, i.e. the students’ progress could have been a result of general development rather than scaffolded activities as claimed by the researchers. They also query the role of words within this theory, though in fact both word use and meaning are exhaustively examined by both Vygotsky and Bakhtin. Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) also recognize that much empirical research in the field has been fragmentary.

Despite these criticisms, this literature review has indicated the increasing influence of sociocultural in educational studies. It has also been argued that these theories provide a useful framework to examine the key research questions of this work. However, many writers acknowledge that sociocultural theory is still very much an unexplored territory, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Literature from other disciplines that gives further perspectives on pupils with English as an additional language, and also gives useful information for teachers, is therefore reviewed in the following chapters. The first of these addresses first and second language acquisition, with particular reference to the work of Cummins.

CHAPTER THREE: PRINCIPLES RELATING TO FIRST LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND SECOND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT.

Introduction.

There were more than 500,000 bilingual pupils in the school population of England in 1999 (South, 1999), and the numbers have continued to grow through immigration and the arrival of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The potential extent of the enormous linguistic and cultural diversity within any particular city in Britain can be inferred from a survey of London's school children, (Baker and Eversley, 2000) which found 307 languages represented and estimated that 30% of London's children were bilingual. Alladina and Edwards (1991) have edited a major survey of 33 of these languages which shows the extensive bilingual and multi-lingual reality of contemporary Britain. At a local level, the fact that Leicester City Council (Leicester Link, February 2000 p. 5) set up an accredited interpretation service with over 50 languages, gives some indication of the linguistic diversity within the city.

Within the schools in Leicester, EAL pupils vary in their level of English acquisition from those who are new to English to those graded as fully fluent. A key factor in influencing their success in the education system will be their linguistic ability in English. English is both the medium of learning for all subjects, and a key subject in the curriculum itself. This makes anything that hinders these pupils from full access to the curriculum quite critical, and this study argues that these pupils may have difficulties with lexical understanding of which their teachers are unaware. As South (ibid p.1) notes, one of the main criteria that must be taken into account in assessing the needs of EAL pupils is the process of learning a second or additional language. This chapter addresses some of the key issues involved in relation to the target pupils of this study and their teachers.

Many linguists agree that language acquisition follows similar (if later) stages in both first and second language learning (Cook & Newson, 1996; Lightbown & Spada, 1999). The development of a first language will therefore be discussed briefly. Theoretical issues in language will also be reviewed. The area of second language acquisition will then be introduced, and will focus on some of the common problems that children have in acquiring a second or additional language. A key focus will be on the ideas of Cummins, which are particularly relevant to this study. This is because his work involves second language learners in the educational setting of schools, as this work also does.

3.1. First language development

There are many linguistic studies on the developmental stages of children's language acquisition. Ingram (1989) cites the 1907 study of Stern and Stern as a precursor of these. From this starting point, Ingram has divided the history of child language studies into three periods: the period of diary studies, the period of large sample studies, and the period of longitudinal language sampling. Further details are shown in Figure 3.1. Currently, corpus studies could also be added as a fourth area, though Ingram has not done this, as these are based on contemporary research methods.

Figure 3.1. Stages in the Development of Child Language Studies - (extending Ingram, 1989).

Type of Study	Dates	Examples of Key Works
Diary Studies	1876 - 1926	Preyer (1882) Stern & Stern (1907)
Large Sample Studies	1926 - 1957	Smith, (1926) McCarthy, (1930) Wellman et al., (1931) Young, (1941) Templin, (1957)
Longitudinal Language Sampling	1957 - onwards	Brave, (1963) Miller & Erun, (1964) Bloom, (1970) Brown, (1973)
Corpus studies	1990 onwards	MacWhinney, (1991)

Normal stages of language acquisition are held to be universal, i.e. children follow similar broadly defined stages for any particular languages and the stages are themselves similar across languages (Morse, 1972; Clark and Clark, 1977; cited in Ingram, 1989; Bee, 1995; Gross, 1996; Mukherji and O'Dea, 2000). The early stages are listed below (Mukherji & O'Dea, *ibid*).

- The pre-linguistic stage (birth – 1 year)

- The one-word stage (1 year – 18 months)
- The first sentences (18 – 30 months)
- More complex sentences (30 months – 3 years)

During the *pre-linguistic stage* the child begins to discriminate between sounds. These sounds will be culturally specific, as they will vary according to the linguistic group into which the child is born. Early vocalization, termed cooing, occurs at 1 to 2 months, followed by babbling at about 6 months, which consists of vowel-consonant combinations. In referring to pre-linguistic phonological abilities, Bowey (1995) notes that some parts of speech discrimination appear innate, whilst others develop through exposure to a particular linguistic context.

The *one-word stage* occurs when children have acquired a dual patterning system in which discrete, meaningless sound elements are joined to make arbitrary symbols that convey meaning. By this time, the infant has mastered several prerequisite skills. These include the awareness and production of basic phonological contrasts, non-verbal communication skills, and the cognitive ability of neural representation. The early use of vocables shifts towards words at about the same time as mental representation develops. This early vocabulary is highly functional (Halliday, 1975; Nelson 1978, cited in Bowey, 1995). Children are learning that speech can be used both to name objects and to express social needs. On average, the infant acquires 500 words by the age of 24 months. A three-year old is estimated to have a vocabulary of over 1,000 words and a five-year old up to 3,000 (Aitchison, 1994). Chomsky (1988, p. 217) suggests that children acquire new words at a rate of 12 per day.

A crucial aspect is phonological development. Children differentiate newly learned names for objects by their awareness of differences in phonemes during their second year. They have inner knowledge of phonemic contrasts before they are able to produce them. Not all languages have the same phonemic contrasts. Ingram (1989) stresses that the functional significance of the phoneme within the target language is critical. This will naturally have implications for EAL learners. A common example is the v/w confusion many L2 learners of English have. This is true in English, but there is only one corresponding phoneme in Gujarati or Turkish, for example. Ingram (op. cit.) points out that the phoneme *th* (in *the* and *this*) is the second most frequent phoneme in English, yet it is acquired comparatively late. Although it has high frequency, it does not have a high functional load. It occurs in a

relatively small number of frequent words and these do not have minimal contrast with other pairs. Therefore, in the common occurrence of the young child pronouncing this as dis and that as dat they are able to be understood.

The use of holophrases links the *one-word stage* with *the first sentences*. In holophrastic speech the child uses a one-word utterance in conjunction with gestures or changes in intonation so that the receiver understands that the meaning the child is conveying is more than the single word. This practice also occurs with learners of English at an older age, who commonly use key nouns along with gestures and an expressive tone to convey meaning.

The child's early sentences have three characteristics, noted by Brown (1973).

- Sentences are simple
- Sentences are short
- Sentences follow grammatical rules

Children's grammatical development in combining words occurs when they have about 50 lexemes. This is often termed the stage of telegraphic speech. The utterance contains the essential content words to convey information and the words are correctly sequenced so that the meaning is clear and unambiguous, i.e. 'Daddy play ball'. Such utterances are telegraphese in that grammatical function words and morphological inflections are missing. This telegraphese stage is common in some older EAL learners in the schools involved in this study. Teachers will be aware of the child's limited proficiency in English, though they may not be aware of the similarities with first language development.

More complex sentences emerge as the child begins to use grammatical markers, questions and negatives. Over-regularisation errors are common, where the child uses irregular verbs as regular, such as *goed, seed, breaked, falled*. The child will rarely hear adults making such mistakes, and this is one of Chomsky's (1965) arguments for his standard theory, which is discussed later in this section. Over-regularisation errors are not restricted to verb use. English-speaking children over-regularise plural forms, creating words like *sheeps, childs, mans, peoples* (Brown, 1973). This over-regularisation commonly occurs with EAL pupils of an older age, but who are at a developing stage in their English acquisition.

The next stage is *language in the over 3s*. By the time the child is three to four years of age, she can use a wide range of sentence structures. At this stage she can also produce

complex sentences through the use of conjunctions. This gives her the ability to produce an infinite number of sentences, though errors continue to occur. The child has, however, now mastered the communicative basic structures. Grammatical features of utterances continue to be refined, and although there are errors, "four and five year olds are very competent communicators, whose control of language most second-language learners would envy" (Bowey, 1995 p.132). Children become fluent speakers when they have developed the linguistic skills to manipulate the grammar constructs of complex sentence formation. They then have access to a system of communication which gives them the potential to express any concept within the system of rules which form their first language. In educational contexts, a minimal level of mastery of this system is, of course, a pre-requisite for curriculum learning.

Boulton-Lewis and Catherwood (1995) conclude that in order to acquire language, children need access to copious amounts of comprehensible speech. If they understand the language they hear around them, then they will discover and construct the regularities themselves. This has links with Krashen's theory of comprehensible input, discussed later in this chapter with other EAL learning principles.

3.2. Some Theoretical Issues in Language Acquisition

Though the chronological stages of normal language development are broadly accepted as universal, there is less consensus on theoretical issues. Two linguists whose theories would be known by language teachers, and also by some mainstream teachers, are Chomsky and Halliday. A brief synopsis of their ideas which relate to this study is given below.

Chomsky's standard theory (1965) has been influential in linguistic studies in proposing the concept of Universal Grammar. Chomsky proposed that language is organised, processed and generated by an innate linguistic system, consisting of a basic set of logical relations common to all languages, which are innate in the child, and which the child brings to the language learning process. This is the speaker's *competence*, and is distinct from the speaker's *performance*. Language is not learned by repetition, as held by the Behaviourist tradition of Skinner, but is generated by the speaker's innate competence mechanism. According to Chomsky, linguistic analysis should study this underlying competence, rather than the performance data of language in use.

There are various arguments for the innate component theory. Language is highly complex, yet it develops very rapidly at an age when other aspects of complex development do not seem nearly so advanced. Human infants have sensitivity to a range of basic speech contrasts. They are able to identify minimally contrasting syllables of synthetic speech very easily. The infant's vocalisation moves from supporting a gestural communication system to the cognition of referents. Word order rules are very definitive. Curtiss' (1977) work with Genie, who had not been exposed to language from about 20 months, demonstrated that Genie developed telegraphic language, although she was never able to gain control of the morphological system. This fits in with the idea of a sensitive period during which children need exposure to a comprehensible and well-structured language input if they are to become competent in the formation of the grammatical rule system. These are acquired in a particular order. As the grammar is universal, the underlying relations and the sequence in which the child abstracts them in the process of language acquisition is invariant. Acquisition largely follows the same process no matter what language the child is acquiring.

However, there are several criticisms of Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar. A major drawback from the point of view of the current study is that language is studied "somewhat clinically" (Mitchell & Myles, 1998) as a mental function rather than a social or psychological one. It results in an objective study of language where the focus is not on the speaker, but on the speech act instead. Moreover, Universal Grammar has been almost solely focused on syntax, whereas this study is concerned with the lexicon. Another drawback is that Chomsky's theory relates to first language acquisition, and he has not made any specific claims about the implications it might have for second language learning (Spada & Lightbown, 1999), whereas half the target pupils in this research were second language learners.

Although Chomsky's theory continues to be very influential, it is difficult to test (Spada & Lightbown, *ibid*). Chomsky (1965, p. 18) himself has noted that, because of the infinite complexity and creativity of the competence mechanism, it cannot be analysed by finite data samples. Other linguists also note the limitations of the theory because it cannot be empirically investigated (e.g. Sorace, 1996, cited in Mitchell and Myles). Further criticisms are made by Firth and Halliday (cited in Stubbs, 1996). They do not accept the distinction between competence and performance, and argue instead for linguistic study to be based on language in use.

Many child language specialists accept the notion of an innate predisposition to language, (Mitchell and Myles, 1998, p. 8), but would argue this is mediated by social, environmental and cultural factors, (e.g. Foster, 1990). This is also an argument of the current work, put forward in the previous chapter.

A final criticism is that Chomsky's theory was based on the speed at which young children acquire language (Mukherji & O'Dea *ibid*). Although children do become proficient speakers at an early age, it is now recognized that it takes them much longer to master the words and syntax that are necessary to express complex meaning. As lexical meaning is a key research question of this study, this is a very relevant criticism. Meaning does, however, have a central focus in Halliday's theory.

Halliday (1975) has put forward another perspective. His socio-functional account of language focuses on how a child learns to mean. Language is expressed as a system of meanings and of ways of expressing these meanings. The meanings relate to the functions language will provide for the child, and they are learnt through interaction with significant others. The functions derive from Halliday's own functional theory of language and also refer to Bernstein's theories of significant socialising contexts (Bernstein, 1971; 1972; 1973). (Cited in Halliday 1985). The seven basic functions are instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative and informative. These functions all occur within three major phases, but at different levels of meaning within each specific phase. As Hatch (1992) notes, Halliday's system is widely used in child language research and in other applied linguistics studies. Halliday's phases chart the child's progress through to adult mastery of language at phase III, but this is not a finite stage, as Halliday argues that there are always new meanings to negotiate during the whole of one's life. His opinion on the importance of meaning for children's learning is illustrated in the following statement.

“When children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one type of learning among many, rather they are learning the foundations of learning itself. The distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of making meaning – a semiotic process; and that the prototypical form of human semiotic is language. Hence the ontogenesis of learning”.

(1993, p. 93)

Halliday's focus on "making meaning" is more relevant to this study than Chomsky's Universal Grammar because of the concerns about children's lexical understanding which are raised in the current work. It is clear that he is stating that language is a prerequisite of learning, i.e. the child learns through language and cannot learn without understanding language. The child needs language to "make meaning" because it is the primary "ontogenesis of learning". Halliday's ideas can be used to support an argument of this study, i.e. if children do not understand key vocabulary that arises in the classroom, their learning may be delayed.

3.3 Second Language Acquisition

As Mitchell and Myles (1998) point out, second language learning takes place after learning a language, or languages, other than the individual's 'native language' or 'mother tongue'. This can encompass "both languages of wider communication encountered within the local region or community (e.g. at the workplace, or in the media), and truly foreign languages which have no immediately local uses or speakers" (ibid p.1). For the purposes of this study, the first definition will apply, as the EAL pupils involved here have to acquire and use English as the medium for learning within their schools and for their educational career, as well as for wider communication. This means that to be assessed as having need for support because of pupils' use of EAL, the pupils by definition speak some other language better than they speak English, otherwise they do not come into the official EAL category. This section addresses some principles of second and additional language development which are relevant to the contextual situation of these pupils, and to the observation of a 'comprehension gap' between EAL children and their L1 peers.

Baker and Prys Jones (1998) note that the "essence of second language theories is to describe the individual and contextual conditions for efficient second language learning" (p. 642). This has traditionally been analysed on a number of levels; namely phonology, syntax, morphology, semantics and lexis, pragmatics, discourse. Mitchell and Myles (1998), in a review of the field, point out that control of syntax is the key element in most second language learning theories. By comparison, other levels of language receive "much more variable attention, and some areas are commonly treated in a semi-autonomous way, as specialist fields; this is often true for SLL-oriented studies of pragmatics and of lexical development" (ibid p. 5). In practice this means that there are fewer theories which directly relate to a key objective of this work, namely to investigate the reading comprehension of EAL pupils in local schools with a focus on vocabulary.

However, a further consideration in any discussion of second language acquisition is the large number of theories or models that *do* exist (Baker and Prys Jones, 1998; Ellis, 1998; Mitchell and Myles, 1998; Tarone and Yule, 1989). Some of these can be regarded as polarised. Tarone and Yule, (1989) for example, cite the opposing views of Krashen (1981) and McLaughlin (1978). Krashen's view is that comprehensible input is necessary for the language learner because the learner does not benefit directly from the conscious learning of, for example, grammatical rules beyond a minimal level for monitoring output. In opposition, McLaughlin argues that conscious learning of grammar within the classroom should be a key aspect of language acquisition rather than a peripheral one, and that learned aspects of the second language can become automatic in the production of the target language.

Tarone and Yale (ibid.) point out that the approach to be taken will depend on the language learner. Schumann (1983) puts this in a different way, in a post-modernist statement.

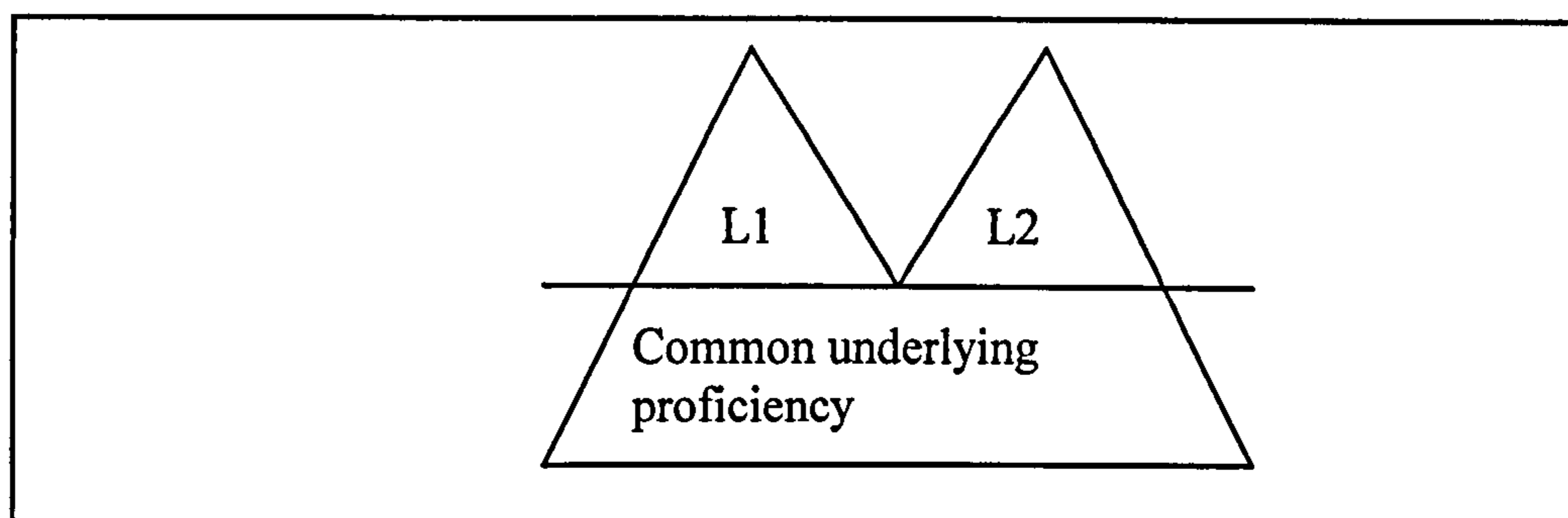
Krashen and McLaughlin's views can co-exist as two different paintings of the language learning experience - as reality symbolised in two different ways. Viewers can choose between the two on an aesthetic basis, favouring the painting which they find to be phenomenologically true to their experience. Neither position is correct; they are simply alternative representations of reality. (p.55).

The 'representations of reality' in this study are the EAL pupils, who form a distinct group, quite different from adult learners of English as a Foreign Language. As noted earlier, they are being schooled in a language that is not their first. This means that many theories of second language acquisition will not be applicable to this study, as they focus on older learners of English who have been educated in their first language and are learning English for professional or personal purposes. The principles and strategies for second language learning that are reviewed in this section have been selected because of their relevance to the situation of the targeted pupils and their teachers in the current work.

In spite of the various arguments about how language is acquired, there is general agreement amongst many linguists that second language development mirrors first language development in most strands, at least in naturalistic contexts (Keenan and

Comrie, 1977; Gass, 1979; Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982; Lightbown, 1985; Ellis, 1985, 1998).

Cummins (1984; 1996) maintains that there is a common underlying proficiency that crosses first and second language development. He argues that the concepts learned in the first language will be transferred to the second language. The diagram below illustrates Cummins' theory.



**Figure 3.2. Cummins' theory of common underlying proficiency
(Adapted from Cummins, 1984)**

Figure 3.2. shows a dual iceberg, which represents the surface feature of the two languages. They both have a common base, however, which is represented under the water. This lower feature illustrates the learner's development of concepts, which can be learnt most easily in the student's first language and then transferred to the second language when the right degree of proficiency has been reached in that language. This principle has been used to show the importance of maintaining the pupil's first language in that knowledge and concepts can be acquired through the L1 and transferred to the L2. It has also provided a rationale for bilingual education in North America, where pupils are taught separately in their first language until they have reached the degree of proficiency in English to enable them to join the mainstream. Although Cummins' theory of Common Underlying Proficiency is recognised as an important principle in second language development (Baker and Prys Jones, 1998), for the purposes of this study it does not clarify differences in reading comprehension between EAL and L1 pupils. It is also not helpful with regard to the teacher's role in promoting lexical understanding, as the EAL pupils who had been through a bilingual programme would be expected to have the same level of understanding as

monolingual English speakers. Cummins' BICS/CALP model, which is discussed later in this section, provides a better fit.

Another relevant principle in second language learning is the use of language in communicative contexts which has developed over the last thirty years. This stresses that language learning should address 'communicative competence' (Canale, 1984), as well as linguistic competence. It emphasises meaning and communication in real situations and with the wider community (Widdowson, 1978; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Larson-Freeman & Long, 1991; Nunan, 1991; Wong Fillmore, 1991; Littlewood, 1992; Pica, 1994). This relates to the current study, as the pupils here have to communicate and make meaning in English speaking schools and also in wider communities.

The communicative approach has also influenced educational policy regarding language development and use through the Kingman Report (1988), followed by the Cox Report (1989) and the National Curriculum for English, (1990), and the subsequent revisions of this. It has to some extent also been integrated into the National Literacy Strategy, which is based on interactive pedagogy. There are, however, some debates about 'negative evidence' in this approach, which can be related to teacher-pupil interactions.

Calvé (1992) (in Duquette, 1995) notes that the communicative approach creates certain problems, one of the main ones being how the correction of errors is made. He stresses that it is crucial not to interfere with the message. Any correction of errors needs to respect this principle. Teachers have to engage in correcting their pupils' mistakes, but the way in which they do this needs to be effective, and to be part of the teaching and learning process. For example, it could have a negative effect on the confidence of EAL pupils if their mistakes in English were corrected over-systematically by their teachers. If the results of the current research show that some pupils are misunderstanding lexemes in texts, then teachers need to have effective strategies for correction.

Calve suggests that a successful strategy is the echoing correction technique. This has similarities with other proposals such as recasting. Nelson (1977) undertook research on the common strategy of recasting, where an adult elaborates on a child's utterance by starting from the child's contribution, then extending it or rephrasing it, and shaping it towards a more complete and correct answer. In Nelson's work two strategies were used, first recasting complicated question forms, and second, recasting complicated verb forms.

Nelson's results showed that the children selectively acquired the specific structures on which the recasting was based. These results indicate that some child-directed speech modifications by adults assist correct language development. However, later cross-cultural studies show that child-directed speech modification by adults are not universal (e.g. Heath, 1983). A similar strategy is that of "revoicing" (Goffman, cited in Hicks, 1996). Here the teacher repeats a child's utterance in 'another' voice (using Bahktinian terms) and extends or rephrases it. This enables the pupil to be guided towards a correct answer or correct understanding.

These strategies show how pupils can be corrected in a child-friendly yet effective way. If, for example, a child had misunderstood the meaning of a key lexeme when reading, the teacher could "recast" or "revoice" the child's answer and support her in the process of correct understanding. These strategies are often used automatically by teachers, yet it is likely that many teachers are unaware of the theories underpinning them. They use them instinctively as part of good practice. It would be useful, however, if teachers had more knowledge of the theoretical background of such techniques. They could then be used as an informed intervention strategy with EAL pupils. A key function could be to develop the child's vocabulary and reading comprehension if the results of this study show that intervention is required to support this.

A further useful strategy to review is that of immersion, both because it addresses pupils and teachers in schools, and because it is an example of theory being put into practice. Immersion programmes in schools have been studied both in Canada and the USA (Cummins and Swain, 1986; Genesee, 1987; Allen and Swain, 1984; Swain and Lapkin, 1995). These programmes immerse English-speaking pupils in schools with a curriculum largely taught in French, and French is also used for many extra-curricular activities. Krashen identified immersion programmes in Canada as being ideal language acquisition contexts in line with his Comprehensible Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985). In this hypothesis Krashen proposed that language acquisition occurs when the student is exposed to sources of comprehensible input, either oral or written, that are slightly above the learner's current ability, the formula being $I + 1$ (1985, p.2). Krashen put an emphasis on language being acquired, rather than being a product of direct teaching. Krashen's theory was significant in that it was a major attempt to provide an explanation for language acquisition rather than just a description. It was also widely promoted amongst second language teachers. It has been criticised, however, as being vague and also for not

explaining what other researchers believe to be valid, yet different, explanations of the same data (Ellis, 1991; Lightbown, 1985).

A contrasting view has been given by Swain and colleagues (Swain and Lapkin, 1995) with the *comprehensible output* principle. They argue that L2 input is largely comprehensible to the learner, who does not have to make a detailed grammatical analysis of it. Conversely, it is in the output of speech that the learner has to negotiate grammatical rules and hypotheses. The act of utterance compels the learner to attempt to negotiate the target language. It also provides the opportunity for feedback to be provided by speech partners. This principle can be applied to issues addressed by this study. Pupil output here, where some EAL pupils were believed to have comprehension gaps in their understanding of vocabulary in texts, might indicate that these pupils need supportive feedback. It is argued that this is critical for their understanding of these and other texts where misunderstandings might occur. It is also primarily through this output that their misconceptions were believed to exist by the researcher.

However, there are significant differences between the Canadian immersion programmes and EAL learning in English schools. In Canada, the aim has been full English/French bilingualism, whereas in England the purpose is English acquisition with little emphasis on the maintenance and development of other languages. Immersion research programmes have suggested, however, successful uses of comprehensive input, the high-level development of a second language in school, and the general beneficial effect of bilingual programmes on cognitive development. Another difference is that the Canadian system has been designed to teach the minority language of French to the majority English-speaking group of pupils. By contrast EAL support in English classrooms is structured to support minority group pupils to achieve the majority group language. Further, immersion systems generally relate to children with a common home language, which the teachers understand, but use minimally in the pupil's target language contexts, whereas in the British EAL context there are large numbers of languages, and few teachers speak these languages. Finally, the relation between their home languages and English is often socially a subordinate one.

EAL children entering school in England are in a semi-immersion or submersion situation. They will be at varying stages of English acquisition. Some will be new to English, in that they have just arrived in the country, whilst others born in Britain may have had minimum

exposure to English in the pre-school years. In the latter case, an example would be of a child cared for by non-English speaking grandparents who has not attended a pre-school playgroup or nursery. At the other end of the scale some bilingual pupils will start school fully fluent in English and may be assessed as not having any need for specific EAL support.

Although an immersion policy does not exist in England, the whole school curriculum is taught through English. EAL acquisition currently involves teaching and learning language throughout the whole curriculum.

"As currently conceptualised, it takes place within the mainstream and within all subjects. The learning of English for pupils with EAL takes place as much in science, mathematics, humanities and the arts as it does in 'subject' English"

(NALDIC South, Working Paper 5, p 2. 1999).

However, the relations between EAL, per se, and other subjects for which it is partly a prerequisite and yet through which it is further developed, is problematic. The use of 'currently conceptualised' in the above statement can be discussed in terms of the development of models of English teaching for EAL pupils. As noted in Chapter 1 of this study, early English language teaching for 'immigrant' children was undertaken locally in language centres and withdrawal classes during the 1970s. This model is now deemed undesirable, both for reasons of social integration and because, whilst English proficiency is developed, other subjects become fossilised until pupils are 'ready' to use English for learning. Within Leicester, as in other LEAs, there is a policy of inclusion that encompasses EAL learners. This also includes support services. Specialist EMAG staff, for example, are expected to work within mainstream classrooms. This development in EAL policy is illustrated in the following figures.

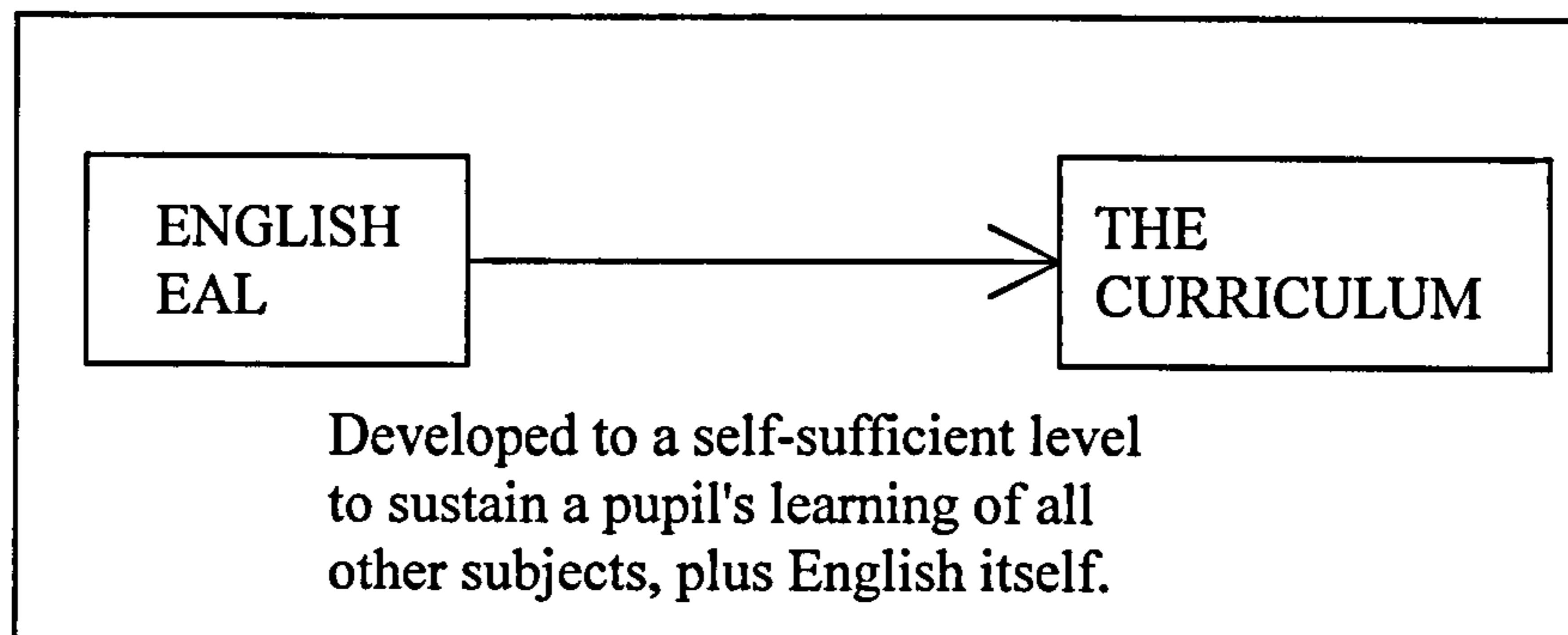


Figure 3.3. Model A - Sequential model for English language learning.

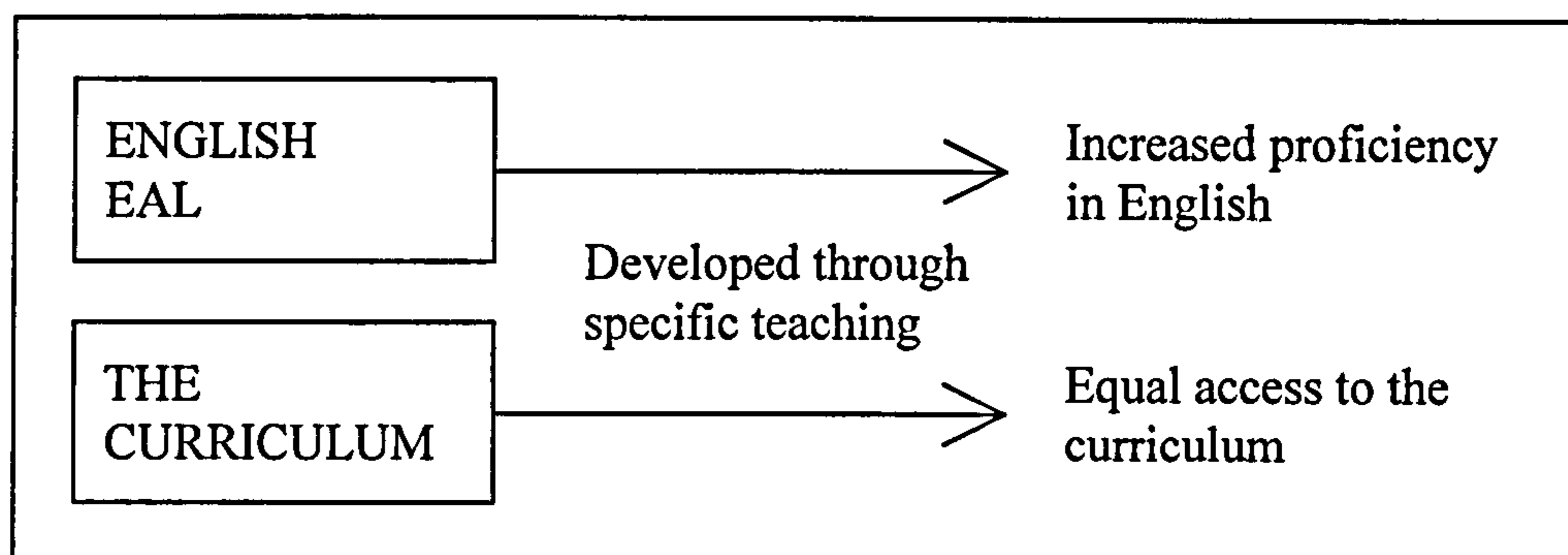


Figure 3.4. Model B - Parallel model for English language learning.

Model B is the currently preferred system as it promotes social integration and holistic models of learning language through the curriculum. Problems do exist, however, such as those of linkage and the transfer of concepts, language and learning skills. There can also be difficulties with personnel. Not all teachers, for example, support inclusive practice. Some prefer the withdrawal model for EAL pupils, either because they believe that specialist language support can be used best in this way, or because they find it difficult to engage in collaborative teaching practice. However, overall, EAL pupils are expected to be part of an inclusive classroom situation. Because of similarities to the Canadian immersion model, this is often known as submersion.

Although the Canadian programmes have been regarded as successful, there have been language-learning problems that have been attributed to social and situational factors. Selinker, Swain and Dumas (1975) noted the fossilising interlanguage forms of pupils within the system. Pupils were learning French from their teachers, but, in addition to this,

were also getting a significant amount of incorrect French from their peers in classroom interaction. Further research revealed that the only correct model of native-level French the pupils were exposed to was that of their teachers (Swain, 1985; Cummins, Harley, Swain and Allen, 1990). Peer input presented fossilised and faulty models. It did not contain the complete range of forms and structures that first language speakers use when speaking to one another.

This research might usefully be applied to English schools. Where there is a majority of EAL learners within a class, the children may be getting a limited model of English from their peers. Their major exposure to English may come from the teacher, with less correct models heard during peer interaction and perhaps at home. Models of exposure in the media might counteract this, but would be widely held to be less significant, since they are not used interactively, nor in production by children as learners.

A further problem found by Swain (1985) was that teachers did not generally provide corrections to errors in syntax or pragmatic problems, though they did address pronunciation errors. This might be because the teachers were sensitive to the issue of over-correction. This situation also occurs in classrooms in this study. In inner city areas, some native English speakers are also likely to use varieties of English which differ from models of the standard forms expected in schools because of their use of local accents and dialects. This means that teachers have to address problems of language production in all pupils. This may, in fact, make it easier for the teachers to deal with as it can be addressed as a whole-class topic. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy is also helpful as the explicit teaching of grammar is one of its key components. However, the precise role of this vis a vis EAL pupils has not been fully articulated. It remains problematic how teachers would provide specific teaching and support for EAL pupil within the literacy hour while sustaining the literacy development of the class as a whole.

Another principle, from the field of sociolinguistics, which can be examined in relation to the current work, is Schumann's (1978) acculturation theory. This was derived from Schumann's case study of a Costa Rican, Alberto, who was learning English in the United States. Alberto reached a stage of fossilisation, or pidginization, as Schumann terms it, in his acquisition of L2. Schumann proposed his acculturation model to explain this, though his ideas are used much more generally in sociolinguistics (Mitchell and Myles, 1998). This principle holds that social and psychological factors govern the extent to which the learner

is able to adapt to the culture of the target language and acquire the L2. Language is a key element of culture, and thus the relationship between the language community of the learner and the second language community will be critical in successful second language acquisition. Schumann's theory was based on adult L2 learners, but it can be adapted to the present study. The EAL pupils involved are reading texts in English that are largely based on the culture of the larger group. It can therefore be argued that to what degree the pupils have acculturised might have an effect on their comprehension of these texts. Schumann's theory has been criticised for being too static, (Ellis, 1998, p.41) and not open to empirical testing (Baker and Prys-Jones, 1998) but it gives a socially grounded explanation useful for study.

The foregoing principles and strategies have been discussed in this literature review, because, as argued at the beginning of this section, they involve schools, pupils and teachers and they have been evaluated in relation to the present work. They give some research findings relevant to classroom practice and present some useful strategies for using with EAL pupils. However, it is the work of Cummins that has proved most relevant to the current research and this is presented in the next section

3.4. Cummins' construct of language proficiency and curriculum related assessment.

Cummins' work is well known in the field of bilingual education and his innovative ideas have been adopted world-wide (Cline and Frederickson, 1996). They have been widely used to form language policies for schools, in research and in classroom practice. This makes his ideas particularly relevant to the current work which also involves schools, pupils and teachers.

A major influence in EAL pedagogy has been Cummins' construct of language proficiency (1984). He argues that language is not a unitary construct, and has identified two strands of language proficiency. These are differentiated by their functional relevance to the performance of cognitive and academic tasks. The first of these is termed Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills, BICS. These are the visible, formal aspects of language relating to pronunciation, basic vocabulary and grammar. The second strand, Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency, CALP, represents the less visible semantic and functional aspects of second language acquisition. These ideas can be more clearly understood in the BICS/CALP iceberg metaphor reproduced below.

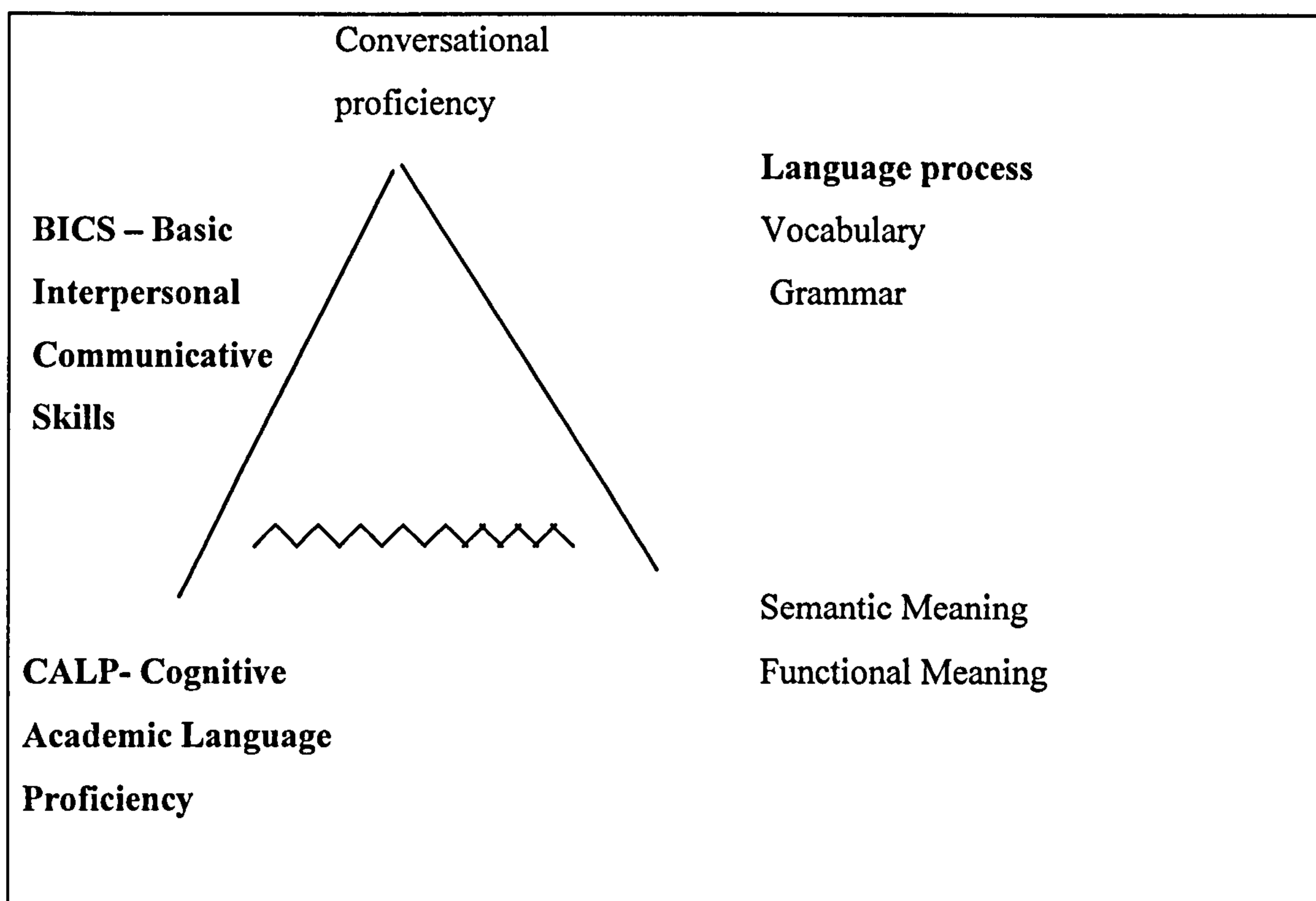


Figure 3.5. Cummins BICS/CALP Iceberg Metaphor

Cummins maintains that it is the CALP aspects of language which are the foundation children's educational achievement. In comparison, the BICS are more superficial. Cummins (1984) noted that second language learners may gain a good level of fluency in conversational English within two years of starting to learn the language. However, an influential Canadian study by Cummins found that it takes between five to seven years to develop verbal cognitive skills that are on a par with native speakers. There are, of course, individual variations

Cline and Frederickson (1996) state that there is still a lack of understanding about these differential rates of acquisition of different aspects of language. They point out that it is possible for an EAL child to be designated as having special educational needs if her language appears to be fluent, but she is experiencing learning difficulties. Teachers may be unaware that the child's level of acquisition in English is superficial, and that she has not yet reached the stage of full cognitive and academic proficiency in English. This is a similar situation to the one studied in the current research, where EAL pupils' proficiency

in English will be tested against that of their L1 peers to check their lexical understanding of key words in texts.

It is argued that the construct of BICS and CALP may prove to be relevant to this current work. The EAL and LI pupil involved in the vocabulary tests were pair-matched by their teachers as being at the same level of reading ability. However, if the tests show significance difference between the two groups in reading comprehension, as opposed to surface fluency, then it can be argued strongly that, overall, the teachers had made an estimation of their EAL pupils' understanding of key lexemes in texts at a surface level which can be related to BICS. If this proves to be the case, it could be further argued that the teachers were not aware that, at the deeper level of CALPs, their EAL pupils did not understand the semantic meaning and functional meaning of vocabulary in texts as well as their L1 partners did.

Corson's (1985) idea of the 'lexical bar' can also be considered in conjunction with Cummins cognitive/academic language proficiency construct. Corson argued that a lexical bar exists in the English lexicon which prohibits some users of non-standard English from access to the more semantically precise knowledge categories which are essential for understanding and being successful in the secondary school system. This bar is therefore a principal mediating factor in educational under-achievement, as it perpetuates an academic hierarchy based on specialised language use. Corson's theory, was, in fact, based on issues relating to social class and educational achievement, but it can also be used to complement Cummin's ideas, and related to EAL pupils.

Corson pointed out that most specialist vocabulary in English has Graeco-Latin roots. Furthermore, this lexis is essential for specialised knowledge areas of education. Crucially, he argued that many words in English are particularly difficult for language users who are not exposed to early and regular contact with them. This would apply to many EAL pupils. The lexical bar, Corson proposed, hinders members of some social groups from access to knowledge categories of the school curriculum, not only in their oral and written language but perhaps in their thinking as well. If the 'social groups' noted by Corson are transposed to EAL groups, then the possible effect on thinking he predicts can be aligned with the current work, and it is likely that in some instances comprehension gaps and misconceptions may affect pupils' cognitive development.

Corson undertook research studies in schools in Yorkshire, London, Sydney and Wollongong to test his hypotheses, and found positive correlations in each study. He concluded that "the link between an active written and oral access to the specialist lexis of English and educational success or failure is a very strong one. Specialist word usage stands as an important mediating factor between social group background and educational success or failure." (ibid p.75).

Some points relevant to the present study can be made based on Corson's work. Although this was based on the English social class system, it can be argued that some EAL pupils may be doubly disadvantaged if they are members of a lower social category group, and also have English as a second or additional language. The Graeco-Latin roots of specialised lexis are also the source of various European languages, and have been adopted into use in others. This will not be the case in African and the Indian subcontinent languages. This is illustrated in the following figure:

A		B
English		Arabic
French		Hindi
Spanish	<-----	Gujerati
Italian		Urdu
Portuguese		Bengali
Russian		Chinese
		Somali
		Swahili
Connection		No connection

Figure 3.6. Comparison of examples of languages with and without Graeco-Latin Roots

This, again, is more likely to disadvantage the EAL pupil in mastering lexis, particularly as the pupils involved in the current research had heritage languages from B rather than A, as is the case with the majority of EAL pupils in Leicester. It also provides another perspective to this study in illustrating how cultural background can affect pupils' comprehension and learning in the classroom, and supports the BICS/CALP differentiation

proposed by Cummins. It must be noted, however, that Corson's study was undertaken with secondary school pupils, whereas the current work involves younger pupils. It is not therefore directly transferable, and it does not allow for the possibility of these younger pupils "catching up" with their peers. It does however, provide a useful addition to Cummins' work and it is evidence of the importance of identifying and correcting any lexical difficulties that pupils may have.

Cummins' construct has, however, been criticised by both communicative competence theorists and by sociolinguists. Communicative competence theorists have argued that BICS can involve considerable cognitive demands. Many conversations can in fact be complex discussions on significant issues. Canale and Swain (1980) point out that communication is "exchange and negotiation of information between at least two individuals. This is always meaningful, takes place in discourse within sociocultural contexts which put constraints on appropriate language use, and is judged successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes." (Cited in Cline and Frederickson, 1996, p. 12).

Sociolinguists have similarly criticised the construct of CALP. They have argued that studies such as Labov's (1969) identify the importance of the sociolinguistic context. Labov found that black American children were assessed as having poor language skills in a formal interview situation with white adults, where ethnicity, social class, and perceived formality were likely to be influential factors. In contrast, when these children were left alone in an informal situation, and were unaware that they were under observation, they used descriptive and complex language.

Criticisms also came from Wong Fillmore (1983). (Cited in Cline and Frederickson, 1996). She undertook a study of classroom discourse in which she identified a range of language functions necessary for 8 to 10 year old children to negotiate in order to achieve educational success. She concluded that the requisite language skills involved were not universally cognitive ones.

Cummins responded to such criticisms. He acknowledged that BICS does involve some aspects of communicative competence, such as pronunciation and fluency. It may not include others, such as social and pragmatic communication skills. He also agreed that CALP is socially grounded and developed within a network of human interaction, i.e. in

the classroom. To clarify the BICS/CALP distinction, he produced a two-dimensional model for developing language proficiency (1984; 1996, p. 57), illustrated below:

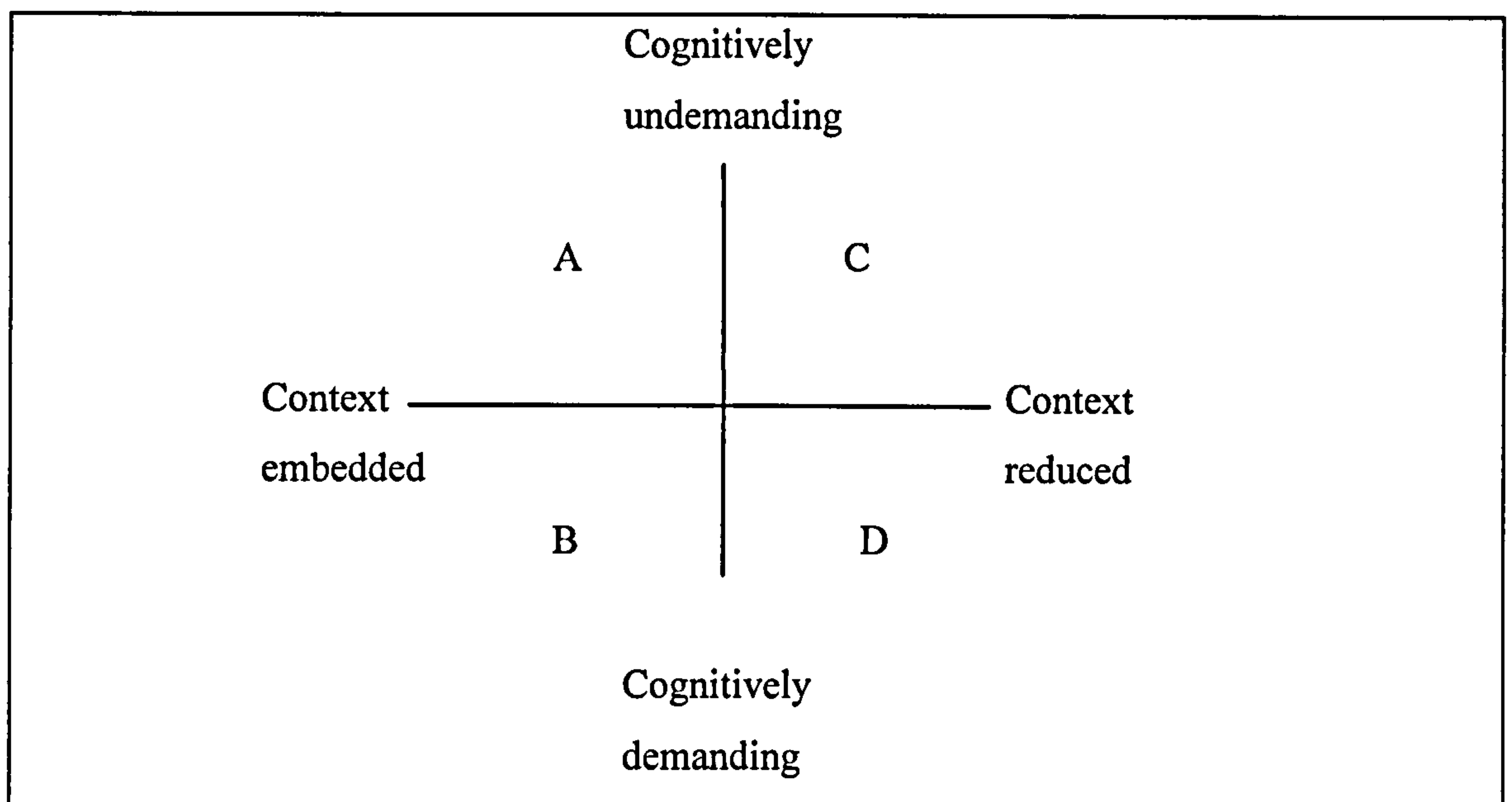


Figure 3.7. Cummins' two-dimensional model of language proficiency

The framework was designed to assess pupils' ability in coping with the cognitive and linguistic demands of their social and educational environment. It consists of two intersecting continua. The horizontal continuum relates to the range of contextual support available for expressing or receiving meaning, whilst the vertical continuum relates to the amount of information that must be processed by the student in order to complete the activity.

Within the context-embedded/context reduced continuum, participants can actively construct meaning. The language is supported by a wide range of meaningful interpersonal and situational cues. By contrast, context-reduced communication relies on linguistic cues for meaning. This means that successful interpretation of the message is largely dependent on knowledge of the language itself. Cummins (1996) maintains that context-embedded communication is typical of the social world outside the classroom, whilst linguistic demands within the classroom, such as using texts, means engagement in communicative activities that are close to the context-reduced end of the continuum.

The upper parts of the vertical continuum represents communication in which the linguistic tools have become largely automated and therefore require little active cognitive

involvement for appropriate performance. By contrast, the lower half of the continuum requires tasks and activities with cognitive involvement because the linguistic tools have not yet become automated.

Cummins (1996, p. 58) gives examples of each quadrant. Quadrant B could be persuasive argument, D, writing an essay, A might typically be casual conversation, whilst C could be copying notes or completing worksheets.

He points out that conversational abilities (quadrant A) are likely to develop quickly among EAL learners as these forms of communication are supported by interpersonal and contextual cues. They make relatively few cognitive demands on the learner. Alternatively, mastery of the academic functions of language (quadrant D) is more difficult because it requires considerable cognitive involvement and is only marginally supported by contextual or interpersonal cues. As pupils move through the education system they need to use language in progressively more cognitively demanding and context-reduced situations. These are considerably more exacting than everyday conversational dialogue.

Cummins states that the crucial aspect of academic language proficiency is the ability to explain complex meanings, either verbally or in written form, through the medium of language itself, rather than by means of contextual or paralinguistic cues. He also notes that quality pre-school speaking and listening experiences are valuable in enabling pupils to use and understand the increasingly decontextualized language demands of the school curriculum (Heath, 1983, cited in Cummins, 1996). This area is taken up further in Chapter 5 of this study, which addresses language socialisation practices in more detail.

The framework provides a guide for English language acquisition for learners of English. It has been disseminated in the UK through conferences, INSET and staff development workshops. Most support teachers have found it to be helpful. Initial teaching should begin at quadrant A (context-embedded, cognitively undemanding) and progress to quadrant B (context-embedded, cognitively demanding), then to quadrant D (context-reduced, cognitively demanding). Quadrant C activities (context-reduced, cognitively undemanding) are unlikely to meet the needs of EAL pupils. These pupils need contextual support to develop their language acquisition and progressively more demanding cognitive challenges to develop their academic ability. Cummins (1996, p. 60) writes, "that language and content will be acquired most successfully when students are challenged cognitively but

provided with the contextual and linguistic supports required for successful task completion." He relates these supports to scaffolding, in that systematic guided progression with a task or series of related tasks would move in a sequence from quadrant to quadrant with a synchronised handover by the teachers. They therefore provide a structure for promoting language proficiency and academic achievement in EAL language learners.

However, it is ideas about academic achievement which have prompted further criticisms of both Cummin's BICS/CALP construct and this two-dimensional model of language proficiency. Particular criticisms come from Edelsky (1990) and Wiley (1996).

Edelsky (1990) argues that CALP is little more than a measure of skills based on testing, with the result that the construct encourages skills-oriented instruction. This, Edelsky maintains, impedes the literacy development of bilingual students, who would make far greater progress in meaning-oriented, whole-language learning contexts. She argues that Cummins' construct has been instrumental in reinforcing the prevailing ideology of education in North America, namely "that written language consists of separate skills, that curriculum should teach those skills, that tests can assess them" (1990, p. 63). What is needed to inform practice in bilingual education are, according to Edelsky, "ethnographics of speaking and of literacy," rather than "differential performance in one (testing) context that is subject to criticism on multiple grounds" (ibid. p. 65).

As the present study incorporates a vocabulary test, Cummins' response to Edelsky's criticism is particularly relevant. Cummins (2000) points out that whilst he does not advocate the inappropriate use of standardised tests, "under some conditions, and properly interpreted, there are potentially appropriate and useful applications of some language testing procedures" (p. 89). It can be argued that the test administered as part of this study was 'appropriate' and 'useful'. It was necessary to test the hypothesis that a reading comprehension gap exists between EAL pupils and L1 pupils. Without concrete evidence, the hypothesis would have remained merely an unsubstantiated theory. However, Cummins strongly disagrees that CALP is a testing mechanism, and points out "it does not depend on test scores for either its construct validity, or its relevance to education" (ibid. p. 90). He also notes that Edelsky's ideas about educational research are limited as they only recognise one way of collecting data on language proficiency, namely through ethnographies of speaking and listening. This also goes against the ideas of Wertsch (1991), and Wells (1999), who argue for an integrated approach to educational research. In the case of this

study, observing and listening to EAL pupils in schools engendered ideas about a comprehension gap, but it was also necessary to incorporate statistical data into the research to make it valid, to obtain results and to draw conclusions, and to take action to change the situation.

Wiley's (1996) critique stems from his ideas about two different orientations to literacy that he has derived from the work of Street (1984; 1993) and Freire (1970). He differentiates between the autonomous approach and the ideological approach. The autonomous approach puts emphasis on the formal mental properties of decoding and encoding text, and is highly individualistic. It excludes variables such as sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts, and the differences in power and resources between different social groups. By contrast, the ideological approach views literacy as a set of practices that do reflect the cultural and power structures in the society. Schools have a key role here, as they are the principal institutions with responsibility for developing literacy. Because certain groups are successful in school whilst others fail, the ideological approach analyses the ways in which the teaching of literacy is undertaken in these institutions. It examines the underlying bias in schools that supports particular groups and excludes others.

Wiley's view is that constructs such as Cummins' BICS/CALPS are likely to give an autonomous orientation to language and literacy practices, with the result that they become isolated from their sociocultural and sociopolitical context. He also expresses concerns about the comparative status of academic language and conversational language which he argues that the construct implies. Furthermore, Wiley criticises what he terms the "simplistic" through "well-intentioned" ways in which teachers have applied the two-dimensional model of language proficiency to their practice. Overall, Wiley is arguing for a greater awareness of the social factors influencing language development rather than what he believes to be a narrow focus on cognitive development.

In replying to Wiley's critique, Cummins (op. cit.) points out that Wiley's analysis is too rigid, and only offers an either/or choice between an autonomous approach to educational enquiry, or an ideological one. Moreover, since 1986, the BICS/CALP construct has been integrated into a comprehensive sociopolitical analysis of policy and practice in schools, with the direct aim of supporting subordinated groups. This has resulted in a framework that "documents educational approaches that challenge this pattern of coercive power

relations and promote the generations of power in the interactions between educators and students" (ibid p. 95).

It can be noted that the current study has used Cummins BICS/CALP construct to explain differences in performance between EAL pupils and L1 pupils, and that this relates to groups of children, not to autonomous individuals. Moreover, Cummins' construct is used in this research in conjunction with sociocultural theories to address issues relating to EAL pupils. It can be argued that the construct will only be autonomous when it is used in an autonomous way, i.e. to refer to an individual pupil. In this study it was used to examine the proficiency in reading comprehension of sociocultural groups. Critically, this was after the research was underway, therefore it was not a case of taking the construct as a model for this work, but instead one of finding that the BICS/CALP differentiation matched the research results. Wiley's claims about an autonomous approach to language and literacy would not therefore be supported by this present study.

Cummins (2000) also refutes Wiley's claim that the BICS/CALP distinction gives a higher status to academic language than to conversational proficiency. He states his belief that no single form of language "is cognitively or linguistically superior to any other form of language in any absolute sense outside of particular contexts" (ibid. p. 96). However, what Wiley and others overlook is the common sense notion that academic language is specific to the cultural setting of the school (where for academic purposes it does have higher status.). Cummins (ibid.) observes, "This is why it is called academic language." Furthermore, to succeed in school, children need to understand the language in which they are being taught. Cummins cites Verhalen and Schoonen's (1998) study as evidence of this. These researchers found that bilingual students who had little understanding of the language used for instruction, and did not receive any additional language support, were unlikely to develop high levels of academic proficiency or literacy knowledge in either their first or their second language. Cummins also notes that Wiley does not appreciate that, within the construct, language proficiency should be viewed as an 'intervening variable' which has a mediating role in children's academic progress. It is a critical factor within the learning process, but there are also other variables, as learning is an interactive social process. Cummins concludes: "Learning reflects the nature of the interactions that learners have experienced with educators and the adequacy of the linguistic frameworks in which these interactions take place" (ibid p. 96).

In addressing Wiley's claims that some practitioners interpret the two-dimensional model of language proficiency (Figure 3.6) in a 'simplistic', confused and inaccurate way, Cummins responds that these criticisms can appear as condescending, and that they undermine "the efforts of educators to use the framework as a tool to discuss, and attempt to better understand, the linguistic challenges their students face" (ibid. p. 97). Cummins describes his framework as a visual metaphor that enables practitioners to link linguistic theories with their day to day practice in multicultural classrooms (see Section 2.4) and argues that such metaphors are highly functional. Links can also be drawn here with Elliott's (1993) idea of 'situational understanding', which notes the insight teachers will have of their pupils in the classroom because of the familiarity gained through daily social and pedagogical interactions. Because of this knowledge, teachers are enabled to act at both reflective and reflexive levels. Moreover, the framework provides what Cummins terms a 'heuristic tool' to stimulate discussion about appropriate academic activities and curriculum content. As discussed earlier in this section, this was proved to be true during the course of this present study with presentations and workshops undertaken with teachers. Furthermore, as Cummins points out, other factors beside ideological or sociopolitical ones are involved in the development of language and literacy proficiency of all groups of pupils. This brings into focus again the need for an integrated approach to educational enquiry, which is a theme that constantly recurs in this study.

Another of Cummins' concerns has been with assessment procedures for EAL pupils. His research with Swain (1986) suggests that there can be specific cognitive-academic advantages to be gained from bilingualism in the early years. These advantages, however, can only be identified by an appropriate assessment process. Research indicates that traditional intelligence tests show significant cultural and social bias (Feuerstein, 1979.) (Cited in Cline and Frederickson, 1996). Attempts have been made to find a solution to this problem. Hamers and colleagues (1993) (pp. cit.) proposed a dynamic system of assessment linked to structured teaching. This would seem to be particularly appropriate for assessing EAL learners. The practical implications of the system, however, have made it difficult to put into practice (Cline and Frederickson, 1996). Mercer (1979, ibid) has suggested a system of using differentiated criteria for pupils from each ethnic and linguistic group. The number and diversity of such groups in the UK make this problematic. In Leicester, for example, it would involve an increasing number of language groups. It would be difficult to standardise such assessment in terms of national educational achievement levels. Cummins' theoretical framework has been adopted as the most useful for

curriculum-related assessment by British educational psychologists and specialist teachers (Cline and Frederickson, 1996).

In the culturally diverse area covered by this study, it is argued that Cummins' model of language development proficiency provides a comprehensible framework for teachers to use in supporting EAL learners. However, it is not one that many mainstream teachers are familiar with, as evidenced by interviews with teachers. Rogers and Pratten (1996) report on using the Cummins framework as a decision-making aid for special education professionals working with bilingual children in Leicestershire. This work, however, was undertaken within the confines of special educational needs. There is no evidence of the framework being widely extended to mainstream teachers. It can be argued that this would provide these staff with a valuable tool in EAL classroom practice. Rogers and Pratten also practice as part of the Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service. This does not now include the city of Leicester, which became a unitary authority in 1997. Although they refer to city schools and quote statistics from the 1991 census, they would not hold any current responsibility for these establishments.

The perceptions held by the teachers involved in this study about the level of proficiency of their EAL pupils can be compared to other research in this field. Three large-scale Canadian studies have reported that, on average, it requires a minimum of five years for incoming children who are new to English to achieve the standard level on academic aspects of English proficiency (Collier, 1987, Cummins 1981, Klesmer, 1994). (Cited in Cummins, 1996).

Klesmer's (1994) study can be related to the present work. Klesmer undertook this research in Toronto. It involved a representative sample of almost three hundred 12 years old English language learners. Teachers' assessment of the English proficiency of these pupils and relevant and background data were collected. Klesmer reported that teachers considered most English language learner pupils as average for their age in speaking and listening and reading after two or three years in Canada. Teachers believed that English language learner pupils had attained the mean of native-born pupils in writing after five or six years. However, the test results did not match teachers' assessments. There was a significant gap between the EAL pupils and the control group (comprised of speakers of English as a first language) in all areas except non-verbal ability even after six years residence in North America. Klesmer concluded:

"there is strong evidence to suggest that the academic/linguistic development of ELL students follows a distinct pattern. It required at least six years for ELL students to approach native English speakers' norms in a variety of areas, and it appears that even after six years, full comparability may not be achieved." (p. 11).

This correlates with the argument of the present study that teachers may over-rate the reading comprehension of EAL pupils. In commenting on the different time scales between those required for conversational proficiency and those required for academic performance, Cummins (1996, pp. 62-63) gives two reasons. Firstly, interpersonal communication usually requires less knowledge of language than does an academic context. The former is also often aided by contextual cues and interpersonal cues, such as eye contact, expression and intonation. These are unlikely to be part of academic situations, which are largely dependent on language proficiency and literacy skills for success and a wider vocabulary. The second reason that Cummins gives is that native English speakers "are not standing still waiting for the English language learners to catch up" (p. 63). This group is continuing to widen their vocabulary, increase their grammatical knowledge, and therefore becoming increasingly proficient in literacy. This means that the EAL students do not have a static target to aim for if they are to achieve educational parity.

Some practical issues emerge from a review of Cummins' work and other related literature. Teachers tend to be unaware of the differentials between EAL pupils' conversational proficiency and cognitive academic skills, as evinced by the Klesmer study. EAL pupils will still need support for language development and academic development even after they have gained conversational fluency in English. This may raise problems where teachers are not aware of the continuing needs of EAL pupils and do not provide the required context and activities for language and learning development.

This chapter has reviewed some principles of first and second language acquisition that were selected because of their relevance to the key research questions of this study. It is argued that Cummins' BICS/CALP Iceberg Metaphor is particularly relevant because it illustrates the difference between surface proficiency in language acquisition and actual *understanding* of semantic and functional words. It would give an explanation of why EAL pupils did not understand key lexical items in texts as well as their L1 peers, if this should prove to be the result of the pupils' vocabulary tests. It would also explain why teachers

were not aware that some EAL pupils were misunderstanding lexical items, because at a surface level these children would appear to be reading fluently without any apparent difficulties.

Teachers involved in the present study found the BICS/CALP framework a very useful explanatory device for the gap between native speakers' and EAL speakers' vocabulary comprehension. Overseas students at De Montfort University found it particularly relevant in the functional representation of their own particular experiences of operating in English. In conclusion, it can be noted that criticisms made of Cummins' models (Baker, 1993; Cline and Frederickson, 1996) often cite a lack of evidence from empirical studies, in addition to the criticisms discussed earlier. However, the findings of this study, although small-scale, support and are supported by Cummins' models. A key focus of the research was on vocabulary, and this is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: VOCABULARY ACQUISITION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTS IN EAL PUPILS

Introduction

The area of vocabulary acquisition and concept formation is central to this study. One of the key research tasks was to investigate the reading comprehension of EAL pupils in comparison to L1 pupils, through a focus on children's understanding of selected vocabulary items as found in their reading. This understanding will then be related to concepts of the target items.

This section reviews literature relating to vocabulary acquisition and development. Many studies about vocabulary refer to the development of first language mental lexicon. As current researchers in the field frequently point out, second language vocabulary development has been a neglected area until comparatively recently (Singleton, 1999; Crystal, 1998; Meara, 1992, 1993; Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997). This means there is less knowledge and research to pass on to teachers. In addition many works on the second language lexicon refer to adult learners or secondary school pupils, whilst the current research investigates primary pupils. Some are based in an overseas research setting, with the implication that the findings cannot necessarily be directly transferred to the British education system, or to primary school level and to EAL pupils. This section attempts to review the vocabulary acquisition of young EAL pupils in the local UK context.

4.1. Vocabulary and Language Learning.

Vocabulary is crucial to the acquisition of language. Miller (1991) describes vocabulary as a set of words which are the basic building blocks in generating and understanding sentences. In the absence of adequate knowledge of that vocabulary, neither the production nor the comprehension of language would be possible. Miller's definition has implications for the EAL learners in this study, who may, it is argued, have difficulties with understanding some key vocabulary in texts.

There is an argument for stating that vocabulary is the key issue in second language acquisition, since there are universal aspects of learning syntax, but lexical learning is inevitably language specific. Chomsky (1965) has proposed the theory of universal grammar, and Cummins (1984), in an EAL type of context, notes the underlying general proficiency common to all languages. Wexler and Manzini (1987, cited in Cook and

Newson, 1996) have developed 'the lexical learning hypothesis'. This claims that parameters belong to lexical entries rather than to principles. From these theories, it can be proposed that children already possess the fundamentals of grammar (either potentially, as universals, or early acquired, as realisations in L2), and it is vocabulary learning that is critical because it is specific to English language development, and vital for academic learning, as in EAL contexts it is the medium of learning at school.

Chomsky has reiterated the universalist position more than once. "A large part of 'language learning' is a matter of determining from presented data the elements of the lexicon and their properties" (1982 p. 8). More recently he has stated, "There is only one human language apart from the lexicon, and language acquisition is in essence a matter of determining lexical idiosyncrasies" (1991 p. 419). Though not all linguists would agree with this, most would acknowledge the area of vocabulary to be a significant part of language development.

Vocabulary development has been linked to cognitive development by psychologists. This is evident in intelligence tests where so-called intelligence is partly assessed through standardised vocabulary tests (Anderson and Freebody, 1981; Terman, 1918; Wechsler, 1949, cited in McKeown and Curtis, 1987) and is related to success in reading comprehension (Anderson and Freebody, 1981; Carroll, 1971; Davis, 1968; Miller, 1988; Nagy and Anderson, 1984; Thorndike, 1974, *ibid*). The latter is crucial for academic achievement in school (Miller, 1988; Stanovich 1986, *ibid*). These ideas about the importance of vocabulary provide a rationale for this investigation into lexical understanding in young pupils.

McWilliam (1997) has noted that there are critical gaps in semantic literature. She points out many studies in theoretical semantics where words are classified by types of lexical meaning, such as denotative, connotative, collocation (Leech, 1974), to their semantic type, antonymy, synonymy, hyponymy, (Cruse, 1986; Jackson 1988), to polysemy, (Taylor 1995), to categorisation, (Jackendoff, 1993), and to literal and figurative representation, (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Such studies, however, do not address language in the curriculum, nor the acquisition of a mental lexicon by EAL pupils.

As Vygotskian and neo-Vygotskian ideas are becoming more prominent in education, social and interactive theories of language development with EAL pupils are being put

forward (Wood, 1998; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Wells, 1999; Cumins, 2000). McWilliam (1997) has summarised some key works in the field, and notes further omissions. Gallaway and Richards (1994) have undertaken research into input and interaction in children's language from a syntactic, phonological and semantic perspective, but do not address school practice. Clark (1993) has studied child lexicon ranges across languages, but this does not include classroom research. Romaine (1989, *ibid*) has studied code-switching in second language learners, but does not relate this to the teaching and learning of vocabulary in schools. As Gass and Schachter (1989, p. 21, *ibid*) indicate, there is a gap between the construction of linguistic theory and the practical business of acquiring a second language in classrooms. This gap is even more significant than being simply a research gap, because most teachers of EAL young learners are unlikely to be aware of the theoretical literature or second language acquisition research that might be indirectly relevant.

More recent volumes, which address vocabulary, such as Singleton's (1999) *Exploring the Second Language Mental Lexicon* and Read, (2000) *Assessing Vocabulary*, do not cite many studies of young learners, nor research into EAL pupils in the UK educational context. This is a further indication of some research gaps in the field. Nevertheless, some useful principles can be extracted from these works.

Singleton (*ibid*) points out that the main difference between acquiring a first language as against a second language is that the second language learner is at a more advanced stage of physical and cognitive development. The learner has already been through the process of learning a language and does not have to "retraverse the various 'milestones' that are associated with the L1 development" (p. 80). However, in the phonetic domain, the second language learner has to negotiate the sounds system of the target language, which might be quite different from that of his or her first language. Singleton argues that having a phonological system already in place can be a hindrance. In addition, in the conceptual/semantic domain, although there will be concepts common to both language communities, there will also be "areas and items of meaning which do not correspond" (p. 80). The second language learner will be confronted with totally new concepts in some instances. Singleton cites Lado's (1957) study of the disparities between American and Hispanic culture, which focused on differing perceptions of, and attitudes towards, animals, as evidence. His view supports the sociocultural perspective of the current work, which

similarly argues that there will be cultural variations in the negotiation of meaning between different groups.

A study undertaken in the Netherlands is also cited, and this has some parallels with the present work. Verhallen and Schoonen (1993, cited in Singleton, 1999) undertook a research project into the lexical knowledge of monolingual Dutch children and bilingual children of Turkish heritage in the Netherlands. They concluded that the bilingual group “produced fewer meaning aspects and the types of meaning aspects expressed are different from those expressed by the Dutch children” (ibid. p.146). This current work also argues that there will be differences in vocabulary comprehension, referred to as 'meaning aspects' by Verhallen and Schoonen, between the two groups under study here.

For both groups of pupils in this research, some vocabulary learning will be incidental and will involve lexical inferencing. It is likely that correct lexical inferencing will be more difficult for the EAL group. Research studies have attempted to identify and classify the contextual clues that can help both first and second language learners to make inferences about unknown words in texts but most relate to adults or older students. An example is Sternberg and Powell's (1983) (op. cit.) framework that was originally developed for L1 learners as a theory of learning words from context. This differentiates between the external and internal context of the target word. The *external* context incorporates the semantic information from the text encompassing the target lexeme. They give an example of this. "At dawn, the sun arose on the horizon and shone brightly." However, this would not be a very helpful example for teachers. It is evident that this would be an extremely complicated way for a young pupil to infer the word *sun*. Moreover, the temporal clue “At dawn” and the spatial clue “horizon” would be more unfamiliar than the target word *sun* would be. The *internal* context is the morphological structure of the word, i.e. the prefix, stem and suffix. The example given is the lexeme *thermoluminescence*. The prefix *thermo* could be inferred as relating to heat, *luminescence* as a verb that might mean producing light, and the suffix *ence* defines an abstract noun. This analysis, combined with some scientific knowledge, could enable the learner to infer correctly that the word refers to the type of light emitted by heated objects (ibid p. 54). Again, this would not be a useful example for the teachers involved in this study, or their pupils. This theory has also been criticised as it does not refer to structural clues which are syntactic or discursal (Ames, 1966; Honeyfield, 1977; Nation and Coady, 1988; ibid p. 56).

A key source of clues for lexical inferencing will be the learner's first language, or any additional languages that have been acquired. Seibert (1945, cited in Read, p. 57) undertook early studies on lexical inferencing in a second language. She observed that the large number of cognate lexemes common to Western European languages helped speakers of one language to deduce the meanings of many words in one of the others. An English-speaking subject of her study, who was also proficient in French, was able to infer 41 per cent of the words in a Spanish text correctly, without having studied Spanish. This has some links with Corson's theory of the lexical bar discussed in Chapter 3. Such inferencing cannot, of course, be guaranteed, if only because of 'false friends'. There are also other implications for the present study. The EAL group were largely from an Asian background, (though there were some European heritage pupils in the group), and nearly all spoke one of the Asian languages at home. Using lexical transfer strategies from the vocabulary of one language to another would therefore be much more difficult for them, as their home language would not have the same linguistic roots as the English texts they were reading. This leads to the issue of training pupils in lexical inferencing.

Read (2000) notes that studies indicate the need for learners to be trained in lexical inferencing. (Bensoussan & Laufer, 1984; Haynes, 1984; Laufer and Sim, 1985). In Bensoussan and Laufer's (1984) study, the most common response to an unknown lexeme was to make no attempt at inferencing. Incorrect inferences were observed as giving the wrong meaning of a multi-meaning word, translating the individual morphemes of a word (inconstant produced as 'internal constant'), lack of understanding about idioms ('on the grounds' became 'on the earth') and confusing the target word because of incorrect graphophoneme inferences ('uniquely' transferred as 'inequality'). By contrast, Lui and Nation (1985, *ibid.*) reported a high success rate in their study of lexical inferencing, but their subjects were experienced teachers taking a postgraduate course in teaching English as a second language, and some were also native speakers. This situation is far removed from young EAL pupils engaging with texts, as studied here. Moreover, studies by Parraren and Schouten-Van Parraren (1981); Haastrup (1987; 1991) and Schouten-Van Parraren (1992, cited in Read, 2000) provide evidence that lexical inferencing is a difficult process, even where there is support from context clues. This supports the argument that some EAL learners will have problems with in lexical inferencing, not only because their first language may have different roots from those of the target language, but also because it is a difficult skill to master for all language learners. Teachers would therefore need to be vigilant to ensure any lexical inferencing was correct for both groups of pupils.

The topic of lexical transfer appears in a paper by Jiang (2000). Jiang (p. 51) notes that at the initial stage of encountering new words in the target language, links are activated between the L2 words and their L1 translations, or lexical association. She cites the Lexicon Association Hypothesis emerging from a study of the bilingual lexicon (Potter et. al. 1984) to support this. The second stage combines the target lexeme entry with L2 formal information and the semantic and syntactic information of its L1 translation. In the third and final stage integration of L2 information, other formal specifications occur. This is illustrated below:

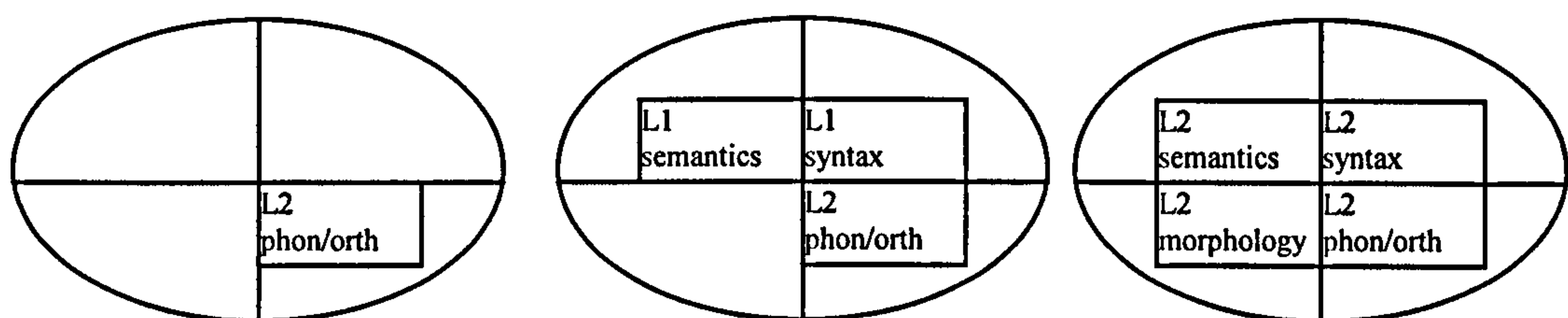


Figure 4.1. Lexical development in L2: from the formal stage to the integration stage (from Jiang, 2000)

Jiang's model is useful in visually presenting the stages the EAL learner must negotiate, from the formal stage of encountering a new word through to its integration into the individual's mental lexicon. It illustrates the complex processes EAL pupils in this study will have to undertake to successfully establish the meaning of newly encountered lexemes. Moreover, Jiang argues that whilst most, if not all, L1 words will become integrated, only a small proportion of L2 words will be. Two major causes are given for this; first, limited contextualised input, and second, the intervention of the existing semantic and lexical systems (p. 71). Jiang's ideas about incomplete lexical integration fit in with a key hypothesis of this study, which argues that EAL pupils do not always fully understand the meanings of words which they appear to be reading proficiently

However, Jiang is primarily concerned with presenting a psycholinguistic model of language acquisition in a second language, and with adult learners who fossilise at the

second stage. Additionally, most of most of the subjects in the study learned L2 in a formal setting before living in the L2 environment. In the present study, the subjects are young children who are learning English in England. Weinreich, (1953, cited in Singleton, 1999) in his categorisation of bilinguals, referred to such subjects as compound bilinguals. Singleton (1999, p 173) defines this as "school-based learning or with learning two languages in homes where the two languages are used interchangeably to refer to the same situations".

A key point can be discussed here. Jiang posits, "When one learns a word in a second language, however, it is very unlikely that a new concept, or set of new semantic specifications, will be created in the process because corresponding, or at least similar concepts or semantic specification already exist in the learner's semantic system" (p. 50). It can be argued that this will not always be the case. Firstly, young learners of EAL who speak other languages at home are likely to use their languages, at least in part, in domain-specific ways. Thus, in Leicester, Gujarati-speaking Muslims, for example, are likely to use Gujarati in domestic and local community shopping contexts, Urdu or Arabic in a mosque or mosque school, and English at school. However, the use of English at school may not overlap conceptually very much with the domestic, local community shopping (because of different foods, for example), or mosque fields of discourse. Hence, a semantic 'overlap' across languages cannot necessarily be assumed. Further, Bryam (1997) has written about what he terms 'cultural awareness' in vocabulary learning. He cites studies by Wierzbicka and Agar to give evidence of this. Wierzbicka (1992), as a result of her comparative linguistic studies, has concluded that some areas of language reflect a specific culture, though, as Bryam points out, "She does not argue that language constrains thought, as Whorf did" (ibid. p. 52). Similarly, Agar, (1991) proposes that some parts of a language are 'rich' carriers of cultural meanings, and are therefore more difficult for second language learners to understand. This perspective is not addressed in Jiang's paper, but it is a key focus of the current work.

Another study can be reviewed within this research as it has links through being undertaken in a local context, and with pupils of a similar age. Beech and Keys (1997) undertook a study into the reading, vocabulary and language preference in 7 to 8 year old bilingual Asian children. They found that, after controlling for non-verbal intelligence, there was a marked difference in receptive oral vocabulary between bilinguals who thought in their parental language, and those bilingual children who preferred to think in English, with the

latter pupils achieving higher scores. Conversely, there was a comparatively weak impact when vocabulary development was related to reading, though knowledge of vocabulary is generally associated with reading proficiency. The parents of all the subjects in the study were of low socio-economic status and they did not have a substantial impact on their children's achievement in reading, but they were found to have an influence on the development of English oral vocabulary. About a quarter of the pupils in the sample were listening, talking and thinking in the parental language most of the time, and this may also be the case in the current research.

Beech and Key's proposals were that Asian children not thinking in English, but in their first language instead, would be less proficient in English, and this would result in a more limited English oral vocabulary, which would in turn affect reading proficiency. Although there are some links with the present study, as previously mentioned, the emphasis here is on reading comprehension between two groups of pupils matched for surface reading proficiency. An interesting fact emerges in that the group who had low scores in oral receptive vocabulary in English did not have correspondingly markedly low scores in reading. There is a tenuous link here between reading in the form of text decoding observed in both studies. Though Beech and Keys did administer the Suffolk Reading Test which measures children's reading comprehension, they have not expanded this idea, and so further comparisons are not possible, though their research does provide some interesting findings about children's vocabulary. The following section discusses how this is acquired.

4.2. Acquiring a mental lexicon

A key issue to be addressed here is how children actually acquire vocabulary and build up a mental lexicon. Aitchison (1994) contends that the child is confronted by 'three different but related tasks, a labelling task, a packaging task and a networking task' (p. 70). Labelling involves matching sound sequences to referents, i.e. objects or things. The packaging task relates to classification, i.e. what can be packaged together under one label. Network building refers to the association between words and how they relate to one another. While she does not relate these lexical learning tasks to curriculum learning, it is clear that EAL pupils not only face these tasks in an L2, presumably simultaneously, but also need to apply their limited, if expanding, lexical knowledge in English simultaneously to curriculum learning in English.

The child's first task of labelling involves her in relating a sequence of sounds as identifying a specific thing. This is often viewed as a straightforward, uncomplicated process. Adults will assume that the child has acquired the labelling skill, because he or she can copy and repeat an utterance. This process of symbolisation, however, where the utterance matches the referent, is a complex skill, as shown by a study of communication and cognition in infants (Bates et al., 1979, cited in Aitchinson, 1994). Again, Aitchinson (1994) does not relate labelling to EAL curriculum learning, but it is quite clear that there are many instances where an apparently obvious term needs re-labelling in different curriculum subjects. For example, 'table' is readily learned as an item of furniture, but the label refers to different referents in maths (a 'table of figures'), geography (a water table), or in relation to particular topics, like transport (a timetable).

This has links with the present study. If this is seen in terms of general or specific taxonomies in relation to curriculum areas, (not Aitchison's focus) then packaging hyponymy relations through collective labels is immensely important for EAL pupils in school learning. Errors in 'packaging' may not only signify vocabulary learning errors, but, more widely, curriculum learning difficulties.

Further observation can be made with reference to EAL learners' development of the lexicon in English when looking at Aitchison's (1994) second linguistic task, that of packaging. This refers to collective labelling, where the child has to master the concept of a collection of referents under one label or superordinate. It is here that over-extensions and under-extensions may occur. With under-extension, *cat* may be used to describe only black cats, and not cats of any other colour. In overextension, *cat* may be used to describe all animals with four legs. Underextension may be a feature of the EAL pupils' lexicon if they are not exposed to English that is completely fluent and within a situation that will enhance their semantic knowledge. Overextensions are less frequent than under-extensions, but may be more noticeable, since they are evident in errors in conversation or writing. These may be earlier features of first language acquisition but be seen at a later stage in children using English as an additional language.

What Aitchison terms "packaging" also relates to prototypes. When children encounter a new word, they will try to match it to its correct category or prototype (Taylor, 1989; Clark & Clark, 1977). Errors occur because the child analyses the prototype according to his or

her individual idiosyncratic system of categories rather than a conventional adult one. This theory can shed light on the difficulties EAL learners have with some vocabulary. They have two sets of prototypes to deal with. They have to acquire adult prototypes, and they also have to acquire the prototypes of the target language, which is not their first language. Taylor (1989, *ibid.*) shows that prototypical patterns of lexis related to concepts (e.g. items of furniture) differ for adults across languages. It can be assumed that this is also the case for children across languages, and that therefore, potentially, such contrasts might well lead to transfer errors (Odlin, 1989, *ibid.*) across differing prototype categories for EAL pupils from their mother tongue to English.

Aitchison's (1994) third category of 'network building' describes how words relate to one another within a semantic network. This is a slow process, which has been described as "the lethargy of semantic development" (Anglin, 1970, cited Aitchison, p. 178). Children are constantly being exposed to new vocabulary within the school curriculum and in the wider community. These new words are initially used in a limited context. They are gradually relocated from this first context into a semantic network with linking co-ordinates. This process is likely to be even slower in children whose first language is not English. This may also affect their understanding of concepts, which is the topic discussed in the following section.

4.3. Concept difficulties of EAL pupils.

It follows that if the correct concepts are not in place, or the child has misconceptions, then this may impinge on the process of learning. While this may occur with any pupil of any background, it seems either more likely to occur, or to be more influential where it does occur, for EAL pupils. Boulton-Lewis and Catherwood (1995), for example, note that conceptual representation can often be different for the bilingual child in terms of experience from that of the native English speaker, because they have been exposed to a different culture. They further note that it may be possible for some young children to misunderstand the language of conversation tasks, for example, by believing 'same' to mean 'look the same' (p. 44).

Some evidence that EAL children make these kinds of errors more often than monolingual children appears in the present study. An example of misunderstanding was cited during an interview with a teacher. The interviewee reported that an Asian pupil taking a SATs revision paper followed the instruction 'Draw a ring around...' by carefully drawing a ring

as worn on the finger, complete with a stone, around each item. She understood the noun to refer to an item of jewellery. The operational act involved here showed that the child had the incorrect conceptual representation of the word 'ring' as required by the task. She knew one meaning of 'ring' and had applied this to the test. If the child had had no understanding at all of the word, and had asked the teacher what its meaning was, then the teacher would have been aware of the child's difficulty. However, the child had good surface fluency in English, and it was only in observing the child translating the word from her personal lexicon into the activity that was required by the task that the teacher became aware of the child's limitation in understanding. It is true that the child was able to complete that SAT task in the sense of drawing something circular, which might identify relevant items, but this example shows that she had not developed an adequate network connected to the word 'ring'. The way in which she drew 'rings' around requested items was laborious and time-consuming and considerably slowed her progress in the test. Arguably, she devoted much attention to this drawing that could have been focused on the tasks themselves. A child of similar ability with a clear understanding of what was required by 'ring' as a verb in its imperative form could perform the task more quickly and so gain more time, and, quite likely, a higher score.

This example also serves to highlight context-neutral theories in education (Demetriou et al. 1992). These are derived from Piagetian and neo-Piagetian theories of cognitive development. They have an emphasis on an abstract concept of readiness, and disallow the influence of social and cultural diversity in development. Therefore such context neutral theories posit a unilinear process of development. This is both within domains and across domains. What they do not address, however, is 'the diversity of real children's encounters with the environment' (op. cit. p. 16). In contrast, the present study compares the assessed vocabulary knowledge of samples of both monolingual English-speaking pupils and those of their peers who use English as an additional language. Implicitly, this study thus invokes social, cultural and linguistic contexts, although the focus is on the language aspects of the lexical knowledge of the EAL group.

As Delpit (1988, in Demetriou et. al. 1992) points out, when a developmental strand is conjoined to a 'readiness' perspective, it can lead to what he describes as 'an inadvertently discriminatory *Laissez-faire* approach to teaching in which children who do not belong to the dominant sociocultural tradition fail to receive training in academic skills presumed to develop in everyone" (p. 161). The child in the real life classroom situation engaged in

drawing rings clearly needed support strategies with vocabulary comprehension. This study indicates that this is not an isolated example. Teachers may make "inadvertent presumptions" about their pupils' level of lexical understanding. It can therefore be argued that teachers need to be more informed about the possible discrepancies between a child's surface vocabulary acquisition and his or her knowledge of word meanings, particularly with EAL pupils.

Another example of concept difficulty was cited by one of the project managers interviewed during this study. An Asian pupil with English as a second language had approached her for help with his homework. He had been asked to discuss "the areas of difficulty in hockey", and had interpreted this in terms of trying to calculate "the area covered by a hockey pitch." The project manager commented:

"He was a very clever boy, and he was just about at his wits end. He couldn't see what, why the difficulty came into it"

(Personal interview - Project F)

This again demonstrates a pupil, termed as 'clever', who did not appear to have problems with the use of English on the surface. He was familiar with 'area' as a mathematical structure, but not of its metaphorical use in 'areas of difficulty'. In this instance, the boy was a secondary school pupil. He had come through the British educational system to this level with gaps in understanding and use of English, and this had resulted in his inability to understand the homework properly. He had also spent much time and energy in the fruitless calculation of the physical area of a hockey pitch, with a consequent high level of frustration.

The narrative examples quoted show the relevance of using a vocabulary test, such as the one employed in this study, which has been recorded and statistically analysed. The accounts could be judged as chance occurrences, so this research project attempts to investigate pupils' level of lexical understanding in schools to test if this is the case, or if there are significant differences between groups of pupils. Vocabulary is essentially linked to concept formation, and this is discussed in the next section.

4.4. The development of concepts in children.

There is no single universal definition of a concept. The two most influential figures in shaping educational theory in the twentieth century at primary school level, Piaget and Vygotsky, held different views about the development of concepts in children.

In discussing the development of academic concepts in school-aged children, Vygotsky (1994: 1935) noted that the process of concept formation 'holds the key to the whole history of the child's intellectual development' (p. 354). This view has implications for the present study. If one group of children do not understand vocabulary as well as a second group, then their concept formation is likely to be hindered, and this may lead to less success in academic achievement. This would be potentially even more serious if the teachers of both groups of children were unaware of such differences (if this can be shown to be the case). Vygotsky (1962) also noted that cognitive development usually parallels the development of the first, or most dominant language. This statement could be critical in giving an explanation of why most first language speakers outperformed EAL pupils in reading comprehension even though the pupils were pair-matched for perceived ability in reading by their teachers, if this proved to be the result

Vygotsky (1962) puts the use of words at the centre of concept formation. He insists that concepts are formed through an intellectual operation rather than through the interplay of associations. The words serve to focus attention and abstract certain traits, which are then synthesised and symbolised by a sign.

For Vygotsky, this is a dual process. The first of these processes is *complex formation*. The child groups together a variety of objects into categories. The second process Vygotsky terms as "the formation of *potential concepts*" (p. 81). The child identifies and extracts certain common attributes. Vygotsky concludes that in both "the use of the word is an integral part of the developing processes, and the word maintains its guiding function in the formation of genuine concepts, to which these processes lead" (ibid.). Applebee (1978) in his study of children's concepts of story, found the results bore "a remarkable resemblance to Vygotsky's (1962) stages in concept development, and show(ing) the same general development order" (p. 57).

In this study, key words from classroom texts were used to find the child's level of understanding for each of these words. It was proposed that there would be a significant

difference in comprehension overall between the two participant groups. One of the concerns of this study is that knowledge of and about word meanings affects the development of concepts, and that this may in turn affect learning. Vygotsky's theory about the central function of words in the development of concepts supports this concern, at least to the extent that it is worth investigating.

There are, however, other ideas about concept formation in children. Piaget's ideas have been widespread in Western education for much of the past three decades (see Demetriou et al. 1992; Bybee & Sund, 1982). Piaget (1969) claimed that language and thought have the same roots, in sensory motor actions. Language, however, does not have the same essential role as in Vygotsky's theory. Piaget argued that language is just one product of children's growing representational skills. When the symbolic function emerges, it produces language and operative thought. From this perspective cognitive development proceeds in line with linguistic development and other concepts which are formed through the process of the child's personal experiences. Children cannot use language appropriately unless they already possess the related concept. Piaget posited, in line with Vygotsky, that a child's mental capacity follows a dynamic process of development through interaction with things and people in the environment. However, Piaget maintained language by itself is not critical to cognitive development. At most, as a complement to the child's activities, it may amplify and assist mental activity on some occasions.

Chomsky's ideas relating to concept development are similar to those of Piaget. He affirms that children learn words quickly and easily, and that this is evidence of the fact that they have acquired concepts before they have become proficient in language. Chomsky argues that the child learns labels for concepts that are already part of his or her conceptual apparatus (1988, p. 32). From this perspective, it could be argued that EAL pupils are mislabelling some concepts because they have not experienced these, i.e. they are not part of their 'conceptual apparatus'. The EAL pupils in this study were able to read the text as quickly and easily as their first-language partner, as judged by their experienced class teachers, but the hypothesis was that they did not actually have the same 'conceptual apparatus'. This study argues that the labels which pupils are able to use do not always reflect the correct concept.

Piaget's theory was the first serious attempt to explain the construction of concepts in young children on the basis of experiments with children, which, for many years, were unquestioned. He was a pioneer in genetic epistemology. However, Vygotsky points out that although Piaget acknowledged that the child's cognitive development "consists of the progressive socialisation of his thinking", he did not relate this to schooling, "one of the basic and most concentrated aspects of the formation process of non-spontaneous concepts" (1994: 1935 p. 362).

Piaget's ideas are problematic from the point of view of this study. He maintains that the child must have the concept mentally before he or she can express it in speech. In the present study, EAL pupils are held to have less understanding of word meanings than their L1 partners, though demonstrating a similar surface linguistic ability in reading. This leaves the problem of the concepts possibly not being in place, whereas the language is. Vygotsky's ideas give a better answer to the problem. He also stated that concepts develop in line with the first or most dominant language. This reinforces the importance of addressing concept formation in a second language, and of supporting EAL children in schools towards a more comprehensive understanding of these.

Wells (1999) notes the many similarities between Vygotsky's ideas and those of Halliday. Although Vygotsky was a psychologist and Halliday is a linguist, both have addressed the field of education, whereas Piaget did not do so directly. This makes both of their contributions relevant to this study.

Halliday discusses concept frames in his work with Mathiessen entitled *Construing Experience Through Meaning* (Halliday and Mathiessen, 1999). He also explains his own definition of knowledge. Halliday notes that this is often conceived of in terms of conceptual taxonomies, (Bloom 1956, Beyer, 1992), schemata, (Rummelhart & Ortony, 1977; Rummelhart, 1980) scripts, (Schank & Abelson, 1977), which evolve from experience. He states that his interpretation of experience is that of *meaning*, rather than *knowing* and is "something that is construed in language" (p. 1). He takes language as the interpretative base of experience through meaning, because language is essential for "not only storing and exchanging experience, but also in construing it" (ibid). This again reinforces the argument that 'making meaning' and 'construing experience', in Halliday's terms, is often dependent on a chain of experiences beginning with the word and being completed when the meaning is constructed.

Halliday' and Matthiessen's review of concept frames is developed from the early work of Quillan in the 1960s. Quillan constructed a network of nodes and relations. These nodes were the word senses, whilst the relations were gathered from dictionary definitions. His work has since been modified, and Halliday notes two significant developments.

I. nodes were given organisation in the form of frames - configurations of roles with specification of possible fillers of these roles (value restrictions).

II. the 'is-a' relation was given special status in the network, defined as a subsumption relation over nodes.

These two developments have been combined as essential features of a *frame-based inheritance network* (Brachman and Levesque, 1985; Sowa, 1991, cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999). Concept frames at a specific point on the subsumption hierarchy assimilate, or 'intent' any role information associated with concepts which appear further up the hierarchy. Halliday gives an example of this:

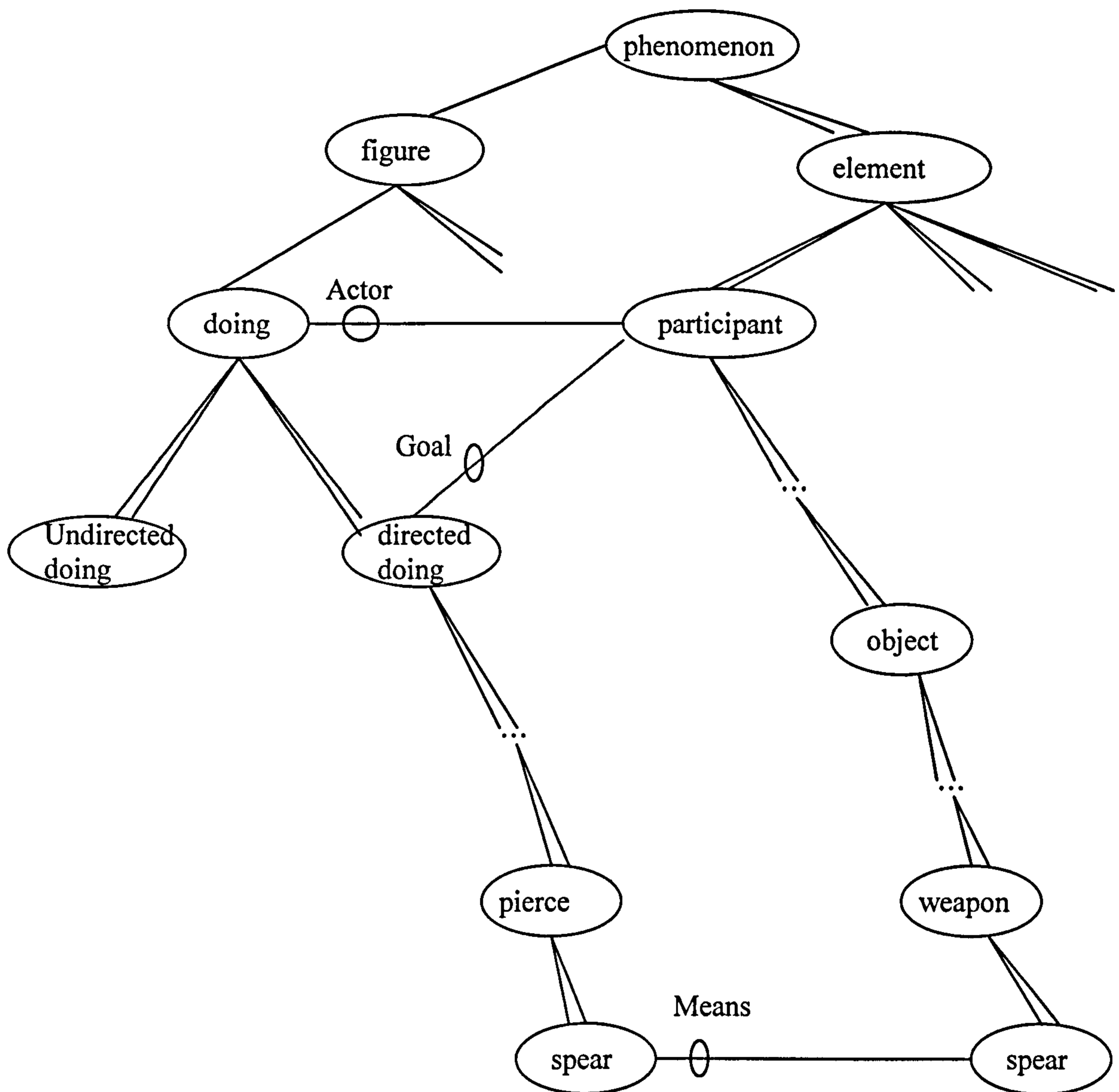


Figure 4.2 : Concept frames in subsumption hierarchy, supporting inheritance.

Figure 4.2. reproduced above shows a part of the subsumption hierarchy of figures and elements. Halliday explains this.

"Certain concepts have roles associated with them - doing/Actor; directed doing/Goal; and spear/means. Since 'directed doing' is subsumed under (classified under) 'doing', it inherits the Actor role, and since 'spear' is subsumed under both 'directed doing' and 'doing', it inherits both the Actor and the Goal roles. In addition, the possible class of filler is specified for each role as a value restriction.

These are shown as pointers from the roles to other concepts in the subsumption hierarchy, in this case pointers to types of element." (ibid)

The example given is a strict taxonomy, but this is not a universal restriction imposed on frame-based inheritance networks. Any concept may be subsumed by other concepts and inherit their properties. Moreover, cross-classifications are a feature of networks, and simultaneous distinctions are allowed. As Halliday explains, "when two or more concepts specify another concept they may constitute a disjoint covering, which means that their disjunction is exclusive" (ibid).

Halliday and Matthiessen's framework is used in this study as it presents a clear visual, and brings together current ideas about concept frames. It is particularly useful in supporting the argument proposed in this chapter. If, for example, a concept at the base level of the hierarchy were wrong, then it could set in motion in the child's mind a ladder of incorrect associations and wrong cross-classification. It could therefore be adapted and used as a model for teachers by substituting classroom texts in place of the figure above.

4.5. Emerging issues

Some key points emerge from this review of vocabulary acquisition and the development of concepts in children. A significant point is the lack of research into vocabulary in second language acquisition studies, and this is even more marked in studies relating to younger pupils in schools. Key works in the field, such as that of Aitchison (op cit.), are focused on the development of the first language mental lexicon. Another point is that vocabulary is related to success in reading comprehension, and is linked to cognitive development by psychologists. It is also linked to the development of concepts in children. It is therefore argued that children's lexical understanding is critical to their clear understanding of texts, and may influence how quickly their learning progresses.

As noted previously, the curriculum in English schools is taught throughout in the English language. There are some arguments about the predominance of English, and ideas about 'linguistic imperialism' (Cummins, 1997; Phillipson, 1992). However, as Halliday points out, we have to accept that knowledge of English is a prerequisite for academic success. "As things are, certain ways of organising experience through language, and of participating and interacting with things, are necessary to success in school." (1978, p. 26).

Halliday was actually commenting on Bernstein's work in linking social class and differential education achievement, but the statement is equally relevant to the current situation in schools when referring to EAL pupils. They may be, in fact, doubly disadvantaged because of social class background, which may be common to that of their monolingual peer group in inner-city schools, and also by a lack of proficiency in English (Beech & Keys, 1997).

As Bernstein (1971, cited in Halliday & Mattiessen, 1999) notes, schooling is one of the 'critical socialising contexts' within a child's life. EAL pupils enter school at different levels of proficiency in English. The greater their linguistic ability in English, then the greater their chance of success in their school career. However, a key argument of this study is that teachers overestimate the English language proficiency of some EAL pupils. The vocabulary tests which form part of the research in this work attempts to prove this. If it is proved that, for a significant proportion of EAL learners, a superficial ability to decode text masks an underlying lack of reading comprehension, then there are two main issues to be addressed. The first of these is raising teacher awareness about EAL pupils' comprehension gaps, which, it has been argued, may affect their development of concepts, and ultimately delay the acquisition of knowledge. Second, strategies need to be put into place to enable EAL pupils to gain access to educational success by being given structured support in the construction of meaning, including a focus on vocabulary. The proposition can be made that support for EAL pupils could be improved by a knowledge of the home literacy practices and language socialisation of the cultural and linguistic group to which they belong. This is addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: CULTURAL VARIATIONS IN LANGUAGE SOCIALISATION AND LITERACY PRACTICES.

Introduction.

Culture is a key issue in this study, not least because this work is concerned with the level of understanding of vocabulary and concepts of EAL pupils from different linguistic and social heritages than the majority group pupils. While the main contrast between the groups of participating pupils is between L1 pupils, who are mother-tongue English speakers, and EAL pupils, whose first languages are languages other than English, which gives a contrast of language backgrounds and use, it is likely that this contrast also implicitly involves language socialisation and cultural patterns in the use of lexis for learning concepts. In other words, the L1 and EAL groups may not only have different understandings of the meanings of words, but also of their uses, and of ways of learning them. The classroom patterns of socialisation into vocabulary that are normal in the UK may be different from those which are experienced in EAL pupils' first language. This may also be true for the L1 pupils, as Bernstein (1971) argued, but it is likely to be a particularly marked feature of many EAL pupils. It is probable that some EAL pupils in UK schools may move between these socialisation patterns. Cultural aspects of social interaction, which may constitute key elements of likely socio-cultural explanations for any findings across language-contrasting groups, are implicitly involved. The main part of this chapter reviews works related to language socialisation, preceded by some key theories relating to culture, which are believed to be particularly relevant to this work. This chapter will also support the main argument with interview data from Leicester teachers.

5.1. Culture in the research context

Culture has been referred to as 'the neglected concept' in many social science contexts (Smith and Bond, 1993, p.35). Cole (1998) notes that although it is widely accepted that it is a distinct characteristic of humans that they live in a culturally organised environment, the topic of culture rarely appears in general or developmental psychology works. He cites the evidence of Lonner, who collected data from major texts and journals in the field, to emphasise this point. In many of these works, no citation for culture existed at all. In some others there were references "to cross-cultural research in a few, restricted domains: IQ testing, Piagetian conservation tasks, Kohlbergian moral dilemmas, and perhaps the origins of emotion or aggression" (ibid p.11).

This view is reiterated by Sätjö (cited in Cole, 1998), who similarly notes that a key text on the psychology of learning, namely Bower and Hildgard's (1981) *Theories of Learning*, does not refer to culture. He argues that the main reason for this is that the two scientific traditions of behaviourism and cognitivism which dominated theories of cognition and learning during the twentieth century gave little weight to the links between culture and learning. Although both these traditions were different in focus, both had the study of the individual in common. There was therefore little consideration given to the impact of culture on development. There is now, however, a shift in thought, largely originating from the influence of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (see Chapter 2). Scholars such as Cole, (1989, 1998) Wertsch, (1985) Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) and Wood (1998) have explored the dimension of culture and development, including the development of learning.

Further markers of the shift towards including 'culture' as a serious issue in psychology, particularly in social psychology, can be seen in a series of textbooks whose titles feature 'culture' (e.g. Berry et. al. 1992; Moghaddam et. al. 1993; Smith and Bond, 1993) and whose teams of authors themselves represent a variety of cultures. While such textbooks rarely include 'learning' or 'schooling' as major topics, recent textbooks on learning do include major sections on culture (Biggs, 1999; Jarvis, et al. 1998). Thus the topics of culture and learning are increasingly linked together, often with language (e.g. Dameh, 1987; Kramsch, 1993; Bonvillain, 1993; Duranti, 1997; Ting-Toomey, 1999) and yet such textbooks do not focus on younger learners. A significant exception is the recent emergence of the topic of language socialisation and literacy practices (Duranti, 2001), in which language, culture and learning are explicitly linked with the socialisation of children into literacy practices. This aspect is elaborated later in this chapter.

This present study also incorporates culture because it is increasingly apparent from sociocultural theories that it is a major aspect of patterns of cognitive development and language learning. It is also arguably critical in understanding some features of the problems some EAL pupils may have in mainstream classrooms, and how teachers can meet the needs of pupils from different linguistic or cultural backgrounds.

The current research also attempts to address real situations in schools, and it is contextualized within interaction between the teacher-researcher, mainstream staff and the pupils. This meets a need for research to be concerned with actual classroom contexts, as

argued for by many scholars. Wood, (1998) for example, notes that studies about teaching can be "largely atheoretical and even idiosyncratic" (p. 158) because they are artificial. As he points out, "One view is that theories developed out of psychological research cannot be used to develop categories to describe what goes on in classrooms because their relevance is limited to what goes on in laboratories" (ibid).

Cole and colleagues (1979) (cited in Wood, 1998) also noted a gap between natural and artificial contexts. They observed children in home-simulated situation and they concluded that there was actually little comparison between these and the demands, tasks and interaction used by cognitive psychologists to study learning and development in the laboratory situation.

This current work has the advantage of being set in natural school situations. The researcher is known to the pupils in a teaching role, and as a colleague to members of staff. This chapter, therefore, addresses the issue of culture within a real setting, and relates what emerges from the study to literature about culture and its links with language socialisation.

Gudykunst and Ting Toomey (1988) also note that there has been little account taken of the influence of culture in research on interpersonal communication. They give two major reasons why theories and researchers should, in fact, include this aspect. First, they point out that culture is necessarily a boundary condition for any research that is not cross-cultural. By this they mean that the conclusions drawn from such research must be limited to the culture and ethnic group in which the research took place. It is a scope condition for theories that do not include culture as an integral part of the theory that the research undertaken cannot establish universal conclusions. Second, Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey name culture as a theoretical variable within research. They refer in particular to interpersonal communication, which relates to the current study in terms of pupil/teacher, and EAL pupil/monolingual pupil. As Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey note, when culture is integrated into research, or becomes an explanation of variables in a theory, then the scope of the study or theory increases. This reflects the work of Triandis (1976), who noted that culture was a necessary variant if research in the field was to produce universally valid conclusions.

Within this present study, culture is a key feature. Some scholars, (e.g. Cole, 1998; Hinde, 1987) argue that there is an overemphasis on cultural differences and too little account of

cultural similarities. Berry, following a linguistic distinction by Pike (1969; 1989 cited in Smith and Bond, 1993) has examined such claims and has proposed an 'etic' and 'emic' analysis of human behaviour. 'Etic' is based on phonetics as a representation of universals, in that all humans eat, exchange greetings, have relationships and such like, which can be described in objective terms. 'Emic' represents phonemics and refers to variations in how these activities occur in specific cultural settings. This particular distinction is useful when examining pupils in school. The *etic*, with an emphasis on cohesion, exemplifies the overall integrated nature of interaction within the schools participating in this study on a macro level as seen (relatively) objectively. The *emic* emphasises how different cultural systems within this overall context may construe meaning differently and this can be taken to represent how misunderstandings can arise because of cultural and linguistic differences.

Whilst accepting that 'the capacity to inhabit a culturally organised environment is the universal species-specific characteristic of homo sapiens' (Cole, 1998, p. 11), the current work examines cultural variations and their possible effect on what may occur in the classroom. As an introduction to this, it is useful to examine some key ideas about culture.

5.2. Culture and Learning Styles

For Herskovitz (1948, p. 17, cited in Cole, 1998) culture is "the man-made part of the environment", a much-cited definition. Linton (1936) describes culture as the accumulation of knowledge, attitudes and habitual behaviour patterns which are common to a particular society, and are passed on by the society to its young. Moerman (1988) makes a definition of culture as encompassing a set or system of principles of interpretation, combined with the products of that set or system. Such systems of expectations could include what Cortazzi and Jin (1996) have termed 'cultures of learning', i.e. frameworks of expectations and interpretations of others' expectations regarding how to learn, for example, vocabulary and literacy.

The foregoing definitions of culture can all be associated with Vygotsky's sociocultural historic theory (Geertz, 1973; Leontiev, 1981; Luria, 1979; Sahlins, 1976) (cited in Cole, 1998). Later interpretations of Vygotsky have been influenced by the ideas of Sapir and Whorf. Their classic theory is known as the 'Sapir-Whorf hypothesis' (Whorf, 1956). In a condensed form, this relates to linguistic determinism and linguistic relativism. The first strand, linguistic determinism, proposes that cognition depends on language, and is constrained by it. The second strand, that of linguistic relativism, holds that speakers of

different languages experience, perceive and conceive the world differently. This hypothesis can be related to teacher's perceptions about the influence of cultural background on children's learning, which emerged from the interviews that formed part of this study.

Most teachers during interviews mentioned language as a key cultural difference. Some referred to it as a "barrier". One teacher commenced the interview by stating that she thought language was the greatest difference in cultural background. Early years teachers felt that the level of English language acquisition children entered school with was quite crucial as to how quickly and how well they settled down. Some noted that if English was spoken at home, the children entered school with a very different approach.

Overall, comments from early years teachers indicated that they believed children entering school with little or no English were at a disadvantage, both socially and with their learning. The teachers were concerned about this, and put strategies into place to support these children. These included multi-language labelling in the classroom. They made extensive use of dual-language books, which have a text in English, and a dual text in another language. This enabled parents to support their children by reading in the home language and translating into English. Such texts would also be useful in supporting the child's early reading, in that home literacy practices can be integrated with the reading methods used in English classrooms.

Bilingual assistants and home-school liaison workers were also believed to provide a valuable service as they could translate between languages and support staff/parent communication. They also work with children in the classroom. These assistants have a role as cultural intermediaries, as they can combine an understanding of the expectations of the school with a knowledge of the cultural and literacy practices of the home. Teachers, however, were often unaware of the linguistic and cultural gaps, between, for example, different Asian groups from the Indian sub-continent, and often presumed that a bilingual assistant who was a Hindu Gujarati speaker would be equally fluent in Urdu and conversant with Islamic literacy socialisation practices, whereas this was rarely like to be the case. Overall, teachers often believed that a bilingual assistant could deal with the linguistic, cultural and social home-school interactions for all 'Asian' pupils. This gives evidence of teachers often having little awareness of the many languages spoken by EAL

pupils and how different they are from each other, and the diverse literacy practices of their home cultures.

A further strategy employed by teachers was that of using children with a good command of English to support peers at an earlier stage of language development. These are examples of scaffolded practice (see Chapter 2). In such situations the child is supported on his or her entry to school, and then the support is gradually withdrawn as the child gains independence. Although most teachers are becoming aware of the term "scaffolding", many are probably unaware of its theoretical derivation. Their good practice in supporting EAL pupils entering school mostly stems from experience, and what Elliott (1993) has termed 'situational understanding'.

Some of the most experienced teachers interviewed commented on the link between English language proficiency and listening skills. They had noticed that some EAL pupils would be sitting quietly and superficially attentive, but in fact had "switched off". They were not really listening as they were unable to understand all that their teacher was saying.

The point about EAL pupils not understanding instructions was underlined in other teacher's interviews. One commented that she worked out when a child hadn't understood instructions by what he or she did, such as when they couldn't complete the activity or task that had been set. These teachers' comments reveal some complexities: it is difficult for a teacher to ascertain differences between listening to understand, listening but not understanding and apparently listening but not actually being engaged. Similarly, it is difficult for the teachers to distinguish not understanding instructions and the consequent inability to complete a task from understanding the instructions, but with a subsequent inability to complete a task for some other reason.

There was a noticeable difference in the responses from two newly qualified teachers, (NQTs). They tended to minimise the effect cultural background had on children's learning in schools. One NQT remarked that she didn't find a great amount of difference between pupils from differing backgrounds, but she did add the rider, "Except when they can't speak English very well". In this case again, the language element emerged. Another recently qualified teacher said his pupils had very little difficulty with understanding word meaning, "But with the vocabulary, no, no. Pronunciation of words perhaps occasionally, but not generally".

This contrasted with other teachers' opinions about vocabulary acquisition and understanding. One teacher commented that if the pupils were using English at home, "perhaps they are using a slightly different vocabulary than we would". Another commented that she had noticed children had difficulty with the polysemy of words in English, and recalled an occasion when some EAL pupils had been baffled by a known word being used with a different meaning in a new context. They thought she was 'just being silly'. Another example was given by a teacher who asked a pupil to point to the longer wing of a bird in a maths lesson. The teacher recounted that the child had no idea what a wing was. When this was explained to her, she was able to complete her work. Some of these examples reveal a certain lack of sensitivity to the children's lexical difficulties and point to the need for teachers to approach these difficulties with more awareness.

In some reports given by teachers interviewed in this study, they spoke about what can be termed a "masking effect" that was used by pupils to hide their lack of understanding. A teacher noted that her EAL pupils had become quite adept at knowing what she required, although they had not fully understood the task, or understood it only superficially. They used other cues to supplement their linguistic comprehension, such as mirroring the activities of their monolingual peers. The children were anxious to please, and fearful of not completing the task to the teacher's satisfaction and gaining her approval. Another teacher commented on pupils sitting on the carpet 'with closed lips', wanting to join in with the nursery rhymes, but unable to do so.

The pupils referred to by teacher in the forgoing analysis displayed uncertainty. They not only had difficulty in interpreting the language of the classroom, but were also in an unfamiliar cultural milieu. Their channels of communication were therefore fraught with uncertainty. Berger and Calabrese (1975) (cited in Gudykunst and Ting Toomey, 1988) have referred to two types of uncertainty. The first, cognitive uncertainty, is described as the inability of the individual to predict their own and others beliefs and attitudes. The second, behavioural uncertainty, relates to the inability to predict their own and other's behaviour in a given situation. In the situations which the teachers narrated, it is likely that the pupils had both cognitive uncertainty and behavioural uncertainty, and some of them had apparently devised coping strategies to assist uncertainty reduction.

Overall, teachers mentioned language difficulties as being the greatest problem. A special educational needs co-ordinator encapsulated the views of many others in her comments about an able EAL pupil struggling with communication. She stated, "It was language in all its aspects. It was written language, spoken language, confidence in the language." This highlights the link between culture and language that is a key issue in the present study. It is addressed on a wider basis in the following section.

5.3. Language socialisation practices

There is growing interest in the language socialisation and literacy practices used by different societies and by different cultural groups within the larger society. This is seen in the work of Duranti (2001), Gregory (1997), Gregory and Williams (2000), Heath (1986), Schieffelin and Ochs (1986), and Street and Street (1995). Though a comparatively new field in educational research, it is one that is particularly relevant to this study because of the focus here on the language use of EAL pupils within mainstream schools. Many of these pupils attend additional religious classes, or minority language lessons, or both. This was not, however, an issue which was widely addressed by either the Project Managers or the teachers interviewed as part of this study. Teachers did discuss their pupils' attendance at mosque schools, for example, but this was in terms of cultural and religious practice rather than literacy practice. This indicates there is not a widespread knowledge of these minority language and literacy practices. Indeed, Gregory (2000) refers to them as having "remained invisible to both the school and society's eyes" (xvi). This section reviews some relevant research, theories and opinions that relate to various cultural practices in language socialisation and how these might impact on formal schooling.

Language socialisation is defined by Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) as having a dual function of implementing both socialisation through language, and socialisation to use language. They draw on the sociocultural theories of Vygotsky and Leontiev to expand this. Socialisation is a result of interactional procedures which members of a society use to construct a communal awareness of shared context, or shared realities. These social interactions themselves are what have been termed 'sociocultural environments' (Wentworth, 1980, cited by Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986). By participating in social interactions within social-cultural environments, the young of the cultural group come to internalise its norms and become competent members of the adult society. They are not, however, passive recipients in the process of socialisation, but rather active performers. The young learn to recognise, and jointly construct with more advanced others, contexts,

and to relate contexts to one another. Thus the children of a particular society are inducted into its principles of social order and belief systems both by exposure to language, and by participating in language-mediated interactions.

Schieffelin and Ochs (*ibid.*) maintain that much socio-cultural information is encoded in conversational discourse, including discourse with children. They note that many formal and functional features of such discourse encode this socio-cultural information. This includes "phonological and morphosyntactic constructions, the lexicon, speech-act types, conversational sequencing, genres, interruptions, overlaps, gaps, and turn lengths" (p. 3). Children therefore not only learn to speak, but through speech interactions learn the social rules of the society to which they belong. Language is often the social/event, and not merely a response to the social/activity event, (Hymes, 1974) as in explanations, negotiations, story-telling or teasing. When the care-givers and others speak to children, or provide a situated speech environment, they are providing information sources (Gumperz 1983) about the context and activity in which members of the group are involved. Schieffelin and Ochs believe that "language in use is then a major, if not the major, tool for conveying sociocultural knowledge and a powerful medium of socialisation." In line with Sapir and Whorf, they suggest, "children acquire a world view as they acquire a language" (p. 3).

Links to the current study can be drawn here. This study argues that a comprehension gap exists between L1 and EAL pupils, and that the EAL pupils do not have the same understanding of key vocabulary items as their monolingual peers. It is further argued that these comprehension gaps are largely due to differences in cultural background, because the EAL pupils come from a different linguistic and cultural heritage, and this is manifested when they engage in texts produced from a largely Western perspective, or 'world view'. This is not a clear-cut situation, and it often produces confusion for teachers because some EAL pupils are able to articulate the text on the same level as their monolingual pupils, and are therefore assumed to have the same level of reading comprehension. The EAL pupils are operating within two cultures, the home and the school. Both are likely to have high aspirations for children to achieve language and literacy skills, but the ways in which this is achieved may be markedly different. In particular, socialisation into language and language use may be quite different. The learning of the second language, EAL, may not in itself guarantee the socialisation into its

use, nor the socialisation through English into world views associated with schooling in Britain.

Although there would be little dispute about the young of a particular society being inducted into its social and linguistic systems by more experienced members of that society, the prevailing norm in Western education of the white, middle class mother-infant dyad is not universal. Different societies have other ways of socialising their young, who all succeed in becoming active and competent members of that society, within normal parameters. Duranti (2001, p. 24) points out that the attempts by Slobin and colleagues (1967) to investigate cross-cultural acquisition of communicative competencies, (later reframed as cross-linguistic instead of cross-cultural) brought a new awareness of speech communities with different social organisation patterns. These included different beliefs about adult/child relationships, the inclusion of sibling care-giving and the use of the extended family in socialising the young. A work which gives concrete evidence of this is Ochs's and Schieffelin's (1986) study of three different types of practice in child language socialisation in three different societies in three different parts of the world.

The three groups studied by Ochs and Schieffelin (*ibid*) were white middle class American, the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea and the Western Samoans. All three groups had a common primary aim, namely to enable their young to develop the linguistic competency and social behaviour required for full membership of the adult society. This was largely accomplished through language, though in different ways and at different stages of development.

The white middle class mothers who were studied viewed their infants as individual social beings capable of intentionally, and attempted to involve them in conversational exchanges, or 'protoconversations', from a very young age. The mothers would simplify their speech using a 'baby-talk' register or 'motherese'. Research on the typical mother/infant dyad has been undertaken by Bruner, (1977) Bullowa, (1979) Lock, (1978) Newson, (1977; 1978) Scaffer (1977) and Shorter (1978), (cited in Duranti, 2001). These studies show specific cultural strategies used in developing vocabulary and syntax as practised in Western society.

In contrast to the white middle-class mother-child dyad, with its focus on speech from the earliest days, the Kaluli mother believes her baby has no understanding, and therefore she

does not talk to it. The infant's early babbling is not connected to early speech, and during the first eighteen months of the child's life there are very few verbal interactions between adults and the infant. The infant is, however, surrounded by a speech-rich environment from both the family and the wider community, because he or she is constantly with the mother. When the first utterances begin, the infant is shown how to speak through modelling. The infant's utterances are not expanded, for the Kaluli believe that it is not appropriate to speak for another, because each individual has his or her own thoughts and opinions which cannot be relayed by others. The Kaliluan socialisation processes are in marked contrast to Western cultural child-rearing practices, but the end results are the same. The young are socialised into the adult speech community, and become functional members of that society. They gain the necessary grammar and lexis from the Kaluli pattern of language socialisation.

The third group studied by Schieffelin and Ochs was the Samoans. This gives a further example of disparate socialisation processes. Samoan society is highly stratified, and has a strict hierarchy in terms of status and age. The young are at the bottom of the hierarchy. The speech used by the care-givers is not lexically or syntactically simplified. Instead the Samoan children are surrounded by adult multiparty speech interaction. Whereas white middle-class care-givers will tend to accommodate situations to the perceived needs of the child, the Samoans encourage their children to meet the needs of the situation by noticing others, listening to them, and by adapting their speech so it is appropriate to the situation. The child also has to assimilate what is meaningful in the society, and focus on clear utterances and direct action. Schieffelin and Ochs summarise that through language use, Samoan children are socialised into their culture's preferred ways of processing information, and its social organisation, which is markedly different from that practised by white, middle class Western communities. They acquire speech proficiency and lexical development through their own culture's specific socialisation process.

This study undertaken by Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) indicates that the accepted Western practice, including using a simplified speech register for young children, is not universally practised, nor is it essential for speech to be acquired or for vocabulary to be developed. White middle-class children, Kaluli children and Samoan children all become native speakers within the normal range of development, even though their care-givers adopt different methods of language socialisation. This is culturally organised so that the child becomes socially competent. As the researchers note, language is used to enculturate the

child into the adult society. Their work is illustrative in the context of the present study as it shows that there are other ways of acquiring language and vocabulary beside those practised by the indigenous population of the UK.

Another point that emerges from Schieffelin and Ochs' work is the difference between the collectivism practised by the Kaluli and the Western Samoans and the individualism practised in the West in children's language socialisation. In the present study the EAL group were mainly from India and Pakistan. These have been classified as highly collectivist societies in which the individual is subsumed by the collective group (Hofstede, 1980). Most of these children are part of extended families where the heritage culture is very strong and is reinforced by group activities. Whilst teachers may be aware that these pupils have strong family networks, they may not realise how this may affect the child's perception and understanding of concepts in English.

Schieffelin and Ochs' study covered three types of language socialisation practices of three disparate cultures in different parts of the world. They surmised that these varying socialisation practices would result in culturally defined social realities or a particular 'world view'. The children became competent members of their society in its particular location. Within the present study, the situation is different. The EAL pupils involved come from a different culture or cultural heritage than that of the mainstream society, and they must reconcile this with their need to engage with a Western perspective to succeed in the education system. One aspect of this is reading comprehension. This study argues that surface proficiency in English can mask the difficulties some EAL pupils have in understanding vocabulary and concepts, and that this may be to some degree attributable to cultural differences between groups, which could also include variations in language socialisation patterns. This is a variable situation, as some minority cultural groups achieve highly in the UK education system, whilst others do not (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996). Even within Western society, different groups have different achievement levels in education as a result of their home literacy practices, as seen in Heath's (1983) study.

Heath studied three types of community literacy levels and how the ways of 'taking' from printed stories was constructed in each, and she related children's pre-school experience to their achievement at school. The three communities studied were, first, the white-middle class Maintown group, second, the white working-class Roadville community, and third, the black working-class Trackton families.

The first group, the Maintown children, grow up in households where literacy is highly prized, and they are socialised towards becoming members of a literate society. These children are surrounded by books. Heath emphasises the importance of the bedtime story as a key literacy event. The child is encouraged to interact with the carer in dialogue about the bedtime story book, in labelling activities, asking 'what' questions and, crucially, relating this to the wider environment. This is repeated in other situations (Heath gives examples such as the doctor's waiting room.) The result of this language socialisation is that the child is inducted into the initiation-reply-evaluation sequences, which Heath notes are the key structural features of classroom learning as cited in studies by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), Griffin and Humphry (1977), and Mehan (1978). The Maintown child is therefore socialised into a prospectively successful school career because of this particular construction of literacy, which will harmonise with that of the school.

The Roadville child is also surrounded by books, and has bedtime stories. Carers provide labels, features and 'what' explanations during reading activities. However, this is not related to the wider environment, as it is in the case of the Maintown child. Furthermore, although the child is initially encouraged to be an active participant in the reading activity, by the time he or she is three years of age, the focus changes, and the child is trained to be a passive listener. This can result in the child becoming a passive learner at school, if these later home practices carry over into the classroom.

The third group, the Trackton community, has a strong oral tradition. There are no bedtime stories, and there is very little focus on reading to children at all. The child is, however, incorporated in the extended family group from birth, and is surrounded by multi-party speech interactions. In contrast to providing direct modelling, the carers provide the experiences from which they expect children to learn. They are not given labels, or engaged in 'what' explanations, but instead they are asked to provide 'why' explanations which involve a personal response. The children become familiar with group literacy events, in which community members orally mediate the meaning of a written text including key lexemes within it. When these children begin their school education there is often a mismatch between the formal literacy demanded by the school and that of their early highly oral language socialisation. It appears that the oral practices into which Trackton children have been socialised are not valued at school.

The three groups of children follow their community's paths of language socialisation. Heath points out that when they arrive at school, the ways of 'taking' used by the school may build on the pre-school literacy development, may require the child to adapt, or may run directly counter to aspects of the child's community pattern. In the first case, Maintown children are likely to have the requisite literacy experiences that the school can develop. Second, the Roadville children need to relearn their early skills of active participation in reading, obtaining knowledge from books and applying this to the wider environment, to enable them to succeed at school. Third, the Tracton children need to adapt their creative/oral literacy to the more formal literacy demanded by the school. Heath concluded that the Roadville and Trackton families show that there is more than one type of literacy socialisation even among Western societies, where English is the common language. They also indicate, "that mainstream ways of acquiring communicative competence do not offer a universally applicable model of development" (ibid p.122). In the case of the present study, EAL learners may have home language socialisation practices which do not conform to those of the mainstream. When they begin formal education, their pre-school experience may not harmonise with that of the school, putting them at an educational disadvantage, as Heath found to be the case with the Roadville and Trackton communities. Moreover, teachers may be unaware of these cultural practices, and this lack of awareness could mean that they are unable to build on the particular pre-school experiences that some EAL pupils bring to the classroom. It may also mean that teachers are unaware of lexical comprehension difficulties, stemming from their EAL pupils' cultural backgrounds and their preferred home literacy practices, when these pupils engage with texts in UK schools.

Heath's study, and the conclusions that she draws from it, have some parallels with Bernstein's (1971) theory of sociolinguistic codes. Bernstein's theory became the basis of an argument that the home language usage and social learning contexts provided for children from working-class homes gave them a more limited range of linguistic experiences than their middle-class peers. Moreover, these experiences were more likely to be regarded as inadequate in school. Bernstein (1975) believed that it should be a function of the school rather than the home to intervene to allow greater equality of opportunity in education. The similarity between the work of Heath and Bernstein is that they both note that a particular type of language socialisation prepares some children better for synchronising with school literacy practice than others. Also, both point to subtle and perhaps abstract meanings in early socialisation practices which are unlikely to be captured by casual observations. If the argument is applied to EAL learners, then some of these may

also be less successful at school because of their home language socialisation. However, this may not be a simple cause-effect relation of determinism, since, for example, many parents of EAL pupils are themselves being progressively socialised into new practices of daily life in Britain. Many pupils will be operating across two cultural systems simultaneously, and it is argued in the current work that this may be a factor affecting their reading comprehension and concept understanding.

Although Bernstein (1975) held that it should be the school's role to intervene to address equal opportunities in education, Street and Street (1995) argue that school literacy, as practised in Western society, has taken priority and has marginalised home and community literacies. They point out that the meanings and uses of literacy are an intrinsic part of community values and practices, yet this is often overlooked, and literacy is primarily associated with schooling and pedagogy. They argue "this perpetuates particular cultural ideologies, because Western pedagogy is a social process to reproduce a particular kind of citizen, a particular kind of identity and a particular concept of nation" (p.87). Street and Street advocate that research in this field should encompass literacy in the community, rather than focusing on the school in isolation. However, another strand to this argument exists. Scribner and Cole (1981) undertook an ethnographic study into the different ways in which literacy can be acquired within and outside of the school, working with the Vai people of West Africa over a four-year period. They concluded that the cognitive changes and improved reasoning skills which are normally attributed to literacy per se are actually a result of the *process* of schooling as practised in Western societies. The learning of the community languages and religious texts did not have these benefits since the traditional Vai literacy skills were learnt in contexts which were different from Western-style schooling.

As noted previously, many of the EAL pupils in this study attended out-of-school classes. Whilst accepting the predominance of mainstream schooling, these extra-curricular literacy activities need to be understood as part of the child's cultural identity and language socialisation. They may also provide a potential source of support for developing the child's achievement in school. There are also disadvantages. Most of the classes have formal, rote-type teaching and learning (Scribner and Cole, 1981; Gregory and Williams, 2000). The teachers interviewed for this study expressed concerns about young children being tired after a full day at school followed by evening sessions. They had also found that some pupils were confused by learning to read in two different scripts, such as Arabic

in addition to English. They did not, however, know a great deal about the community classes or the language learning involved, or how much this was an integral part of some of their EAL pupils lives. However, as Street and Street (1995) advocate, research into home language socialisation should complement that of school-based research to give a broader picture of the child's literacy competence overall. There have been some such studies in the UK that can be introduced here.

Gregory and Williams (2000) undertook a study of literacy practices in London, incorporating a wide spectrum of cultures. The authors address certain 'myths' about the teaching and learning of reading, which, they believe, exist in urban multicultural areas. The first myth equates economic poverty with poor literacy skills. The authors maintain that there is rich culture of out-of-school literacy activities which remain "invisible to both school and society" (p. xvi). They develop their argument by providing ethnographic studies of home literacy practices across different cultures that exist within the Spitalfields area of London.

The second myth Gregory and Williams (*ibid*) attempt to dispel is that a particular type of parenting is necessary for early achievement in reading. They note that home-school literacy practices are widely held to be a key factor in a child's success or failure in school and refer to considerable research in the field. Research by the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (1993) suggested that the parent's level of education was the firmest predictor of the child's success in reading. Wells' (1985) influential large-scale study reported a correlation between home literacy practices, with a key focus on dyadic child/adult story reading, and early proficiency in reading at school. This was followed by Snow and Ninio's (1986) work in which they concluded that home story reading was essential to provide children with the requisite skills to successfully interact in school reading activities. The Bullock Report of 1975 emphasised the value of sharing books, and this theme was repeated in the Cox Report of 1988. More recently, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority Report (SCAA) (1996) recommended that parents should create learning opportunities at home through shared reading.

Gregory and Williams (2000) argue that these conditions do not apply universally, and some children acquire literacy and become proficient readers through alternative literacy practices. To support this argument they examine "unofficial literacies" (*ibid*. p. 159) practised by different cultures. Of key interest here is the study of the home literacy

practices of the Bangladeshi-British pupils, as it relates most closely to the cultural background of some of the EAL pupils who were participants in the present research. However, the subtitle Gregory and Williams use, 'Formal Learning in Informal Contexts' (ibid. p. 167), must be queried. How informal some of these contexts are is debatable, because the children are both in a formal learning situation and a formal rather than informal context when they attend, for example, Qur'anic, or mosque school. Gregory and Williams also refer to *organised* classes, which again belies an informal context.

The researchers note that the British-Bangladeshi children interact within two very different cultures (p. 169). Their acquisition of literacy can be seen in the context of learning four or more languages. Their home language is Sylheti, which is a spoken, not written, branch of Bengali, and they are expected to become literate in standard Bengali as part of their cultural language socialisation. These children are Muslims, so they must learn to read the Qur'an, which means attendance at the Qur'anic school, or mosque school, to learn to read Arabic. In addition, they have to become literate in English for their statutory schooling, and to participate in the wider society. Many will later learn a modern foreign language, such as French or German. Gregory and Williams (2000) estimate that Spitalfield's Bangladeshi-British children spend an average of thirteen hours per week in literacy activities related to their home and culture outside of the time they spend at school. This literacy socialisation uses traditional teaching methodology and is far removed from the story-reading approach advocated by Wells (ibid) and others. It is language socialisation in a formal context to enable the young to participate in their heritage culture and religion, and to support the continuation of group identity. As the above paragraph shows, this identity is multiple across languages and group memberships, Sylheti for the immediate family or community, Bengali for literacy and broader cultural heritage, Arabic for religion, and English for school and non-Bengali contexts in Britain. Many other British Asian groups have parallel multiple identities across languages and groups memberships which, like the Bengali groups, may also be realised in different literacy practices. Such practices may well, of course, treat vocabulary quite differently; the ways of learning the Arabic lexis of the Qur'an in a mosque are not necessarily those of learning English lexis in reading in the school classroom.

The book-sharing which does take place at home is also different from that of the accepted adult/child dyad discussed previously. For many of the Bangladeshi-British children studied by Gregory and Williams, book-sharing takes place with siblings rather than with

other adults, because the adults may be literate only in Bengali. The researchers noted that the strategies used by older siblings teaching the younger ones were a combination of those used in their mainstream English school, and those used in their Bengali and Arabic lessons. Gregory and Williams have termed this 'syncretic literacy (p.176) and note that it combines "the repetitions and fast-flowing pace characteristic of the Qur'anic reading grafted on to strategies such as anchoring, 'chunking' of expressions and predicting, adopted from lessons in the English school (ibid.). The older siblings also used scaffolding techniques as a support for the young readers.

Gregory and Williams (2000) provide valuable information on the multiple literacy socialisation activities of Bangladeshi-British children. There are, however, some issues to be addressed. The researchers state that these young children are supported in their reading by the older siblings "who are already fully proficient in English" (ibid p. 176). This is a blanket statement that does not acknowledge that some of these older siblings may have a surface proficiency in English that hides their actual lower level of understanding (Cummins, 1984). Such siblings may include some who receive support as EAL pupils. Moreover, the current research investigates similar issues, as it has a focus on vocabulary comprehension and associated concept development. If the results show there is, in fact, a comprehension gap between the L1 pupils and the EAL pupils, then it can be argued that this is also likely to be the case in the pupils studied in Gregory and William's work. Another issue that they do not address is that of fossilisation. Some of the young siblings involved are likely to get a less correct model of English from their older brother and sisters, which may result in fossilisation. Gregory and Williams do not mention this, though it is a recognised aspect of second language acquisition. Furthermore, although this book carries important messages for teachers, and it is the teachers who are responsible for EAL pupils' learning in the classroom, the work is not especially written for practitioners. The teachers interviewed as part of the present study indicated they wanted to know more about their pupils' cultural backgrounds. Their needs would be met by the works of Edwards, (1995, 1996, 1998), which are specifically written for practitioners.

Edwards (1998) makes the valid point that EAL children "need to learn English as rapidly and efficiently as possible," (p. 2) and explores the potential of linguistic diversity as a tool for learning. This is relevant to the present study which investigates EAL pupils' reading comprehension as it shows practical ways to capitalise on pupils' first language in the English classroom. Further, Edwards' work provides information for the teachers

interviewed during the research who expressed a need to know more about their pupils' cultural backgrounds. Edwards' work gives both an insight into minority ethnic social practices and beliefs, and ways in which teachers can incorporate home language socialisation into school practice. Much of this is based on school-based initiatives which were undertaken by teachers supported by Edwards and colleagues. This is valuable as it addresses real classroom contexts, to which teachers can relate, and also puts theory into practice.

Affective issues are also addressed in this work. It is widely acknowledged that self-esteem and a positive sense of identity will promote successful learning. Research undertaken by Beykont (1994), Campos and Keatinge (1998), Ramirez (1992) and Lucas and Katz (1994) cited by Edwards (p. 4) shows that there is a correlation between how far pupils' language and culture is integrated into the curriculum and how well these pupils achieve at school. This indicates that pupils perform better when they believe that their heritage background is valued. Edwards points out that "by encouraging the use of community languages, teachers are sending powerful message about the value which they attach to other languages to all the children in the class; they are also enhancing the status of bilingual children" (p. 5). Edwards is therefore arguing that as well as employing linguistic diversity as a tool for learning it is also significant in promoting a positive sense of identity, which, in turn, can enhance a child's achievement.

Edwards (ibid.) also addresses issues relating to reading and culture as they exist in day-to-day practices in multilingual classrooms. This is based on evidence provided by practitioners' school-based research. The works reviewed earlier in this chapter, Scheffelin and Ochs (1986), Heath (1983), Gregory and Williams (2000) show that language socialisation is a practice that is variable among different cultural groups. As Edwards points out, in some groups literacy is closely aligned with religion and holy texts are treated with great respect. In others, reading is a communal activity, where the text is read aloud and its meaning is mediated by group interaction. Individual silent reading is viewed as an anti-social practice. The multilingual classroom may therefore consist of children who have undergone very different language socialisation experiences. However, as a result of classroom-based research, Edwards maintains that children adapt quite easily to new situations, and it is the parents who find most difficulty in reconciling home and school literacy practices. For example, it was discovered that some parents were baffled because their children's reading books had no clear moral or religious message. She advocates that

teachers should be aware that there are many approaches to the teaching of reading, and that it can be useful to use a variety of approaches with all children. This will extend pupils' experiences of learning in different contexts and for different purposes. Teachers also need to inform parents about the methods that are employed in the teaching of reading, and why these methods are considered beneficial. As a result of such dialogue, the parents "will not necessarily agree that the school's way is better than their own, but they are likely to feel much happier when they understand the reasons" (ibid. p. 54).

As stated earlier, Edwards' work is particularly relevant to this study because it provides teachers with the knowledge about the cultural background of their EAL pupils that they want, and also provides resource material for use in multilingual classes. Moreover, it is largely based on school-based research. A disadvantage is that this research was small-scale, and confined to a particular location, but overall it is very useful for teachers. Another relevant work, which has resulted from a two-year study of multicultural children in early years education, is that of Woods et al (1999). Their recommendations are close to those put forward by Edwards. They advocate that educators should develop a knowledge and understanding of children's languages and cultures as a tool for planning relevant activities in their formal schooling. They also argue, in line with Edwards' proposals, that an awareness of EAL pupils' linguistic and cultural identities, together with a positive attitude towards these identities, is necessary for these pupils' 'prior language' (Woods and Jeffery, 1996, *ibid.*) to be activated.

This chapter has reviewed literature that gives evidence of cultural variations in language socialisation. Studies in language socialisation are informative about the variable ways in which different societies construct the social processes for the education of their young children. It has been shown that these are often far removed from the accepted practice in Western societies. Most of the EAL pupils involved in this study came from collectivist societies that have a strong group identity based in the heritage culture. It is argued that their early socialisation is likely to engender a particular cultural perspective, which may affect their negotiation of meaning in the classroom, particularly in the case of this study in negotiating word meanings in texts which will be "culture laden" from a different society.

Schools in the UK have increasing minority ethnic populations who have a rich diversity of home literacy practices which are different from those used in the process of formal education in the UK. British academics such as Edwards, (1998) Gregory, (1996) Gregory

and Williams, (2000) and Woods et.al. (1999) argue that these cultural literacy practices provide a largely untapped resource for supporting pupils' learning in school. As yet, this has not been widely disseminated to schools and to teachers, but it provides a potential for future practice. There are, however, some cautions. Edwards (ibid) warns 'tokenism' (p.24). She also points out that new initiatives in schools need to be undertaken with the support of the headteacher and senior management to be successful.

This study does, however, query the value of some the formal rote teaching which takes place in many of these extra-curricula classes. Scribner and Cole (1981) found that it was the *process* of Western education, rather than just the acquisition of literacy which led to wider cognitive development. Although this study agrees that home literacy practices can be used as a tool to support children's learning in school, it argues that they should not be accepted uncritically. However, the teachers participating in this study expressed a desire to know more about their pupils' cultural backgrounds, and it is likely that this is true of the teaching profession in general. The studies reviewed in this section provide required the kind of information and show ways in which the children's home literacy practices can be a resource for schools to build on.

This chapter concludes the main body of the literature review. It is followed by Chapter 6, which presents the methodology and research design of this study.

CHAPTER SIX: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

6.1. Outline of the study

This chapter gives details of the methodology and research design of this study. The origins of the research were discussed in Chapter 1. This section opens with a review of some principles of action research which are believed to be particularly relevant to the present study. This is followed by details of the research design from the pilot stage to the main study, the compilation and analysis of the data, a comparison with pupils' SATS scores, and the dissemination of the results. A discussion about the successes and difficulties of each stage of the research is included in the relevant section, and the chapter concludes with a more detailed analysis of the limitations of the research.

6.2. Action research methodology

After the study had begun, the researcher became aware of action research methodology. It was realised that one reason for undertaking the project, namely a desire to investigate and improve the researcher's own practice, to assist colleagues and to impinge on school practice, could be considered an example of action research. This is discussed below.

Action research has been conducted in many fields, such as commerce, health and industry, in addition to education. There are also differing schools of action research. However, as this study is education-based, it is best related to the work done by proponents of action research in this particular field.

Two key figures in education action research were Rapoport and Stenhouse. Rapoport's seminal (1970) paper, *Three Dilemmas in an action research*, (in Rudduck and Hopkins, 1985) was based on the premise that action research should address both the 'practical concerns' of those in a particular situation which was problematic, and also the aims of social science through collaboration in a framework acceptable to both parties.

Stenhouse was impressed by these ideas, but in the nature of the whole ideology, he wanted to take Rapoport's definition and "push it a little further and apply it to education" (ibid p. 56). He emphasised that action research "is necessarily a substantive act," which "has to be undertaken with an obligation to benefit others than the research community" (ibid p. 57).

In the present case, this would imply that the research should benefit primary teachers and EAL pupils.

Stenhouse's support for action research as a methodology for improving educational practice inspired other British academics, including Rudduck and Hopkins (1985), Hopkins (1993), Elliott (1991, 1993), Burgess (1995) and Somekh (1995). However, it is a globally applied methodology, and an appropriate definition in a language-learning context comes from an American.

"An important difference between action research and other research done by teachers is that in the latter instance teachers might well be doing research on issues and questions which are those considered most important by the established community of scholars in the relevant field, i.e. theory-driven research. However, in action research, it is accepted that research questions should emerge from a teacher's own immediate concerns and problems" (Crookes, 1993, p. 130).

It was from the researcher's own "immediate concerns and problems" in a similar context that this study originated. This set in motion the first stage of the action research cycle. Before detailing these stages of the present study, there are issues about the concept of 'self' in action research that need to be addressed, not least because in the present study the researcher is also a teacher of the children under study, i.e. the writer has more than one relevant 'self' in the research context.

There is considerable current interest in Schon's (1983) definition of the 'reflective practitioner.' Reflective teaching has been defined as a process through which the capacity to act on professional judgements is developed and maintained (Pollard and Tann, 1993, p. 4). Action research demands reflection on one's own practice. Indeed, a necessary prerequisite to engaging in research is what has been termed 'situational understanding' (Elliott, 1993).

Elliott has identified three strands of reflective practice, namely, 'personal', 'problematic', and 'critical'. The 'personal' element is the individual as an integral part of his or her own research. The 'problematic' refers to the interactive role of the self within the parameters of this research. The 'critical' strand is what the self brings to the investigation in terms of examining 'taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions' (1993, p. 69).

Certainly, within the present study, there were dilemmas in undertaking the role of teacher-researcher. A key issue was subjectivity versus objectivity. As a teacher participant within the research situation, it would be difficult to be totally detached and objective about the children and their learning contexts. Against this difficulty can be countered a number of arguments. The researcher's role as a language support teacher, working in a number of schools, gave an opportunity for a wider perspective beyond that of most class teachers working within a single class or school. This allowed the study to be more objective than if it had been contained within one educational setting, and also gave it a wider scope. Nevertheless, some subjectivity may remain, and this is discussed further at the end of the chapter.

It can, however, be argued that all research is subjective to some degree. This is particularly true of human research. A further point is the growing perception of many academics and researchers that research is best undertaken in natural or normal classroom contexts, rather than artificial, laboratory-type ones (Cole, 1998; Wood, 1998). If the researcher is also a player in the research field, in this case a teacher, then it can be posited that the results obtained will be more true than those that might be obtained by an outside researcher, in terms of being realistic and related to normal practice. Further, the present researcher, as teacher, is completely familiar with the normal teaching-learning contexts experienced by the target pupils.

There were considerable benefits from being part of the educational field under review. A key factor was insight. This gave the researcher a knowledge of what needed to be researched. It also gave the study feasibility, since the researcher had full access to the research sites and to participants in their normal classroom contexts. A further advantage was familiarity with the context. This facilitated the smooth operation of the research process within the schools involved. The research was incorporated within existing routines, and was not perceived as disruptive or threatening by either the teachers or the pupils. Any role-tension was minimised from both sides. The researcher was in an extension role in a familiar context. Most of the teachers and the pupils were equally familiar with the researcher being part of the normal school staff. Data gathering would be perceived by participants as part of the normal teaching-learning process. It can be argued, therefore, that this gave the results more face validity than those obtained from outside agencies. For example, hearing children read and probing their understanding of the text

vocabulary, as a key part of the present research, would not be seen as an unusual event by children since the researcher, as teacher, would routinely engage in these activities with the same children as part of normal teaching.

Access was also facilitated by the researcher being known by the schools, and being engaged in collaborative practice with many of the teachers. All the headteachers involved gave full support, both to the research process and to the subsequent workshops disseminating the results. Teachers perceived the research as being useful and beneficial to them and to their pupils, and co-operated fully. This is in contrast to the experiences of other researchers, from universities or outside agencies, who are currently finding access to schools difficult since participating in research by outsiders is often seen as an imposition or extra burden, with a perceived dubious benefit to actual participants. This has no reflection on the validity of their research, but rather reflects the current curriculum, often described as 'crowded'. The statutory requirements for daily literacy and numeracy teaching, plus other core and foundation subjects, means that schools in general are now more reluctant to participate in research projects put forward by outside bodies. It was therefore quite crucial to this study that access was unproblematic. However, if the pupils' vocabulary tests were being undertaken currently (2000-2001), it might prove more difficult because of teachers' reluctance to release pupils from their numeracy and literacy lessons.

Although the issue of objectivity versus subjectivity has previously been discussed, the further idea of self in terms of 'taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions' (Elliott, *op cit.*) needs to be addressed. The critical-emancipatory model of action research, derived from the 'critical theory' of the Frankfurt school of philosophy, draws heavily on Habermas' (1972) categories of 'practical' and 'emancipatory' knowledge (see Carr and Kemmis, 1983).

A central concept of this model is that engaging in critical analysis and rational debate is emancipatory. The individual becomes freed, to a greater or lesser extent, from the confinements of the established power structure. Carr and Kemmis (1983) argue that the individual needs to be emancipated from restrictive ideologies before being able to engage in true or pure research. Another important facet of emancipatory-critical research is its collaborative nature. Carr and Kemmis further argue that the cultural influences and value systems of the individual are so intrinsic that they can never be totally displaced. True critical enquiry can only take place collaboratively within a group, where individuals can

support one another in becoming critical. The collaborative research team is an effective means of empowering the self and bringing about radical change.

This study was clearly not a collaborative project. However, in key areas where impartiality was of paramount importance, as in scoring the pupils' vocabulary test, three appropriately-qualified raters were asked to moderate the scores calculated by the researcher, i.e. to work collaboratively with the researcher to ensure some measure of critical enquiry was in place and reduce the possible subjectivity of calculating scores only by a teacher-researcher.

It can also be argued that much research is inherently individual. This is particularly true of Ph.D. studies in education or social sciences. To accept that only collaborative research engenders true critical enquiry would invalidate many of these. Hence, for some research, a realistic ideal is to strive for a high degree of critical enquiry with little or no collaboration.

Other proponents of action research disagree with the critical-emancipatory school. Somekh (1995) sees this definition of action research as being "too narrow and the recommended procedures for carrying it out too prescriptive" (p. 349). She comments that this perspective has led many to see action research primarily as a means of personal empowerment. John Elliott (1993) maintains that practitioners do not need to be freed from any constraints of the power structures of their research setting because they are already a part of that system. Using the works of Foucault and Giroux as a theoretical basis, Elliott argues that power is not always restrictive; it can also be empowering. "Power expressed as domination is countered by power expressed as resistance" (1991, pp. 112-113). Whilst Elliott agrees that 'routinised behaviour and unquestioned assumptions' can be prohibitive in curtailing initiative and limiting change, he argues that, through reflective practice the individual can engage in 'strategic action for improvement and reform' (ibid).

These ideas can be applied to the present study. By being part of the power-system, namely the educational establishment, the researcher was able to gain virtually unlimited access to the participants of the study i.e. project managers, teachers and, principally, pupils. This was also true in disseminating the results. The schools involved went to considerable lengths to accommodate such dissemination, i.e. Vocabulary Workshops, in ways such as rearranging inset timetables. Therefore, being part of the system did facilitate 'strategic action for improvement and reform' (op cit).

Another key issue that needs to be discussed in a teacher-researcher study is that of time. Stenhouse has described this limitation well in the British context:

"The most serious impediment to the development of teachers as researchers and indeed as artists in teaching, is quite simply shortage of time. In this country teachers teach too much."

(Cited in Rudduck and Hopkins, 1985, p. 16)

Arguably, and this would be widely supported by current teachers themselves, the demands on time for British teachers are now considerably heavier than when Stenhouse made this statement. Some academics hold the view that teachers cannot engage in successful research because the demands of school practice prohibit this (Rudduck, in Rudduck and Hopkins, 1985). It can be argued that this position negates the essence of action research, because it should be undertaken by actual practitioners investigating their own field of work. Many definitions of action research promote this as integral to the whole concept, including those of Stenhouse (1975), Nunan (1990), McKernan (1991) and Crookes (1993).

However, the observation that combining the role of teacher and researcher is difficult, because of the time factor, is a valid one. In the case of the present study, the LEA sanctioned a 0.2 secondment, equivalent to one working day per week. This allowed release from normal teaching duties to undertake the research. Without this time, the present study could not have been completed. Time was required for a literature review, for undertaking interviews, and for conducting the pupils' vocabulary tests, plus many other related tasks. Although the study was still carried out part time, it did mean that the researcher was in touch with the grassroots of the study, namely teachers and pupils interacting in classrooms throughout the duration of this work. As well as allowing access, this ensured that the research continued to be related to what was actually happening in schools.

As noted previously, there are various schools of action research, and this methodology has also evolved into practitioner-based enquiry (Murray and Lawrence, 2000). There are also a number of models of action research, such as those constructed by Lewin (1947), Elliot (1981), Ebbutt (1983, in Hopkins, 1985), McKernan (1988) and the Deakin University

model (1982, in McKernan 1996), though all have similar principles, which can be related to the current research.

First, an issue is identified, being in the instance of this study the researcher's perceptions about possible comprehension gaps in EAL pupils' reading comprehension, and teachers' unawareness of these. This is followed by fact-finding and analysis, which took the form here of a Vocabulary Test for pupils to investigate their understanding of key lexemes in texts, interviews with teachers and a Teachers' Vocabulary Questionnaire. It also involved investigating best-practice ideas by interviewing senior personnel in the Language Support Service.

The results were written in the form of this present thesis that gave the results and the conclusions. These were transferred into action, and proposed action. This took the form of disseminating the results and conclusions to teachers and other school staff, e.g. classroom assistants, nursery nurses, through a series of Vocabulary Workshops, with the aim of raising awareness and changing practice. The researcher's present role as part of a central advisory team for EAL achievement involves advising schools and providing INSET across the authority, which means the knowledge gained from this study can be disseminated more widely. This action is ongoing. Moreover, feedback from teachers and future SATs results will be used to set new targets for improvement.

Other action will be to document and present the research findings in a form useful to schools, Language Support Services, and other professional bodies. They may also be disseminated through publication in education journals and other relevant journals.

In addition, the action taken enhanced the researcher in both personal and professional areas. This gives further links with action research, but there are some differences to be noted. First, as discussed earlier, this research was not a collaborative project. It was undertaken by a single researcher and therefore lacked the element of critical group enquiry that some schools of action research hold to be integral to the methodology. Second, it contained considerable quantitative data that was statistically analysed. This is largely a feature of "research, development and dissemination" methods (McKernan, 1996) rather than action research. It is argued that, overall, this study therefore had some key characteristics of action research, while it may not be a prototypical example of such research. This is illustrated in the following section, which presents the research design.

6.3. Research Design

Figure 6.1 shows the four main phases of this study. Further details are discussed below.

Phase 1			
External Research			
Interviews			
	LEA OFFICER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECTION XI N=1	HEAD OF MULTI-CULTURAL SERVICE N=1	PROJECT MANAGERS N=8
Phase 2			
School-based Research			
	TEACHERS' INTERVIEWS N=30		PUPILS' VOCABULARY TESTS N=100
Phase 3			
		TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRES N=70	
Phase 4			
Action and Dissemination			
	INSET FOR TEACHERS N=7		PROPOSED PUBLICATIONS N=

Figure 6.1. Outline of research design

The key research questions of this study were defined in the introduction. The research design illustrated in Figure 6.1. shows the four main phases of the study, which were designed to elicit answers to these research questions.

Phase 1 consisted of External Research. This was research conducted outside the schools, though still within an educational context. This took the form of a series of interviews with the senior management personnel responsible for the Language Support Service for EAL pupils in local schools, then known as Section 11, now EMTAG. Phase 1 was designed to investigate the support available to pupils and teachers from the Service.

Phase 2 was the School-based Research. This formed the core of this study. It was divided into two parts. The first of these, interviews with mainstream teachers, was designed to investigate aspects of teachers' experiences with, and perceptions about, their EAL pupils. These interviews also sought to establish teachers' knowledge about their EAL pupils' cultural background, in particular home literacy practices and language socialisation customs.

The second part of Phase 2 was the Vocabulary Test which was undertaken with one hundred Year 2 pupils, divided into two groups: 50 EAL pupils and 50 L1 pupils. These pupils were matched into pairs, based on their reading ability, by their class teachers. The test was designed to answer the key research question of this study: namely, did EAL pupils' level of reading comprehension match their surface reading proficiency? The question of teachers' possible lack of awareness of their EAL pupils actual level of reading comprehension would also be answered by these tests. This was further amplified by comparisons with these same pupils' results in the national Standard Attainment Tasks for reading at Key Stage 1, as an independent (but normal in the context) measure of reading.

The final phase of this research, Phase 4, consists of the dissemination of the results. This is on-going, and has so far taken the form of a series of Vocabulary Workshops. Some of these have already taken place, and more are scheduled for the future. The teachers who participate in these Workshops are being asked to feedback on any subsequent changes in their practice, and also asked if these Workshops have raised their level of awareness about reading comprehension in *all* pupils. They have also been requested to report any instances where they have noticed misunderstanding by pupils. This feedback will be used for review and to plan new action. It is also proposed that the research findings will be documented and presented to schools in a useful form.

This research was qualitatively driven in the sense of seeking participants' interpretations of relevant meanings. There were, however, substantial quantitative elements involved

through the inclusion of statistical treatment of the vocabulary tests and a questionnaire for teachers. The study was designed as a qualitative project because its central focus was based on examining the quality of lexical understanding of EAL pupils in city schools. This can be related to definitions of qualitative data.

Qualitative data are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts. With qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events lead to which consequences and derive fruitful explanations.

(Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 1)

Though research has traditionally been divided into either the qualitative or quantitative dimension, there is a growing perception that making use of both of these methods of data collection can be positive and complementary (see Day, 1994, in Miles and Huberman, 1994; Cohen and Manion, 1989). Both were included in this study, as mentioned previously. The study was based on four phases. Phases 2 and 3 involved quantitative elements. Phase 1, which was based on qualitative data, is presented in the following section.

6.4. Phase 1: External Interviews

Phase 1 consisted of ten semi-structured interviews with senior professionals responsible for EAL in the city of Leicester. One was with the LEA officer with responsibility for what was then Section 11, the second was with the Head of Multicultural Service, and a further eight interviews were undertaken with managers responsible for the work of language support teachers, bilingual assistants and home-school liaison personnel in schools.

The nature of face-to-face interviews as a research method is addressed in standard works on educational research by Cohen and Manion (1985), and Powney and Watts (1987). Both subscribe to the same definition of what an interview is, ascribed to Canner and Kahn. This states that an interview is:

initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic descriptions, prediction or explanations.

(Cited in Powney and Watts, 1987, p. 6).

The semi-structured interviews used in this study were defined as such because they consisted of prepared topics and questions, which were nevertheless flexible. They could be described as 'conversations with a purpose.' The interviews were interactive, with two speech participants, i.e. the interviewer and the interviewee, contributing to a jointly constructed conversation in a context familiar to both. The interviews were framed around EAL pupils in schools, thus the setting and the subjects were familiar to both parties, but the interviewer was constant, whereas the interviewee changed from interview to interview.

The question of interviewer bias emerges in all research, and particularly when the interviewer is also the researcher (Powney and Watts, 1987 p. 37). It is argued here that this was less likely to occur in the interviews with the Project Managers, because of their management role and professional status. The interviewer was aware that it might be a factor in interviews with teacher colleagues, and this awareness guided the interview process in Phase II.

The following sections outline the conditions and contexts of the interviews. The Phase 1 interviews were undertaken to delineate the local context for the research within the framework of the revised Section 11 service (as it was then). The rationale for this was that the Section 11 Service was responsible for providing support for EAL pupils in Leicestershire schools. These interviews were sequenced in hierarchical order according to the seniority of those interviewed. This was to allow an overview of the aims of the support service from the responsible officer, and to align this with the policy and practice in schools advocated by the project managers. The interviews with project managers would also allow the researcher to elicit a perspective from highly experienced, responsible teachers with expertise of working with EAL pupils and co-ordinating other teachers for EAL support. The schedule is illustrated in the following diagram:

PHASE 1 INTERVIEWS

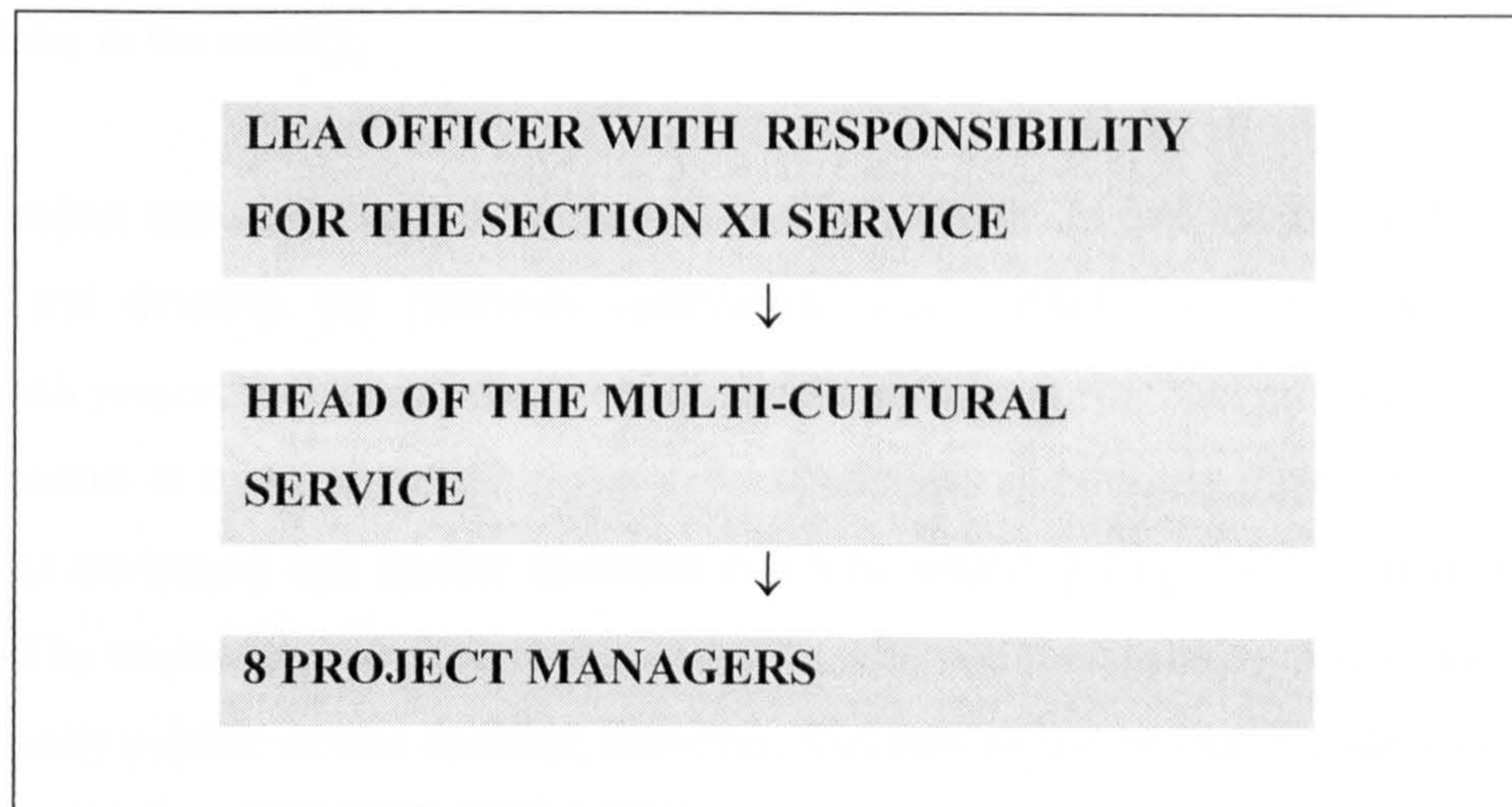


Figure 6.2. The Sequence of Phase I interviews with senior staff responsible for EAL

These individual interviews were lengthy and detailed. They took place at the beginning of the research, and were conducted in the order shown above. They were tape-recorded and transcribed later. The questions asked appear in Appendix 2.

The first interview took place with the LEA officer responsible for the Section 11 Service. This officer had been responsible for submitting a needs analysis for the county to the Home Office, in a bid for funding. He was, therefore, able to provide a review of the past history of Section 11 funding and set the mission statement for the revised implementation of the service. Transcripts of speeches containing key information and data were also provided.

The second interview took place with the then Head of the Leicestershire Multicultural Service. This was an extremely long and informative session. It also gave a different, more politically slanted view of services for the ethnic minority population of Leicestershire. This included a chronological account of local schooling for these community pupils. A wealth of information was also given about relevant sources, and related research. The interviewee's own research publications were also made available.

Following this, interviews with the eight project managers were undertaken. Seven of the project managers gave full co-operation. These interviews were of an average length of two hours. This included introductory explanations, and post-interview discussion. These

seven project managers gave full and comprehensive answers to the questions asked. They spoke about their aspirations for the Service and about policy and practice in the EAL support teaching in the county.

Four of the project managers were subsequently re-interviewed. In two instances, this was to continue and develop the previous interviews. The further two interviews were undertaken with project managers who were from an ethnic minority background, and had first-hand accounts to relate about their personal experiences as minority pupils in English schools. It was envisaged that further accounts could be added, giving this research study another strand by reviewing the experiences of adults who had themselves come to the UK as ethnic minority pupils. It was decided, however, that this would be better undertaken as a separate research project. The number and extent of these interviews is indicative, however, of the full support and endorsement given by the project managers.

Though seven of the project managers were fully co-operative and supportive, the eighth expressed some reservations. This particular manager agreed to an interview, and though the questions were answered, these answers were kept to a minimum without the wider discussion which had taken place in the previous interviews. The interviewee stated that he/she really didn't see the point of the whole process, and there was a perceptible hostility towards the whole interview. This may have been due to a less successful approach on the part of the interviewer than in the previous interviews, or, as this project manager said, "I'm afraid you've caught me at a bad time. It's the end of term. Another time might be better."

However, overall, the first phase of the research project was successful. Nine of the ten interviewees were fully co-operative and supportive, and endorsed the aims of the study. There are two possible reasons for this. First, Leicestershire had put a successful bid to the Home Office for Section 11 funding. This had been awarded for five years, instead of the usual three years. The revised service had been set up within a professional framework with high aspirations for supporting EAL pupils in schools. There was what has been described as a "mood of optimism" (Garnett, Charnwood speech). This prevailing ethos was beneficial to the first phase interviews being conducted successfully. It must be noted, however, that the cut in funding that was announced by the Government in 1993 changed this. This was evident in the second set of interviews with two of the project managers. Although they continued to give full support to the study, they were much less optimistic about the future of Section 11. (Such cuts and the precarious financial situation for EAL

provision, exemplified in temporary or short-term contracts for most staff involved, have continued until the present time).

Another critical factor in the success of the Phase One interviews was that of time, as interviews were arranged during the working day. This allowed reasonable access and was mutually convenient for the interviewer and the interviewees.

6.5. Phase 2: Teacher interviews and Pupils' Vocabulary Tests

Phase 2 of the research was particularly rewarding as it involved working with teachers and pupils in the context of schools. This was the core of the study, to investigate the reality of classroom practice involving EAL pupils, L1 pupils and mainstream staff in the actual teaching and learning situation. However, it proved to be problematic in terms of time management, and relied considerably on teachers' co-operation and goodwill.

Teacher interviews

Thirty teachers were interviewed in five primary schools in Leicestershire. There was some debate as to whether to increase the number of interviews. However, it was decided that this would be sufficient for an overview, providing a cross-section of views and opinions to collate and relate to the rest of the data collected. The researcher had worked in four of these schools, but not in the fifth. The inclusion of this fifth school was to allow some degree of objectivity. It should also be mentioned that the researcher was not part of the staff at any of the schools, but rather worked in them for a proportion of the school week as a member of a support service. This was beneficial, as it allowed for familiarity without the total subjectivity of immediate collegiality of staff membership. The questions asked appear in Appendix 1.

A key issue, as mentioned previously, was that of time management. The interviews had to be arranged within the school day. As teachers, particularly in the primary phase, have a full teaching commitment, interviews had to be undertaken during the lunch break, after school, or in the small amount of non-contact time available. All of the teachers who were approached agreed to be interviewed, though some were quite nervous about the process. All gave up their free time to do this, implying that they supported the project.

6.6.1. Pilot interviews

Five pilot interviews were undertaken with teachers. These were valuable in setting up a more successful procedure for the subsequent interviews. Two key areas in need of revision emerged. First, the pattern of questioning in these pilot interviews was too direct and too academic. The teachers found this off-putting, and difficult to relate to their classroom practice. Second, the appropriate use of a tape recorder had to be negotiated.

As a result of the first issue, a more general discussion about the research project was introduced as a preamble. The teachers were informed that their perceptions about how EAL pupils coped in the classroom were needed to provide necessary data. They were in the best position to give this, since they had day- to- day responsibility for these pupils, and would be able to provide a true picture of classroom activities. It was emphasised that there were no right or wrong answers. What was important was the teachers' experiences and observations about their EAL pupils. This preamble was designed to elicit the teachers' co-operation on the basis that they could then see the point of the study.

The direct single question was abandoned, and replaced by a wider form. For example, instead of being asked, "How far do you think children's cultural background influences their learning in the classroom?" a more general approach was used as an introduction. A typical example might be, "You have been teaching for a number of years, and have a great deal of experience with ethnic minority pupils. Using your background and your experience, could you say how far you think children's cultural background influences their learning in the classroom? This approach sought to establish 'common ground' (Clark, 1992; 1996) before putting questions.

This approach was much more successful in that the interviewees seemed more at ease and talked more readily, and it was adopted for the main interviews. It was also realised that the original list of questions overlapped. Some areas under discussion were too similar, and this proved confusing for the interviewees because the differences were too subtle. It was therefore decided to cut the number of questions from eight to six. This would also save teachers' time.

Another issue that emerged was that the teachers felt uncomfortable with the obvious presence of a tape recorder. This led to some nervousness in the pilot interviews. It was essential, of course, to record the interviews because of the amount of data involved. It

was also obligatory, ethically, to inform the teachers that the interview was being recorded. This problem was reduced by using a small hand-held cassette recorder, or by using the standard classroom tape recorder that the teachers were familiar with. Assurances about anonymity and confidentiality were provided; the use of the recordings would be confined to the research purposes only

6.6.2. Main Teachers' Interviews

In contrast with the Phase One interviews, which were formally arranged by appointment, the teacher interviews were conducted on an opportunity basis. All of the teachers who were approached agreed to an interview, and these took place within schools during lunch breaks, non-contact time or after school. There was generally a short time span between the interview being requested and being undertaken. Often it was on the same day as the request, or very shortly afterwards. The interviews averaged one hour (including an unrecorded pre-interview information briefing to set the context) and to ensure, as far as possible, an informal and relaxed atmosphere, and to allow for some post-interview discussion.

About half of the teachers interviewed were initially uncomfortable because their conversation was being recorded. This was despite assurances of confidentiality, and the steps that had been taken to make the recording device less obvious. One of the teachers openly said, "I don't feel comfortable with that thing on".

However, apart from the one example cited, the recording element was forgotten as the interviews proceeded. The teachers gave thoughtful answers to the questions posed. They related their own experiences and perceptions, and, in many cases, their own wider philosophy. They gave specific examples of their observations, which were particularly useful. There were also other unpredicted issues which arose, to be discussed later.

In a few of the interviews, prompts were needed. However, most of the teachers had much to say on the questions raised, and the interviews could have been extended if time had allowed. There were also occasions where the discussion had to be steered back to the particular focus of the initial question. It was also quite tempting for the interviewer to become involved in extended dialogue with a fellow practitioner, and this had to be avoided. This was both to avoid any influence on the interviewee, and because of the time factor.

Overall, the interviews were successful. They provided the data required for the research, and they also gave the teachers an opportunity to discuss their experiences and perceptions. It can be argued that the teachers responded positively because they were engaged in discussion relating to their professional practice with a fellow practitioner. This highlights one of the key advantages of action research, namely that it is conducted within a natural research setting, in this case, in the school with a familiar colleague or visiting teachers.

6.7. Pupils' Vocabulary Tests

The Pupils' Vocabulary Tests formed the core of this study. These were initiated by a desire to find a way of measuring the vocabulary comprehension of EAL pupils against that of their L1 peers judged by their teachers to be reading at the same level in terms of text decoding. The task was to find a suitable research design. It was essential that this was original, but existing literacy tests were reviewed to see if any could provide a model.

Standardised reading tests were examined in the search for a suitable model. A survey by the Department for Education (SCCA, 1996) showed the most commonly used reading tests in primary schools. This is reproduced below.

Name of test (rank order)	Type of test (group/individual)	% of schools using test
1. Salford Reading Test	Individual	35%
2. The Young Reading Test	Group	19%
3. NFER-Nelson Reading Test	Group	15%
4. The Neale Analysis of Reading	Individual	15%
5. The Suffolk Reading Scale	Group	10%

Table 6.1. The five most commonly used standardised reading tests in English primary schools (SCCA 1996)

The first of these, the Salford Sentence Reading Test, (Bookbinder, 1976, in SCCA 1996) consists of sentences of increasing length and difficulty in three parallel forms A, B and C. It has been compared to the well-known Schonell Graded Word Reading test, and there is some debate about whether it can be used as a measurement of reading attainment, or should be more accurately described as a word recognition test (ibid. p. 12). From the

viewpoint of this study it contains some culture-specific sentences, i.e. 'Porridge, scrambled egg, toast and marmalade are served for breakfast'. This particular test, therefore, did not provide a useful model for assessing EAL pupils for whom culture-specific lexis would be a likely handicap.

The group-reading tests, namely The Young Reading Test (Young, 1989, op cit.), the NFER-Nelson Reading Test (Macmillan Test Unit, 1985, op cit.) and The Suffolk Reading Scale (Hagley 1987, op cit.) are all based on a multiple-choice format. A group test was not a suitable one, as it would not allow for a focus on the individual pupil, nor would it allow for an analysis of what the individual pupil actually believed the word meant. In addition, the multiple-choice format has the possibility of a correct answer being chosen by chance rather than through knowledge, or by recognition rather than through production of an answer (criticisms of the multiple-choice format appear later in this section). Finally, although all three of the tests measured some degree of reading comprehension, this was not of the depth required for this study.

The remaining commonly used test, The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (Neale, 1988, op cit.), is an individual reading test which assesses reading progress and identifies differentials between sight reading and reading comprehension. It has, however, been judged as being more reliable in the assessment of older pupils than the target Year 2 pupils involved in this study. As a result, it was discounted as a model.

Overall, the reading tests most commonly used in primary schools were not ideal models. They lacked the requisite context, since items would not appear in contexts which would be those encountered by children in their normal classroom reading, as most were target words in single sentence contexts. This does not relate well to more normal classroom reading from books. The next step was to review specific tests for EAL learners.

Vocabulary tests constructed for EAL learners did not prove not suitable for the purpose of the research. An example is the Eurocentre Vocabulary Size Test (Meara and Jones, 1990a). This is a vocabulary breadth test, and it is principally directed towards adult learners, not children. Undoubtedly, pupils would enjoy this as it is a computer-based test, and it has the advantages of being quick and easy to administer and score. However, it would not allow for the comparative (EAL and L1) element of the research, as it is based on vocabulary acquisition for second language learners.

A major international test designed for university-level assessment of English proficiency, such as The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) was too complex to provide a model for using with children. This whole test has been largely constructed on multiple-choice items. As many researchers point out, many possible routes to a correct or incorrect answer can exist within a multiple-choice format (Anderson and Freebody, 1981; McKeown and Curtis, 1987). These did not offer a satisfactory model for the purposes of the current study with young children.

The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (Paribakht and Wesche, 1997) measures depth, i.e. comprehension of words. This, however, had not been published when the present vocabulary tests began. If it had been available, it would have produced the most useful model from those that were reviewed. It consists of five self-report categories, as illustrated below, but only categories IV and V would have been useful for the type of test required (in fact, these latter categories were similar to the researcher's own questions).

Self-report categories	
I	I don't remember having seen this word before.
II	I have seen this word before, but I don't know what it means.
III	I have seen this word before, and I think it means _____ (synonym or translation)
IV	I know this word. It means _____ (synonym or translation)
V	I can use this word in a sentence: _____ (Write a sentence.) <i>(If you do this section, please also do Section IV.)</i>

Figure 6.3. The VKS elicitation scale (Paribakht and Wesche, 1997: 180 cited in Read, 2000)

It has been criticised, though, because complex vocabulary knowledge is difficult to reduce to a single numerical scale (Read, 2000). The system used in the current study allowed for a wide range of correct criteria for the target words, which were only scaled later after freely elicited responses.

A further key issue in the search for an appropriate model was relevance. It was critical to the research that the vocabulary was related to the curriculum, and to words that pupils actually encountered in schools, otherwise the validity of any results and their application to assisting the development of language skills of EAL pupils across the curriculum would be threatened. Also, any unusual or artificial test would sit less comfortably with the action research paradigm in which the normal context, as a baseline, is paramount. Any overseas materials, such as tests used in North America or Australia, were, therefore also rejected because they were not directly related to the British educational context.

The British Picture Vocabulary Scale (Dunn 1997) is used by both the Leicester City and the Leicestershire Psychology Services, and was considered. However, this is picture-based, not text-based, and could be too firmly set in an artificial testing situation. As Cortazzi (personal statement) points out, some of the items are biased towards white-middle class children.

The vocabulary had to be actual words that children would encounter in schools, preferably in normally occurring in authentic classroom texts. Using the criteria that contextualisation, authenticity and normality are crucial, Singleton (1999) has raised some criticism of Meara for using words in the Birbeck Vocabulary Project word-association tests (Meara 1984, *op cit.*) that are inappropriate. (The critique is used here to illustrate the importance of testing vocabulary children would encounter and use in schools.)

"one can note that, although Meara (1984: 231) presents his results as being founded on the use of 'very common' L2 items as stimuli, some of the examples he gives of the stimulus words used do not actually chime particularly well with this claim - comprising as they do quite rare items such as *caque* (herring barrel), *émail* (enamel), *toupie* (spinning tops) etc. In view of the rarity of such words, it seems likely that subject's responses to them reflect less an L2 mental lexicon structure which is qualitatively different from that of their L1 lexicon than a simple state of ignorance which provokes a desperate casting about for lexical straws to clutch at" (pp. 131-2)

The review of the existing available tests for vocabulary did not therefore provide a way forward. Meanwhile, a growing list of words that seemed problematic to EAL pupils was being compiled by the researcher from reading books which target pupils used in the course

of their normal learning in local schools. These children were apparently reading the texts quite accurately (i.e. in terms of decoding and reading aloud), but when questioned, either did not know what the word meant, or gave a wrong or inappropriate definition.

As none of the existing vocabulary tests could provide a model, it became evident that the way forward was to use the actual books that the children were reading in schools as a basis for constructing a test. This provided several advantages.

First, the test materials would be authentic, comprising of real reading books of a type familiar to all the pupils and immediately recognised by them as being of a normal reading material category. All the selected texts were those commonly found in most primary schools nationally and were certainly available in the schools involved in this study. Some were taken from reading schemes, and others were popular stories, or non-fiction books

By using standard classroom texts, the vocabulary tests would be accepted by pupils as part of the usual familiar learning routine, namely, reading to a teacher on a one-to-one basis. This gave the added advantage of being an activity which pupils enjoy. In addition, the tests could be incorporated into the normal classroom routine with minimal deviation from everyday teaching and learning processes. Pupils were also gaining extra reading practice by reading from classroom books with an experienced teacher.

Another advantage of using real books was that teachers would also be familiar with them. They would recognise the books as being commonplace in reading material found in British primary schools. When the results emerged, teachers would be able to relate to them more quickly and easily than to unfamiliar material, and correlate them to their own practice which, of course, included the use of these same books. This would be an important element within an action research paradigm. Results from the texts would have the further face validity that teachers could draw upon them in the knowledge that the same books would very likely continue to be used for several years to come.

While it has just been argued that the strength of using these normal, readily available classroom materials lay in their familiarity and authenticity in the pupils' (and teachers') learning environment, this could also be interpreted as a negative feature. That is, it could be argued that target pupils might be familiar with the books and hence rely on memories of use of the materials during the vocabulary tests. In practice, the researcher judged that

this possible contaminating factor did *not* play a role. No children tested seemed to be so familiar with the books that they remembered the words; none mentioned any previous reading of the materials. This does not, of course, rule this out entirely, but it does make it seem highly unlikely as a contamination. In any case, as a safeguard, a range of books was used.

A selection of 23 books was made. 20 of these had one target word, and 3 had two or more target words. Initially, twenty-seven words were selected with the idea that two could be discarded after the pilot test, leaving a number of 25 that would facilitate any calculations deriving from them. In the event, it was found that all the words had value in producing appropriate data, and so all twenty-seven were retained, despite this not being so convenient in terms of statistical analysis.

The initial planning of the research design was to test matched pairs of pupils, one from the EAL group and one from the L1 group, to read the books individually. Each pupil would then be asked to define what each target word meant within the context of the text in which it appeared. Such a question is, of course, commonplace when pupils read to teachers and is almost a daily experience.

It was decided that Year 2 pupils should be selected. Most of these pupils would be able to read the books with little or no support. These pupils would also be in the final year of Key Stage 1. In addition, it would be their SATs year, when they would be undertaking the national standardised reading comprehension tests. The proposed number of pupils was 100, of whom 50 would be EAL pupils. Their designation as EAL would be based on the pupil lists for Section 11, which defines them as those pupils who do not speak English as a first language and who need additional support to develop their English to give them full access to the normal school curriculum. The EAL group would then be defined by normal current assessments of EAL needs, as then operated by the LEA and accepted by classroom teachers. This could be considered a definition by working practice, and it is the practice of the researcher to work with children classed as EAL by this definition. Using it accords with the action research paradigm as part of a baseline of current working practice. This definition is not without difficulty; it is not wholly comprehensive, but it seems both normal and realistic for this study. Also it was formulated by authoritative agencies (DfEE and LEA) outside the scope of this study and it consists of standard criteria. These pupils would be matched with 50 L1 pupils, namely monolingual English-speaking children.

Again, the definition of 'monolingual' was that used in the working practices of the schools, according to the knowledge of the classroom teachers. Any pupils who were thought to be bilingual, i.e. who normally used one or more languages other than English, were not included. Thus, doubtful cases of possible bilingual children were discarded from the L1 category for matched pairs. It is possible, although rather unlikely, that the L1 category of pupils may have included some children who were familiar with other language. However, the key point here is that the L1 group were classified as such according to the normal working practices of their teachers and that, using categories from the same working practices, they were contrasted with the EAL group.

Class teachers were therefore asked to provide the necessary lists of matched EAL and LI pairs who, in their opinion, had the same level of reading ability. This matching was undertaken by the pupils' current teachers, (rather than by the researcher), on the basis of the teachers' professional assessment practices, general experience, and knowledge from daily work with the children. Significantly, this would include, of course, the teachers' use of reading records and standard reading scores or reading ages, as part of their normal practices. It was quite crucial that it was the teachers who undertook this task. They would have detailed knowledge of all the pupils in their classes, whereas the researcher would know some pupils only. It would also confirm that the teachers believed both pupils in the matched pairs were reading and understanding books at the same level. This matching was carefully carried out as an important feature of the research design.

The choice of schools in which to undertake the pupils' vocabulary tests was opportunist. The researcher was attached to three schools, and this ensured the co-operation of the headteachers and staff in agreeing to the research. A fourth school, in which the researcher did not work, was also included. The headteacher was a former colleague. This again facilitated access and support. Overall, gaining access to four schools in which to undertake the research was unproblematic because of personal and professional links.

6.7.1. The pilot study

The next stage was to set up a pilot study to be observed by the research supervisor. In preparation for this, a small number of trial tests were undertaken. A draft pro-forma was constructed, and the required texts were borrowed from schools with the permission of the headteachers. These pre-pilot tests indicated the need to find a reasonably quiet place in which to conduct them, which would be free from interruption, particularly from the other

children, who wanted to be the next to read. In the school chosen for the pilot test, this was a 'ladybird' room. This is a withdrawal room from the main teaching base, but situated within the whole teaching area. This kept the site of the pilot tests within the classroom area, but in a quieter spot, which lessened the likelihood of interruptions.

The pre-pilot tests also indicated the time needed to conduct each test. This varied from pupil to pupil, depending upon reading ability, but an average was 45 minutes per child. This did not include preparing the test setting, i.e. collecting equipment, arranging furniture, and, most significantly, collecting the children. It was important to ascertain the average time that would be required in order to negotiate this time for each target pupil with their teacher.

The children were told that they were going to be reading a selection of books, and then they would be asked about the meanings of some of the words in these books. Because they all knew the researcher as a teacher in the school, they all readily accepted this. Most pupils also enjoy one-to-one interaction with a teacher. These preparatory sessions were therefore useful in framing the logistics of the tests by ensuring good preparation and a suitable place in which to conduct them.

The next stage was to undertake the pilot test. This was conducted under the observation of the research supervisor. It involved tests with four pupils, two from the EAL group, and two from the L1 group. It took place during the normal school day, and followed the procedure outlined above. The research supervisor approved the general procedure of the tests. The children's positive response to what they perceived as an extended reading activity in a familiar situation was commented on. Three amendments, however, were suggested.

First, it was recommended that a standard question should be used when asking the children to define the target words. An example of this is that instead of asking the children complex questions such as "What is a *nap*? When might you have a *nap*?" an invariant formula of, "What does *nap* mean?" should be used. This would avoid the possible danger of providing semantic or contextual clues within the questions if each question were to contain a contextual variation, e.g. "*When* might you *have* a *nap*?" indicates a clue about time. Second, it was suggested that some of the pages with strong picture cues should have the picture covered. This would mean that the children could not

make guesses based on these very obvious cues. This would, perhaps, limit the context and authenticity to that of text only, so this was only suggested for cases where the illustration provided many obvious clues to target word meanings. For other words the accompanying picture would be retained, i.e. the book would be the normal unchanged text. The third recommendation was that an improved pro-forma to use for the testing should be constructed.

The issue of possible contamination also arose, in that pupils might feed back details of the reading test to their peers who had not yet been tested. However, three arguments can be countered against this. First, the children believed the test to be a normal reading activity, and were therefore unlikely to talk about it to others, unless such discussion is a feature of normal reading, which is not observed to be the case in these schools. Second, there was no immediate feedback by the teacher-researcher of 'answers', which meant there was no restricted information to share. Any sharing would be a sharing of what pupils already knew. Third, the fairly large number of words involved (27) meant that the participants were unlikely to remember many of them and therefore any contamination would be obstructed by memory limitations. Such contamination by oral relaying of test information outside the test context therefore seems extremely unlikely or very limited indeed. There were no indications through pupils or teachers that any such contamination had taken place.

6.7.2. Implementing the Vocabulary Tests

Following the pilot test, the recommendations emerging from this were put into place. A revised pro-forma was constructed. Pictures in five selected texts illustrating five target lexemes were covered to obtain a clearer result of the children's' understanding of the target words. A standardised method of questioning was adopted.

Schools were taken in order, so that all the tests were completed in one school before beginning them in another. The three schools in which the researcher worked were completed first, and then the fourth school followed in the final sets of tests in each school. Class teachers in the schools had provided lists of matched pairs of EAL and L1 pupils, who, in their opinion, were reading at the same level, for the researcher to use.

6.7.3. Procedure of the testing

All of the twenty-three books used in the pilot test were retained for the actual tests, that is, the actual books, rather than copied extracts, were used for the texts. Five of these were

story books, and eighteen were reading scheme books. Importantly, then, the children were handling and reading normal books throughout the test.

All of the reading scheme books were read aloud by the children, with support where this was needed. Not all of the pupils had the same level of reading ability for, although EAL and L1 pupils were tested in matched pairs, there was a spread of reading abilities across the range of the pairs. Most of them could read the texts independently, but some children needed prompts. In some cases, the more difficult texts from the reading schemes were read to the less able readers. This seems justifiable because the test focused on lexical knowledge, not on pupils' ability to read aloud, and this kind of teacher assistance for 'difficult' parts of texts is not uncommon. It was ensured that if a text was read to a particular pupil, then it also was read to his or her partner, to ensure the test was fair within pairs. As long as both pupils in a pair had exactly the same input, this would not affect the results, being based, as they were, on matched pupils' reading comprehension of target vocabulary, and not their reading ability spread across the whole group.

Extracts from four of the story books were read to the children, after it was ensured that they had heard the complete story in a whole class situation with either their class teacher or the researcher. This was to cut down on time, as these books were much longer than the reading scheme texts. The fifth book was a short and simple reader, so the children were asked to read it aloud by themselves.

The test was conducted in a standard format by the researcher asking each child to define the target word at the same point in each test. The responses were written down on the proforma as the child was speaking. As pupils are familiar with teachers writing comments in their reading records when they read, they accepted this quite happily. None of the children's replies was too long or too complex to record in this way. A number of the tests were also tape recorded to provide verification of consistency of the procedure. A copy of the proforma appears in Appendix 3.

The Pupils' Vocabulary Tests were productive in terms of producing the required data. They were relatively straightforward to administer for an experienced teacher. Access was facilitated by the researcher being part of the school system. However, there were difficulties. The greatest of these was the time factor. The tests had to be undertaken on the one day per week allowed for the study (i.e. when the researcher was not engaged in her

normal teaching). The maximum number of tests possible per school day was six. It was not always possible to fit in even this small number on each day when the tests were administered. This was owing to both other tasks involved in the research, and to constraints in the school timetable. This included curriculum requirements, school assemblies and other such events. As mentioned previously, some teachers would not release pupils from their literacy session, but only during other sessions, so the researcher had to wait until pupils were available. This was an issue toward the end of the period of testing. Had it occurred earlier, the period of the vocabulary tests would have increased further. The fourth and final school participating in the tests preferred these to be administered in the afternoons only, so that pupils would not miss their literacy and maths lessons which took place in the mornings. School holidays were another consideration. These also lengthened the period of the testing. Overall, the length of time the vocabulary tests took was considerable. They were, however, a key focus of the research, and so this use of time was valuable.

6.7.4. Scoring the tests

When all the tests were completed, a system for scoring was put into place. The first step was to construct a standardised set of criteria for each target word. The reason for a search for criteria for each word was because inspection of the actual word meanings (as given in dictionaries) and the children's own explanations, showed that it would not be advisable to adopt a uniform scoring system for all the target words. Some words had more meanings, or more complex meanings, than others, even when the context of occurrence was taken into account. In connection with this point, it is worth noting that the standard vocabulary and reading texts (referred to earlier) adopt uniform scoring procedures irrespective of the complexity of understanding items. The set of scoring criteria was compiled using a list of dictionary definitions for each key lexeme. Six dictionaries were used, as listed below. Four were standard dictionaries of a kind found in school libraries or staff rooms, and two were children's dictionaries. Two were devised for learners of English as a foreign or second language and would therefore be used by EAL learners and their teachers.

1. Chambers English Dictionary (Chambers, 1988). A standard household dictionary also used in schools.
2. Longmans Dictionary of Contemporary English (Longmans, 1988). A dictionary compiled for learners of English.
3. Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary (Collins, 1987). A dictionary for

learners of English based on a large corpus of current English.

4. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary (2 vols. OUP, 1977). A well-established reference work.
5. The Oxford Children's Dictionary in Colour (OUP, 1976). Used in the target schools.
6. An Illustrated Dictionary (Schofield and Sims, 1983). For children, also used in the target schools.

The key criteria were taken from the definitions given in each of the above. These were checked by the research supervisor. When the list of definitions had been verified, the scoring took place. Since the definitions varied according to the key criteria mentioned in the dictionaries used, the potential maximum score was calculated from the fullest possible definitions for each word. This score would, of course, vary from word to word, since their definitions have varying degrees of complexity. While this renders calculations of scores more complex, it seems more valid than assigning an arbitrary maximum score to *all* words, irrespective of their complexity. The same scoring procedure, once it was established, was, of course, consistently used for each pupil with particular target words.

There was some concern on the part of the researcher about objectivity. The study was based on the premise that L1 pupils' vocabulary comprehension was better than that of their EAL partners. This might result in some subjectivity. Various methods of making each pupil's test anonymous were considered. The research supervisor, however, thought this would be both unmanageable and unnecessary. When scoring the tests, the focus was not on whether the pupil was L1 or EAL, but on the content of the responses, word by word. This excluded other considerations. In addition, a standardisation exercise with three test raters was undertaken to verify the scores obtained by the researcher

There were some issues that arose within the context of the scoring. One was that the observed scores were low in comparison to the maximum possible scores. This was because of the number of appropriate criteria for each target word, which showed comprehension, was wide. Whilst the pupils might be able to give some of these definitions they would be unlikely to give them all, since primary children's understanding of any particular word cannot necessarily be expected to reach the ceiling of adult comprehension of that word. A simple example of this is the target word *nap*. This had three criteria, 1) *sleep* 2) *short* 3) *daytime*. Few pupils gave a full definition, such as "It's a

short sleep during the day." However, many pupils were able to give one or two of the criteria, and so gained marks whenever they were mentioned, but not the maximum possible. This marking system was necessary to allow all the possible criteria to be awarded scores, but meant the observed scores appeared low. The three most difficult words for both groups of pupils, namely *bluebottle*, *upset* and *emeralds*, all had, in fact, low maximum scores. While such low scores seemed disappointing, they reflect normal processes of semantic development for children: some words are only partially understood or explainable by children at any stage of lexical learning. They do not affect the central purpose of the test, which is to ascertain the EAL pupils' understanding in relation to that of their L1 matched peers.

Initially, one mark per criterion was allowed. However, some anomalies arose. A particular case was *eyebrows*, where pupils often pointed to their eyebrows, without giving any of the criteria verbally. Instead they would say "Here", or just use the pointing gesture. This was discussed with the advisory tutor for statistical analysis and data. It was recommended that two marks per criterion should be given. This would allow for one mark to be allowed in examples such as eyebrows, where the pupil knew what they were, but did not verbalise this. This recommendation was taken up, and the original scoring system was altered accordingly. This also proved to be useful with the pupils' use of synonyms. An example is where a pupil described a stream as *wobbly*. This related to 'a *natural flow of water*,' 'winding', 'meandering.' It is unlikely that any seven year old pupil would be able to give these definitions, as such, with the possible exception of *winding*, so *wobbly* was accepted to be given one mark as synonymous with these descriptors within a child's lexicon. Such marks were, of course, assigned consistently for particular words across all pupils' tests.

This leads to another issue. The children's answers were often very full, varied and descriptive. As an English specialist, it went against the grain for the researcher not to be able to award marks for the descriptive or more expressive use of language. However, the purpose of the testing was to verify children's vocabulary comprehension, with the attendant links with concept development, so the criteria had to be adhered to strictly, that is points were awarded on the basis of whether children mentioned essential elements of definitions and not for the use of more elaborate or vivid descriptions as examples. In this sense, the scoring assessed the competence of understanding, not the productive use to express such understanding.

The initial results were the raw scores. The raw scores were next converted to facility indices. This gave the fraction of the total possible scores for both groups by dividing the pupils' actual raw scores by the total possible raw scores. These were then arranged to form two rank order lists of difficulty, first for the EAL pupils and second for the L1 pupils.

Following this, the chi-square test was used on the raw scores to calculate whether there was a significant difference between the groups on each of the target words. The chi-square test was chosen in preference to the t-test because of the wide range of the scores. For using t-tests on parametric statistics distribution should be continuous and normal. The chi-square test was chosen as the data was not continuous and was unlikely to fit a normal distribution curve (Siegal, 1956: 'Goodness of fit test', p. 43).

The next procedure was the ratification of the results. This was undertaken by three further raters who used the same set of criteria to assess the pupils' recorded performances for each word. The raters were highly experienced teachers familiar with EAL and primary school contexts. It proved to be extremely time-consuming, because each rater had to examine 2,700 definitions. This meant the procedure had to be carried out over a number of sessions with each rater.

Following the ratification process, some amendments were made. Additional criteria were allowed for two of the words, *beard* and *saw*. In the case of *beard*, *grow* was allowed as a criterion. This had not been included in the initial set of definitions but was considered an essential aspect of the meaning. *Saw* was revised to allow *see* as part of the same lexeme, which had not been given marks initially. The scoring for *Jack-in-the-box* was simplified.

The other amendments were more minor, and involved discussion about appropriate synonyms. This allowed agreement on the acceptable range of synonyms for target words. This range could not have been anticipated in advance. Following this, the tests were re-scored to take account of amendments and to maintain consistency. The raw scores were again converted to facility indices. Two rank order correlation lists were compiled, one for each group. The chi-square test was used on the raw scores to measure any statistically significant difference.

When the statistics were completed, the lexemes were ordered into groups. Group 1 consisted of lexical units significant at the 1% level. Group 2 were those significant at the

5% level. Group 3 contained lexemes for which the EAL pupils had a higher raw score, and Group 4 consisted of those items for which both groups had similar scores. An analysis of key features of pupils' answers for each lexeme was then undertaken. These were extracted personally and manually. Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising (NUD*IST) software was considered, but it was judged that qualitative analysis of the data provided by young children could be better undertaken by hand by the researcher herself, who had had many years experience of working with pupils of this age and so would be able to interpret their answers accurately, adequately, and consistently.

The next step was to compare the results of the Vocabulary Test with the results of the same pupils' Standard Attainment Tasks (SATs) for the Reading Task and for Reading Comprehension. The use of SATs was an obvious choice, as they are national statutory standardised tests taken at the end of each Key Stage by all pupils as a current normal part of schooling. Moreover, they would not be administered by the researcher though the researcher's role in the participating schools gave access to these SATs results without undue complications. It was accepted that these results would be treated ethically. The SATs scores were also compared with the teachers' allocations of EAL/L1 matched reading pairs. This would show how well the teachers' allocations matched the pupils' SATs results, and how closely these matched the results of the Vocabulary Test. This would be quite critical in determining answers to the key research questions of this study.

6.8. Teachers' Vocabulary Questionnaires

The teachers' questionnaires were distributed after the Pupils' Vocabulary Tests had been completed and scored. The objective was to see how closely the teachers' perceptions about vocabulary comprehension correlated with the results of the pupils' tests. This complied with the qualifications that a valid questionnaire should be constructed from theory and previous research (Johnson, 1992). The teachers' questionnaire was a follow-up to the results of the vocabulary tests. (See Appendix 4 for a copy of the Teachers' Questionnaire).

A thirteen-item questionnaire was constructed, using target words from the vocabulary tests, and the sentence within which these words occurred. The questionnaire asked teachers to rate selected items from the pupils' tests for their difficulty for word knowledge. Six of the seven statistically significant words (according to the results previously analysed and reported in Chapter 7) were included. Two sheets were produced, one asking teachers to score for how well they estimated L1 pupils would understand each word, and the

second asking for a similar perception about EAL pupils. The Likert scale was used on a 1 to 5 measurement, ranging from Very easy, Quite easy, Average, Quite difficult through to Very difficult.

It has been recommended that questionnaires should be subject to the following series of tests and revisions: 1) criticism from experienced peers; 2) revision and testing on friends, relatives, co-workers; 3) revision and testing on approximately 50 people resembling the eventual respondents in the survey; 4) revision and testing again; 5) revision (Sudman and Bradburn, 1982). Within this particular test, the items were reproduced from texts, so the question formulation was already in place. It was, therefore only felt necessary to undertake steps 1 and 2, and obtain pilot test results from one school before distributing the complete questionnaire to other schools.

The method used for distributing the questionnaires was indirect and involved an agent. This agent was the Section 11 teacher in the schools involved. The use of an agent gave a key person, through the use of professional links, to take responsibility for giving out and collecting the questionnaires. These were sent to eight schools, and returns were sent from seven of these. One agent did not return any questionnaires. Overall, this strategy proved successful, with a return of 70 properly completed questionnaires out of a maximum possible number of 100. The questionnaires were sent to the 30 teachers who were interviewed. The intention behind this was an envisaged comparison between interviewed and other teachers. However, since the questionnaires were anonymous it was not clear which, or how many, questionnaires from interviewed teachers were returned. This ruled out the above comparison. This difficulty of identifying a particular subset of questionnaires also applies to the teachers who taught the target pupils (L1 and EAL) to whom questionnaires were also sent.

The questionnaire data were analysed on the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 6 (SPSS 6). Ratings for EAL pupils and L1 pupils on each word were compared using the appropriate parametric statistic, the t-test. However, there was little correlation between the teachers' perceptions and the pupils' actual results. An explanation for this might be that the teachers would be likely to be thinking of the average pupil, whereas the vocabulary tests were completed by individual pupils across a wide ability range. To balance this, the order of the pupils' scores was calculated. The highest 20% and the lowest 20% were then removed. The normal procedure would be to use a quartile reduction, but

this was not possible because of the numbers involved, i.e. 50 in each group. This left a median band which would be more likely to correspond with the teachers' possible focus on the average pupil. A chi-square score was calculated from this median band and this was then compared to the teachers' results. This is discussed in the data analysis chapter.

This section completes the main body of the Methodology and Research Design chapter. The following section addresses some of the limitations of the research as a conclusion to the chapter.

6.9. Critical reflections on some limitations of the research

This section reflects on some of the limitations of the research in more detail. These centre round the Vocabulary Tests conducted with the pupils and the interviews with the mainstream teachers.

As previously noted, this study was a small-scale one and the sample size of children who took the Vocabulary Test was limited. The choice of items was not systematic in that the items did not necessarily represent levels of word knowledge, as they do in tests such as Nation's (2001). They do, however, reflect children's primary reading materials. Although they may seem arbitrary, much vocabulary in primary schools is like this, even in "controlled" reading schemes. Moreover, the items are systematically treated in the administration of the test, and in its statistical analysis. The teachers who attended the subsequent INSET accepted the legitimacy of the words and acknowledged the authenticity of their provenance. There was only one teacher who questioned the word *pail*, saying this was not a word in general use, but he recognised that if the word appeared in a classroom book then it already had a certain legitimacy through being in the classroom, and therefore he accepted it as a test item. There have been no other queries from teachers about test items to date, though these may well arise in future sessions.

The issue of contamination also needs to be addressed. The possible contamination of children telling one another about the test items has been judged earlier to be unlikely, as children rarely discuss one-to-one reading with the teacher with each other afterwards. The children also treated the test as a normal reading activity and did not react in any unexpected or atypical manner. Other possible contamination might be from the children's previous reading, or acquaintance with the reading materials since they are in the classroom. However, first, *all* tested children would have had this opportunity, not only one

group or particular individuals. Second, since children may encounter words of all sorts in classrooms or at home, this is normal exposure. Third, there was no evidence of any children saying that they had already learned the target words through reading a particular book. Contamination can therefore be ruled out as being unlikely, or as being an even possibility for all the tested items and for all the children, and therefore not likely to skew results.

Time was a difficulty in this study, as discussed in 6.7.3. The Vocabulary Test was time-consuming to administer and evaluate. Other forms of vocabulary tests might be quicker, but less useful in probing children's understanding of items through eliciting their explanations of the words. The issue about time links with the limited number of words used in the test discussed next.

The small number of words used was a real limitation of the research, but using a larger number of words would have extended the testing time for each session with each child. In view of the children's age, and taking into account that testing was done in normal class time, it would have been unreasonable to lengthen the test. The possibility of extending the range of tested words by having a second test with a further batch of words was excluded. Class teachers would have resisted this, as it would have detracted from normal class work. On the grounds of practicality and feasibility, therefore, the number of words was kept to 27 items only. This limitation means that the results are limited to those words, which limits the generalization of the results. However, the test can be seen as a valid exploratory study that reveals interesting and insightful information for teachers.

Other concerns relate to power, authority and ethical issues, and the needs and rights of the subjects versus those of the researcher. The "dual membership role" (Adler & Adler, 1987), in this instance of being a teacher and a researcher, gave unproblematic access to the subjects of the study. It also gave the researcher-as teacher power and authority over the children (Cosaro, 1981). They were obliged to take the test, and there were no challenges to this. Only one child, in fact, challenged the text (cf. Chapter 8). It has been noted that preadolescents are the first age group where children develop the power to control or contain research over them (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988). The children involved in this study were much younger and the researcher had role authority over them. There was, therefore, an element of "manipulation" (Adler & Adler, 1997) because the children were used for an instrumental purpose. This was more marked because the researcher could not give them

feedback because of possible contamination. The children did have extensive one-to-one reading practice with the researcher, but its value was reduced because of the lack of corrective feedback. Theoretically, this might have been done after the data had been collected and analysed, but the time span involved meant that the children had changed year groups, and any feedback would have been about an event of which they had little recollection. However, feedback was given to the teacher participants through workshops in schools and to some staff at INSET events arranged by the local authority. Such sessions, in Leicester and Derby, also included other teachers who showed interest in the research and confirmed verbally that they would be able to relate it to their own practice. Although the results of the study have been disseminated to teachers, and will hopefully influence their practice and benefit a wide range of pupils, it remains a limitation that a learning opportunity for the children involved was subsumed by the demands of this research.

Other issues that can be amplified further relate to the researcher's dual role as teacher/researcher amongst teachers and the implications this might have for the interviews conducted with fellow practitioners. Both the interviewer and the interviewees were likely to have "taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions" (Elliott, 1993, p. 69) in common, through all operating within the education system. This was an advantage in that the teacher interviewees would feel a certain resonance with the questions and the questioner, and would most likely feel comfortable about giving open and frank replies. However, this shared mental framework might also be seen as a disadvantage since both the interviewer and the interviewees, by virtue of shared culture, would be less likely to make suppositions fully explicit. The researcher as interviewer was aware of this yet, naturally enough, her prime mode of interview behaviour was that of a colleague rather than ethnographic stranger, and so her encouragement for teachers to be explicit was limited.

Secondly, whilst the shared professional background and experiences was expected to have led to a measure of honesty, the researcher recognized that there are situational constraints such that interviewees are inclined to say what the interviewer wishes to hear. This constraint can be expressed through gestures, expressions of interest and other leaked feedback from the interviewer, and is more likely to be activated in the later stages of an interview. Since the researcher was aware of constraining influences, she did try to limit their effect. However, in the human situation of teacher to teacher, her efforts to limit these effects were themselves limited.

At the time of the interviews, the researcher had no power or authority position, for example as a line manager over the interviewees. Her prime status in the eyes of the teachers was that of a colleague. However, the collegiality of the interview was limited by the fact the interviewee had to be informed that this was a research interview, and it is possible that something of that formality superseded collegiality. This may have been evidenced in those interviews where the teachers were particularly nervous about a tape recorder being used. This is a further possible constraint, but it seems unavoidable.

These reflections on the limitations of the research conclude the Methodology and Research Design chapter. The following chapter, Chapter 7, gives the analyses of interviews conducted with the former Section 11 Project Managers and with 30 mainstream teachers.

CHAPTER SEVEN: INTERVIEW ANALYSES: PROJECT MANAGERS AND MAINSTREAM TEACHERS

This chapter is divided into two main parts. Part 1 gives an analysis of the supplementary interviews undertaken with the Project Managers with responsibility for the then Section 11 provision to schools within the Leicestershire LEA. Part 2 is an analysis of interviews with mainstream teachers working in the same authority. Intersected between these are comments about the changes to Section 11 funding that affected the Service. This is included as the grant to support the minority ethnic pupils was considerably reduced, affecting the aspirations of the Project Managers, and, in effect, lessening the amount of support available to mainstream teachers.

A key objective of these interviews was to form a series of linkages between the aims of the Section 11 Service, teachers' levels of awareness of, and situational experiences with their EAL pupils, and the actual performance of these pupils. In this study, the pupils' performance was measured by a vocabulary test. This was then incorporated into a questionnaire for teachers, which gave further evidence of teachers' level of awareness. This information was then used to develop INSET provision for schools. Overall, there was a link between the interviews, the tests and the questionnaire, the analysis of the results and the dissemination of the findings to teachers.

When the revised Section 11 Service was set up in Leicestershire in 1992, eight Project Managers were appointed. These managers were key figures in implementing language support facilities in schools. They held responsibility for the deployment of staff to schools¹. They were also responsible for providing a weekly programme of INSET for staff, related to language development work in schools. This analysis gives an account of their ideas and strategies relating to policy and practice in the Section II provision.

The interviews were divided into four main areas of discussion. First, the Project Managers were asked about their background and relevant experience in second and additional language acquisition. Relevant qualifications and experiences would be a requisite for policy-making, for managing a team, and for impacting upon school practice. Second, they discussed how they perceived the role of their Section 11 staff in schools. This was an important area, as they had responsibility for directing this school practice, and for

monitoring and evaluating it. Moreover, they would need to ensure that their staff had appropriate training for their specific roles. The third category was about the type of approach they would advocate, '*task force or subversive?*' in raising awareness about the aims of the Service. As explained in 7.1.2, these two headings came from the interviewees, who held differing views. This was a critical area, as in many cases Section 11 staff had to set up new working practices in schools, such as partnership and collaborative teaching. They also had to raise awareness about language teaching in multi-ethnic and multilingual classrooms. The final section consists of the Project Managers' opinions on the future Section 11 Service. This explored their vision for the way forward for language support in schools.

Part II consists of an analysis of interviews with thirty mainstream teachers. There were six main areas of discussion. First, teachers were asked about their perceptions of how far the cultural backgrounds of EAL pupils influenced their learning in the classroom. Second, teachers were asked if they had observed any instances where cultural differences had been apparent. In the third category, teachers were asked to detail what would be most useful to them in supporting their EAL pupils. As teachers have 'situational understanding' (Elliot, 1993) and ultimate responsibility for their pupils, this was quite critical in conclusions about how teachers would wish the funding for language support to be used. Fourth, teachers were asked if they could recount instances of EAL pupils' concept development. Following this, in point five, teachers were asked if they had noted any particular problems second or additional language learners had in an English classroom. Question six, the final question, related to the National Curriculum and how well teachers believed it met the needs of their EAL pupils. The shifting nature of the National Curriculum made standardisation more difficult for this question, but a discussion of why it was included is made in 7.3.6.

7.0. Results of the interviews conducted with the Project Managers.

7.1. Background and relevant experience of the project managers.

The eight project managers interviewed were asked to give details of their background and their relevant experience in language teaching. This is detailed below:

Project Manager 1 was of white British heritage. This project manager had undertaken voluntary service overseas, (V.S.O.), teaching in Ghana. This was followed by a P.G.C.E.

¹ This was based on the county-wide Needs Analysis of 1991. This gave data about the number of ethnic

in Teaching English as a Second Language, then further teaching in Ghana. Project Manager 1 had been previously Teacher in Charge of the Language Centre in Nottingham for seventeen years before being appointed to the current post.

Project Manager 2 was of Asian heritage. Though English was his first language, he also spoke Punjabi and Hindi. He had begun his career as a teacher in EFL at a Middle-Eastern university. This was followed by 'broad experience' in teaching English as a Second language in the UK and overseas, before taking up the current post.

Project Manager 3 was of Ugandan Asian heritage. English was now her first language and she admitted to having let her Gujarati 'get quite rusty'. This manager was a 'recent entrant' to English as a Second Language teaching. She had begun her career as an English teacher in a multi-lingual school, then quite quickly obtained a post as Advisory Teacher for Multicultural Education followed by the appointment to Project Manager.

Project Manager 4 was of white British heritage. This project manager had taught overseas and also had considerable experience of teaching in British multilingual schools. He had also been part of a senior management team with responsibility for teaching English as a Second Language. This project manager had been a key figure in introducing partnership teaching and had been involved in the DFE Training Pack for this.

Project Manger 5 was of African-Caribbean heritage. This project manager spoke English and Creole, the former on formal occasions and the latter more informally. She had initially qualified as a primary teacher and had worked in mainstream schools before becoming an Advisory Teacher for Multicultural Education. This project manager had a strong interest in the education of African-Caribbean pupils and also in the causes of under-achievement in this group.

Project Manager 7 was of white British heritage. This project manager had over twenty years experience of teaching English as a second language in local schools. She had run English classes for Ugandan Asians when they arrived in the city in the early 1970s, and had also taught evening classes for Asian women. Project Manager 7 was Head of Department in a large multicultural school with responsibility for co-ordinating English as a second language provision, before becoming a Project Manager with Section 11.

Project Manager 8 was of white British heritage. This project manager had taught English as a Second Language in schools for several years and was very experienced in this field. She had held a post of Advisory Teacher for English as Second Language before taking up the post of project manager.

All of the project leaders had experience of specific language support work, apart from one of the Asian managers. Three had experience of teaching overseas. They all had held management and/or advisory teacher posts. They embodied between them some of the ethnic diversity that characterises the general pupil population of Leicester and is an obvious characteristic of many EAL pupils. All were highly articulate and well-informed about second language acquisition. The background experience skills and abilities of the individual project managers would be critical in forming a dynamic Section 11 Service for the county.

7.1.1. The role of Section 11 staff.

The project managers were asked to comment on how they envisaged the role of Section 11 staff. This engendered considerable discussion. From the many issues that arose, two key points emerged. One of the project managers encapsulated these two points as, *changing children*, and second, *changing schools*.

The first point, that of changing children, referred to Section 11 staff working with mainstream staff to develop EAL pupils' English language acquisition and to raise their achievement in schools. The second point, that of changing schools, was directed towards raising awareness about linguistic and cultural diversity in schools, and to assist schools in implementing policies to address these issues. Although it is likely that these key areas formed part of the management training, it also emerges from their comments that these were, to a large extent, previously held ideas.

The strategy of working collaboratively with mainstream teachers to support EAL pupils in schools was advocated in all the interviews. One manager said, *"I believe that an effective way of working is to work collaboratively with the teachers"*. Another project manager elaborated on *"collective partnership teaching, taking a block of work at a time, modelling ways of working, identifying the language tasks of the lesson"*. A further project manager stated, *"My focus at the moment is skilling people up, so that they have got some good*

methodologies and good approaches to teaching bilingual pupils, hopefully in partnership with mainstream staff". Another statement on this issue was, "If you can persuade one key individual within the school to start working together in partnership, constructing lessons and planning and evaluating together, that is success"¹.

The difficulties attached to Section 11 staff working in collaborative partnership with mainstream staff were acknowledged by the project managers. They recognised that Section 11 personnel needed to possess, or be trained in, skills to master this approach, and it required a shift in attitude by many mainstream teachers. A project manager who was addressing this issue, said, *"I have started by looking at expertise that staff need to work in the classroom"*. Another manager stated, *"Section 11 staff have an almost impossible job. Skills they need, negotiation, specialist language skills, a senior management role towards having teachers in on their methodology"*. A further project manager confirmed how the support teachers' role often involved compromise, *"I see them working alongside, in partnership, with teachers ideally, but I see them often having to compromise the ideal, and I think that as long as they're actually in classrooms and working with children that need the support, and as long as they are collaborating with the teacher in terms of knowing what input should be, and the output that's expected, we sometimes have to be satisfied with that compromise"*.

The project managers were aware that, for Section 11 support to be fully effective, it should involve whole school policy and practice. This would involve key areas of language policies, multicultural policies and equal opportunities policies. One project manager focused on the need for change in policies about bilingualism, first language teaching and oracy. He also added a home-school links policy. To effect this, Section 11 staff should be *"developing practice and disseminating across whole schools, so that they are not just locking expertise into a class, but making sure it gets throughout the whole school."* This was acknowledged to be a demanding role, but one that was seen as *"the responsibility of all Section 11 staff"*.

¹ 'Partnership' and 'collaborative' are often used as interchangeable terms in the local context, and are used to describe teaching situations where the mainstream teacher and the support teacher jointly plan and deliver lessons, and evaluate them together. More correctly, 'partnership' should refer to a longer term and full time team-teaching situation, whilst 'collaborative' would refer to part-time support situations. (Bourne and McPake, (1991) have defined categories of language support teaching as support, co-operative and partnership.)

A second project manager believed his staff should *play "a key role in influencing, persuading, mainstream colleagues. I do believe that Section 11 and supporting developing bilingual children should be seen in the long term within the context of a broader equal opportunities perspective."* Another commented that the role was not merely pupil-focused but also school-and staff-focused, *"helping the school to take on and prioritise language"*.

Another issue project managers addressed within the context of changing schools was that of changing attitudes about language deficiency. One manager explained this as making school staff aware that a child new to English was not a child who had *"no language"*, but rather is one who *"has a language, knows how language operates"*. The manager pointed out that such a child, in all probability, would be very able in his or her own language. What was necessary was to give the child *"ways into learning English, so that they can achieve, hopefully, on a par with their peers"*. *"So it's looking at, yes, the limitations of someone who has no English, but also looking at what that child is bringing to school already and ways that we can tap into that"*. This manager believed that many schools might *"panic"* when they first experienced a pupil new to English as they would not think they had the necessary resources to meet the pupil's needs. However, it was maintained that, *"all teachers are language teachers, and it's just a case of not panicking, stopping and thinking, 'What is it I'm already doing, and how can I make it accessible?'"* So it's really trying to get teachers to plug into what they already know, and to take on board strategies to extend what they've already learnt." This comment indicates a broad belief, shared with the other managers, not only in the general importance of language knowledge and skills across the curriculum for EAL pupils, but of the equal importance of the attitudes and knowledge about language held by the classroom teachers.

A further manager felt the *'key element'* was the question of change. This was related to *'prevailing ideologies'* in schools, *'the accepted norms and the accepted ideas and the accepted wisdom of what teaching and learning was about'*. Where such ideologies existed, the bilingual pupil might be seen as having no language, *"as a kind of deficit model"*. It was noted that this might also be the case for other pupils, an example being given of white working-class children. This project leader believed that a *"mismatch"* had always existed between the curriculum and the needs of the children attending. It was the arrival of bilingual pupils in schools that had brought the problem into the open. The manager explained, *"It's only with bilingual children that it become really obvious"*. He

believed that the need for language teaching in the curriculum was there “*for virtually all children, in some respects*”. School needed to address this issue. “*There's a need to turn things on its head, and say, well what can we do to actually make things better? How can we become more adaptable to meet the needs of whatever diverse children we have?*”

Whilst project managers were agreed on key areas of Section 11 support work, such as collaborative partnership teaching, and the need to raise whole school awareness of language issues, there was less consensus on the approach to be taken, as the next section shows.

7.1.2. Task force or subversive?

The title of this sub-section emerged from interviewees. The former head of Leicestershire's Multicultural Centre had declared that the newly formed Section II service should operate like a ‘*task force*’ in bringing about change to school policy and practice. A project manager had countered this by saying he felt a *subversive* approach would be better. Although this was later rescinded and replaced by *diplomatic*, it was felt to be a particularly apt opposition to the metaphor of a task force. The tension between these oppositions emerged as an important aspect of support teachers' roles in the managers' interviews.

The eight project managers interviewed were asked whether they would advocate a task force approach or a subversive approach to Section 11 work in schools. Of the eight, two opted outright for the task force approach. The remaining six decided that a subversive approach would be better, though they rephrased ‘*subversive*’ with other adjectives, including *diplomatic*, *subtle* and *sensitive*.

Of these six, two differentiated between county and city schools. As the data in Chapter 1 illustrates, the ethnic minority population of Leicestershire is concentrated in the city, and is more peripheral in the county. They believed the city schools should be more aware of linguistic and cultural diversity amongst pupils than the county schools. One of the project managers explained this:

"So I'm more in favour of the diplomatic, subtler approach, but I think there is a place for the finger-wagging approach in schools that are aware and know better, but are just not prepared to pull their finger out and do what they know should be done."

The second project manager, who also differentiated between city and county schools, made the point that *"the whole concept of Section 11 was new"* to the county, and *"it's not like the city where its been around and used for a long time."* It was believed that *"the whole issues has to be approached with a delicacy and a sensitivity which might appear to be an over-compromise, but which, in fact, will lead to more effective work than a bull in a china shop approach would do."*

The two managers who opted for a *task-force* used strong metaphors and direct language to emphasise the strength of their approach. These included the following statements. *"Be open about what we are doing - set our stall out and say what our aims are."* *"Specialist Section 11 teachers can show us the way forward - more task force."*

The more popular *subversive* approach was elaborated on by the project manager who had first coined the term. He perceived it as *"kind of subtly changing perception"*. It was believed that challenging belief and attitudes *"coming across as if you're riding on a white horse, challenging everything in sight"* would be counterproductive, and *"not likely to get anywhere"*. What was important was to start *"where the teachers are at"*. Interestingly, this project manger again returned to subversion, this time in its verb form. The approach he recommended was that of changing teachers' perceptions slowly, and *"subvert their thinking."* On the face of it, this notion of *subversion* does not seem consonant with senior positions in the education service. However, it is worth remarking that many notable figures in educational history might be seen as subversive (e.g. Socrates, Rousseau, A. S. Neil) and some books with 'subversive' titles have achieved fame (or notoriety) such as Paolo Freire's 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' and 'Teaching as a Subversive Activity' (Postman and Weingarten, 1971). The latter was required reading on some PGCE courses during the 1970s and 1980s. More generally all education in might be seen as needing to balance transmission and change: subversion is one approach to change.

Another project manager, who agreed with the subversive approach, used the verb *influence* to describe the way in which he wished his team to work, *"My colleagues are there to influence"*. He also stressed the strategy of persuasion in terms of getting mainstream staff, *"to look at their practices, to look at language across the curriculum, to look at language awareness issues"*. The manager felt *how* staff were influential was a critical factor. He elaborated on this. *"You can either go in there like a task force and ram things down people's throats, or you can have a more subtle, more sophisticated"*

approach." The manager had few doubts that the latter would be the more effective, with an emphasis on influencing and persuading.

A further manager's answer to the task-force or subversive question was, *"Much nearer subversive, but wouldn't use the word"*. This project manager instead used 'diplomatic' to convey how he wished his team to work. He focused on the strategy of partnership, and believed both mainstream and Section 11 staff had strengths to offer. *"... it's to do with accepting that mainstream teacher and headteachers and senior management bring a huge amount of expertise to their job, and it's to do with me as a Section II member of staff going in and saying, 'You know things I don't know. I have ideas and approaches I want to try out. And we get together and put our evaluation together, and see where we get together in order to develop this class, this school'."* This project manager believed that change would evolve slowly, not *"in a term or two terms"*, and that the approach should be integrative.

Thus overall, among these managers, there was a 75:25 ratio in favour of the subversive approach to Section 11 practice in schools. The final question dealt with in this section, concerning the future of Section 11, was much more ambivalent. This was complicated by some interviews taking place before funding to the service was cut in 1993, just one year after Leicestershire had been awarded a five- year grant, and some after this.

7.1.3. The Way Forward - the future of Section 11 provision.

When they were being asked being asked how they saw the way forward for Section 11 provision in schools, seven of the eight project managers discussed the importance of whole school language policies and practice. What emerged was an underlying aim for Section 11 personnel to raise awareness about language issues and for schools ultimately to take responsibility for these.

One of the project managers stated that it was *"absolutely essential that the language provision and language support across the curriculum is taken seriously as joint responsibility between the mainstream colleagues and Section 11"*. Another project leader felt it was a priority to ensure *"that schools have got policies, that senior management are aware of what good practice is in terms of language development"*. This project manager prioritised this above *"sitting alongside individual children, or working with individual teachers."*

Another project manager said, *"I think we need to concentrate on actually putting into schools, into mainstream, the strategies that we are trying to use ourselves as Section 11 teachers, so that we have to make support specialists of all teachers"*. This manager emphasised the multicultural, multilingual and multiracial nature of contemporary Britain and the need for all schools to respond to this.

A further project manager encapsulated the opinions of the other managers by referring to Section 11 personnel as *'acting as agents of change'*. The term *'agents of change'* gave a good description of a key task of staff, namely to raise awareness of the needs of EAL pupils, to bring about a change in attitude towards the needs of these pupils, and to influence policy and practice in schools.

Although not stated explicitly during the interviews with the project managers, the idea of transferring responsibility for language support for EAL pupils to mainstream schools was commensurate with the five year span for which central funding had been granted and, as they had mentioned, with the idea that schools would ultimately be responsible for those issues, (p. 148). If funding were withdrawn after this period, then the schools would be better equipped to support their EAL pupils through the dissemination of Section 11 expertise. As the previously quoted project manager maintained, *"People now have more of an idea of what Section 11 is supposed to be. That understanding will remain"*.

In line with the key task of influencing policy and practice in schools, seven of the eight project managers referred to the importance of raising the status of Section 11 staff. In one of the interviews, this view came from the question about the role of the staff in mainstream schools, rather than the question of the future of Section II. It has been included here, however, as it fits into *'the way forward'* category.

During five of the interviews, some concerns emerged about the background of Section II staff. One project manager stated, *"... in many schools, sad to say, the Section 11 person was the person who couldn't cope with the classroom, who wasn't particularly good at keeping up with the developments in education, who was seen as the not very good teacher in the school"*. Another referred to staff being at varying degrees of *'professional awareness'* and *'professional competence'*. A further project manager pointed out that many staff had been working under Section 11 funding before reorganisation was

implemented and might *"very well not have changed their practice"*. A fourth project manager noted that some teachers brought remedial reading expertise, or class teaching skills to their Section 11 work, but not an *"awareness of the language learning needs of pupils, and if they can't do that, they can't do whole school issues"*.

There would therefore seem to be a link between concerns about what can be termed *'inherited staff'* who might have been employed as generalists under the previously less controlled approach to language support, rather than as specialist language teachers. The project managers saw the way forward as intensive professional training to produce a team of well-qualified and credible specialists.

One project manager summarised his ideas about the future of Section 11 provision as raising the *"level of rigour"* and raising the status of teachers and bilingual assistants. Under the new structure he believed the service had to be, *"far more professional, far more rigorous, far more effective in delivery"*. This would necessitate the right personnel, for this project manager believed it was *"a question of calibre individuals"*. Another project manager spoke of disseminating practice across whole schools as a *"high role, tough role"*. He spoke about his aim of *"skilling people up"*.

Two of the project managers developed the notion of raising the status of Section 11 staff by envisaging a smaller, appropriately qualified team of professionals. One said, *"I suppose the way forward is to have fewer, well-qualified, very articulate people working in schools"*. This view was endorsed by the second project manager, who advocated, *"more of an LEA advisory role"*, for key individuals *"who really have a vision about Section 11, and real expertise ... extremely professional people ... paid more"*.

This emphasis on raising the status of Section 11 personnel and the importance of in-service professional training proved to be a double-edged sword. Prior to the cut in funding in 1994, all Section 11 staff were given 0.1 inset per week, equivalent to one half-day. This training was both comprehensive and professional. It had a key focus on language development strategies, multiculturalism and equal opportunities. However, it was viewed with ambivalence by schools. There were two major reasons for this. The professional development sessions took staff out of the classroom for 20% of the school week. School staff may have thought this time could have been better spent in schools. There was also an issue of equal opportunities, as it was seen by some that Section 11 staff

had far more access to professional development than their mainstream colleagues. Therefore a key aim of the project managers to raise the status of Section 11 staff, which involved considerable professional training, was not universally popular with mainstream schools even though such training was intended to support equal opportunities for EAL pupils in their schools.

Four of the project managers saw the future role of Section 11 as empowering EAL pupils by aiding their access to standard English. They viewed this largely in terms of equal opportunities. One project manager spoke of standard English as being a dialect amongst dialects, but emphasised that *"it's the chosen dialect to use for formal presentation, for legalities, for government"*. The manager asserted that *"it is the norm that everybody should aspire to if they want to progress in terms of university education or in terms of a government or parliamentary career"*. She emphasised, however, that it should not be at *"the expense of what we already bring with us, in terms of our dialect, in terms of our languages"*.

A second project manager emphasised similar points. She stated that children need the opportunity to develop their English language skills to succeed in the education system and beyond. *"You've got to empower them, you've got to give them the language to fight their battles with, so that they become as qualified as anybody else."* Another project manager discussed the importance of providing children with an *"entitlement"* and stressed how centrally he viewed language across the curriculum.

Within the area of discussion about the future of Section 11 provision, central government policy was mentioned by three project leaders, in the wake of the announcement of a cut in funding to the service. What emerged was a feeling that the language support service was not a high priority. However, another project manager with a long service in EAL teaching commented that Section 11 had been under continual threats of being axed since its inauguration in 1966, but had always managed to survive. Certainly, within the current situation (200/2001), with large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers added to existing EAL pupil quotas, additional funding for language support will be quite critical.

7.2.1. Full Circle: Changes from 1997

The next major change to Section 11 came in the wake of the election of the new Labour Government in 1997. Nationally, schools were canvassed for their opinion as to how the

funding should be used. Key issues were those of responsibility. Schools were asked whether the DfEE or the Home Office should administer the grant, and, on a local level, whether the grant should go direct to schools or be used to operate a central service. The majority of schools voted for direct control of the funding.

As a result of the survey, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant was introduced in April 1999 to replace the education constituent of the previous Section 11 fund. Responsibility for administration was transferred from the Home Office to the Department for Education and Employment. Initially, £80 million was transferred from Section 11. This was later increased to £130 million for 1999-2000 and to £430 million over the next following three years. The grant has subsequently been re-titled the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant (EMTAG) to incorporate traveller pupils.

At a local level, the introduction of EMTAG has again necessitated considerable change. In common with other education authorities, Leicester had to find additional funding to complement its allocation. Also, initially, 100% of the funding was devolved to schools, though, after negotiation, 15% has been retained to fund a central service.

Table 7.1. EMTAG funding for Leicester City Schools, 1999-00

Central Government Grant	LEA Contribution	Total Allocation	Amount held centrally by LEA (Excluding buy back)	Amount Devolved to School (including buy back)	Amount Brought Back by Schools
£	£		£	£	£
2,115,750	1,139,250	3,255,000	322,343	2,932,657	2,738,228

from Leicester City Council Education Department EMTAG Action Plan 1999.

The funding must be used for staffing and/or resources to support ethnic minority pupils, and the school must take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the progress of these pupils and for providing statistical data.

The 'chequered history' of Section 11 has therefore turned full-circle since the modernising grant of 1992 was introduced. Schools once again have responsibility for the funding. There have been regulations put into place, however, to ensure that the former misuse of funding is not repeated. School are accountable to the LEA and must give evidence that

the funding is actually being spent on raising the achievement of the ethnic minority pupils for whom it is provided.

7.2.2. Discussion.

The ambitious aim of providing a professional and dynamic central language support service for Leicestershire was short-lived. It can be argued that it was undermined by the cut in provision announced in 1993, just one year after the service was launched. This was seen by some as evidence that Section 11 has low priority with government. All eight of the project managers indicated this, either directly or indirectly. As discussed earlier, the service did not provide good career prospects after 1993. As one of the project managers remarked, "*... if I were under 45, I would seriously be looking to get out of Section 11, ... It's not a high priority.*"

Section 11, from 1992 to 1999, was instrumental, however, in raising awareness about the linguistic and cultural diversity of minority ethnic pupils. This had been one of the main aims of the project managers interviewed between 1992 and 1993. As one has stated, "*People now have more of an idea of what Section II is supposed to be. That understanding will remain.*"

What has also remained is a small central team of (EMTAG) Achievement Consultants. Their role is to provide both central and on-site training, consultancy and advice to assist schools in policy development and implementation. This has been advocated to two of the project managers, as discussed earlier (7.1.3). There is also a pool of staff consisting of language support teachers, bilingual assistants and home-school liaison workers whom school can opt to "buy back".

A reduced service, therefore, remains to serve the needs of an increasingly multicultural and multilingual authority. It was reported in 1999 that over 40% of the school population (over 20,000 pupils) were of minority ethnic heritage, and that this percentage was rising, (Leicester City Council Education Department, EMAG Action Plan, 1999.)

It was also reported in this document that, "The general view of achievement of pupils within Leicester schools is below national averages and well below national targets" (p. 21). Statistics for 1999 show that the LEA average for Key Stage 2 English tests at level 4 or above was 54% compared to a national average of 64%. In effect, the results for the city

were 10% below the national average. Key Stage 2 Maths tests were also 10% below the national average (ibid. p. 8). The national performance tables for GCSE results between 1997 and 2000 show that Leicester City is ranked 114th, which is eighth from the bottom of the list. Interestingly, neighbouring Rutland appears second in rank order of achievement. (Times Educational Supplement, November 24th, 2000). These figures support one the hypotheses of this study, namely that some classroom teachers tend to overestimate the achievement of their EAL pupils. It is likely that this is because these pupils are perceived to be well motivated and hard working and are achieving well compared to the norm within the city. However, the general level of achievement within the city is low, as reported above, and it can be argued that some EAL pupils only appear to be achieving highly because of below-average standards across the city. As discussed in the teacher interviews, some mainstream staff believed that their EAL pupils were doing well and did not need any language support. This study, however, argues that there may be a significant difference in lexical understanding in reading between matched pairs of EAL pupils and monolingual pupils.

This argument holds that EAL pupils, apparently performing well, still need support. These are supplemented by a consistent influx of pupils new to English as can be seen from the summary of the Section II needs analysis of 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998 reproduced below.

Table 7.2. Leicester City Needs Analysis 1995; 1996; 1997 and 1998.

	lev 1	lev 2	lev 3	lev 4	lev 5	total	% lev 1	% lev 2	% lev 3	% lev 4	% lev 5	
1995												
project 1	563	1117	2182	1821	666	6349	9	18	34	29	10	100
project 2	610	1246	1883	989	226	4954	12	25	38	20	5	100
project 3	360	837	1669	1692	733	5291	7	16	32	32	14	100
project 4	152	413	968	1158	928	3619	4	11	27	32	26	100
proj 4 Special Sch.s	108	16	30	14	1	169	64	9	19	8	1	100
totals	1793	3629	6732	5674	2554	20382	9	18	33	28	13	100
1996												
project 1	551	1117	2233	1787	695	6383	9	17	35	28	11	100
project 2	682	1266	1864	1040	213	5065	13	25	37	21	4	100
project 3	345	885	1770	1765	840	5605	6	16	32	31	15	100
project 4	117	443	905	1323	944	3732	3	12	24	35	25	100
proj 4 - Spec. Sch.	107	35	34	30	2	208	51	17	16	14	1	100
City total	1802	3746	6806	5945	2694	20993	9	18	32	28	13	100
1997												
project 1	506	1047	2125	1713	800	6191	8	17	34	28	3	100
project 2	716	1019	171	1228	279	5013	14	20	35	24	6	100
project 3	369	779	1662	1910	1007	5727	6	14	29	33	18	100
project 4	176	391	923	1203	1133	3826	5	14	29	33	18	100
proj 4 - Spec Sch.	71	36	54	30	6	197	36	18	27	15	3	100
City total	1838	3272	6535	6084	3225	20954	9	16	31	29	15	100
1998												
project 1	416	984	2237	1760	682	6079	7	16	37	29	11	100
project 2	731	1056	1787	1167	331	5072	14	21	35	23	7	100
project 3	353	894	1759	2046	1153	6205	6	14	28	33	19	100
project 4	201	455	806	761	541	2764	7	16	29	28	20	100
proj 4 - Spec. Sch.	73	61	58	27	2	221	33	28	26	12	1	100
OVERALL TOTALS	1774	3450	6647	5761	2709	20341	9	17	33	28	13	100
Level 1 - new to English No access to curric. except through first lang., practical activities, pictures, etc.												
Level 2 - early bilingual a little access to the curriculum through English												
Level 3 - developing bilingual Access to the curric. through English but still obviously needs support.												
Level 4 - competent bilingual Access to curric. through English and only needs support for advanced work												
Level 5 - fully fluent Access to the curriculum is unrestricted by English language learning needs												

from Leicester City Council Education Department, EMTAG Action Plan, 1999

The language needs profile of the city has taken a new turn with the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees, as a result of central government policy to place these across the country. Leicester City Council reported, in January 2000, that there were 600 asylum seekers and 120 refugees in the city. It was also revealed that there had been a "steady

flow" of asylum seekers to the city during the preceding eighteen months. (Leicester Mercury, Thursday, January 27th, 2000).

It is likely that these numbers will continue to increase if Leicester, or Britain generally, receive even a small proportion of refugees and other world-wide mobile populations. A recent report reads, "If the last century was an epoch of wars and revolutions, this one will be marked by the mass flight of millions driven from their homes by famine, wars and ecological disasters" (The Guardian, Tuesday, January 25th, 2000). In the same report, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees notes that refugee figures have increased from 2.5m to 21m over the past twenty years.

The following chart shows the number of asylum seekers in Britain, and the diverse range of countries from which they come.

Table 7.3. Applications for asylum in Britain and main countries of origin, January and February 2001. From "inexile." The Refugee Council Magazine, April 2001.

STATISTICS	
January and February 2001	
Applications	
There were 5,520 applications in February, the lowest number since May 1999.	
Top 10 countries of origin	
Iraq	1,465
Afghanistan	1,125
Sri Lanka	1,005
Iran	940
Somalia	880
Turkey	665
Fed. Rep. Yugoslavia	645
Pakistan	385
Romania	305
Zimbabwe	250

It is probable that Leicester will continue to receive a considerable number of asylum seekers. There are two main reasons for this. First, there is the central government policy of compulsory dispersal. Second, Leicester is viewed as a multicultural city with existing resources enabling it to cater for the asylum seekers.

This will have implications for schools, and for language support within these schools. Traditionally, the Leicester Section 11 has supported a largely Asian EAL community, with Gujarati speakers being the largest minority group. Applications for asylum are firstly from Iraq and Afghanistan, followed by people coming from Sri Lanka. Already some of the children from these families are coming into schools, meaning that there are new language needs to be met. This will necessitate a cycle of needs analysis, policy development, dissemination and practice in schools within an action research type framework to respond to the increasingly diverse needs of EAL pupils in local schools. This provides an introduction to the following section which analyses teachers' perceptions and observations of EAL pupils currently attending these schools.

7.3 Results of the interviews conducted with teachers.

7.3.1. Teachers' opinions about the influence of cultural background on learning in the classroom.

(N = 30)

Category	%
Language	80
Listening/understanding	32
Good attitude/supportive parents	24
Pre-school experience	20
Emphasis on formal education	12
Additive diversity	12

Table 7.4. Influence of cultural background.

Language

When asked how they thought cultural background influenced children's learning in the classroom, the most common response was language. 80% of the teachers who were

interviewed cited this. The term 'language' was used as a synonym for English language acquisition, though none of the teachers actually used this term.

One teacher commenced the interview by stating categorically, *"I think the language is the greatest difference"*. This teacher believed that *"How much English they are understanding is greater than any difference in culture"*. Another teacher commented, *"Obviously, the language very much influences it. Interpretation really, of our English language, because sometimes English isn't spoken much at home."* Another said, *"I think it varies a lot with how far they've got with the level of their English"*.

Crucially, from the point of view of the present study, a further teacher spoke about the EAL pupils' *"lack of vocabulary, not sharing the common English terms that we use, that we take for granted"*. This teacher mentioned the cultural base of many English words, and felt that children who had been brought up speaking English *"might have actually come across them before"*, whereas EAL pupils might have never encountered such words previously.

Over a quarter of the interviewees, who were either nursery and reception teachers, or had had experience of this age group, believed that the individual child's level of English acquisition was critical in determining how well the child settled into school.

One teacher commented, *"they often don't have the language, or the same experiences as the first language children, so they start their learning quite a long way down the ladder in some areas, not in all areas"*. Another had noticed, *"It affects them badly if they haven't got words", "particularly everyday words like book, toilet, mummy to convey meaning"*. The use of *have* in these instances might imply possession of English vocabulary on a part/whole basis, rather than a continuum of the development of meaning. A further nursery teacher had observed that if the parents had prepared the children for school by speaking to them in English then the result was that *"the children can become more confident when they're here"*. A similar observation was made by another nursery teacher, who had noted that if children arrived in school unable to speak any English were *"very clingy to mum"* and were *"a little bit lost"*. The teacher summarised this. *"They appear lost in the nursery for longer."* Again, a further nursery teacher made similar observations. This teacher believed it was very *"traumatic"* for young children with a limited level of English because *"they can't ask things or explain their problems"*. These children could

"be very distressed". She had found that other pupils who could communicate even at a simple level, *"enough to play"*, settled much better, and were able to *"get involved and play"*.

Another nursery teacher noted the difference between two pupils, both of whom were Sikhs. One child, with a good command of English, entered school and settled well. He displayed good social skills by interacting well with the other children and with the staff, and was keen to learn. The second pupil, with minimal English language acquisition, found entry to school much more difficult. The teacher commented, *"he found it very hard because he was very wooden, he didn't know how to socialise with the other children"*. She summarised, *"So, just judging from those two, they're both very different, so it depends on the pre-school experiences... it is bound to have an impact on how they develop and learn."*

Overall, teachers therefore put language issues as the key factor influencing children's learning in the classroom, and comments from nursery and reception staff indicated that children entering school with little or no English language acquisition were at a disadvantage, both socially and with their learning. In other words, teachers indicated that proficiency in English enhanced EAL pupil's academic attainment, because the curriculum is delivered in English and English proficiency also enabled pupils to join in the full life of the school.

Listening/understanding

The issue of EAL pupils' listening and understanding abilities was discussed by 32% of the interviewees. Some of the most experienced teachers commented on the link between English language proficiency and listening skills. They had noticed that some EAL pupils would be sitting quietly and, superficially, appear to be attentive, but had in fact "switched off". They were not really listening, as they were not able to understand all that their teacher was saying. One teacher commented,

"I'm conscious that several children in this class latch on to one or two words in a sentence, then they go off in the wrong direction. I'm conscious that listening on the carpet is very difficult for a lot of them, because, as I say, they're only following one or two words in a sentence. Then they switch off."

Another observation was that it was "*little bit of a worry sometimes that they actually miss the point of things,*" which could be because, "*they haven't really fully understood what's being said*".

A similar comment was made by a further teacher who was concerned that when the children were sitting and listening, "*... you wonder if they're actually listening to what you're saying, although they do sit and listen and never let you know that they can't understand you*". The teacher felt this lack of understanding became evident when the children "*never put forward any answers to questions*".

It therefore emerged that the area of children sitting quietly and 'listening', but not having full comprehension of what was being said to them was the second key observation teachers made in discussing the influence of cultural background on learning. This ties in with the third category that teachers mentioned, which was a good standard of behaviour from EAL pupils, and supportive parents who valued education. This goes some way to explaining why pupils were very willing to conform and listen quietly, despite their perceived lack of understanding.

Good attitude/supportive parents

24% of the teachers interviewed commented positively on the good behaviour of EAL pupils and on the value the parents of these children placed on education. This was also implicit in other interviews, but comments from these others have not been included in the overall percentage, as the point was not explicitly stated by the interviewees. This was important because the teachers' emphasis on this positive aspect clearly demonstrates that they do not have negative attitudes towards EAL pupils, or that they see such pupils in problematic terms.

One teacher commented that she had found "*that the Asian children are more motivated educationally because the parents are so keen*". Another of the teachers observed that "*the interest and involvement of the parents and the value they place on education*" was "*very significant*". A further teacher said, "*discipline-wise, they seem to be better behaved, and the parents that I have spoken to about my concerns, the few that I have had, seem to put a lot of effort into the child*".

Pre-school experience

The next most frequently-mentioned category was that of a perceived inadequacy of preparation for schooling and limited pre-school experience. 20% of the teachers referred to this when discussing the cultural backgrounds of EAL pupils, and how this influenced their learning in school. This category was also strongly correlated with the main category identified by teachers, namely, that of language. The difficulties pupils faced in entering school with little or no English acquisition, in the opinion of the teachers interviewed, have been discussed in the first category. This category includes other perceptions made by teachers about the pupils' pre-school experiences.

One of the teachers commented that *"most of the English children have been to a playgroup and a lot of the Asian children haven't"*. The teacher felt that there was *"a difference"* between all children who had this experience, and those who had not, but that it was *"more pronounced with the Asian children because of their English"*. Other teachers referred to different types of experience children had been exposed to, in general terms. An example of this is where one teacher commented, *"they might not have experienced the same things that the children have from an English background."* Another teacher mentioned some EAL pupils being *"quite traumatised"*. The teacher attributed this to the pupils having no knowledge of the education system, and not being used to mixing with large numbers of children. Another teacher similarly said, *"It can be very traumatic"*. A further teacher believed, *"It depends how much contact they've had outside of the home"*. It was also noted that, *"The children tend to spend a lot of time with their grandparents"*. A résumé of teachers' opinions in this category can be given in the words of a teacher who stated that, *"So making the cultural change from home to school is more difficult for them"*.

Emphasis on formal education

The next key observation of the teachers who were interviewed was that the parents of EAL pupils favoured formal education, and did not appreciate the role of play in children's learning. 12% of the interviewees mentioned this. Play is an integral part of early years education in Britain. It is highlighted in the Leicester City LEA Early Years Education Policy draft constitution document (2000).

A nursery teacher observed, *"Asian children haven't learnt to play, and Nursery is all about learning through play"*. Another nursery teacher commented that *"Formal learning is high on their list"* and that a lot of parents would bring the child in and say, proudly,

"He knows his ABC". Some concrete examples of teachers' experiences within this category appear in the following section.

Additive diversity

A further 12% of teachers stated that the EAL children's diverse cultural background gave a positive added dimension to the classroom. One teacher commented, *"I think often it can add things, because the children from different cultural groups can sometimes add a new element to what you're teaching"*. Another teacher said, *"I've always welcomed the diversity of the children's backgrounds in the classroom"*. This added diversity was implied by other interviewees, but as it was not stated explicitly, it was not included in the percentage. Again this shows a 'value added' understanding of EAL pupils rather than a simplistic problem-centered understanding

Additional comments

The final area reviewed in this section is the response from two teachers who said they found the children's cultural background had very little influence on their learning. Both of these interviewees were among the younger teachers interviewed. One was a newly qualified teacher (N.Q.T) and the second was recently qualified. Their comments were, *"I wouldn't say there's a great amount of difference"* and *"I've had Asian children here that have had no problems with that"*. Both of these teachers, however, added a qualifier that included language. One said, *"The definite article is a problem with them"* and the second commented, *"except when they can't speak English very well"*. However, throughout the interview, both teachers constantly reiterated that they had not observed any significant cultural differences between EAL pupils and their monolingual peers. This may have been because, being younger, they had grown up in a more multicultural environment than some of the other teachers. They might also have felt it discriminatory to distinguish between pupils. A third reason might be lack of experience, both being recent entrants to the profession.

7.3.2. Teachers' citations of concrete examples of cultural differences.

(N = 30)

Category	%
Language	64
Formal approach to education	28
Food and eating	20
Festivals and celebrations	16
Additional schooling	16

Table 7.5. Specific examples of cultural differences.

In the next category, teachers were asked to related concrete experiences of where cultural differences had been apparent. This developed the foregoing category, in which teachers' more general statements were given, by providing specific examples and observations.

Language

Again, language issues were the most common, with 64% of teachers citing examples of these. One interviewee reported that an EAL pupil taking a SATs revision paper followed the instruction *'Draw a ring around ...'* by carefully drawing a ring as worn on the finger, complete with a stone, around each item. The operational act involved here showed that the child had the incorrect conceptual representation of the word 'ring' as required by the task. If the child had had no understanding at all of the word, and had asked the teacher what its meaning was, then the teacher would have been aware of the child's difficulty. However, the child had good surface fluency in English, and it was only in observing the child translating the word from her personal lexicon into the activity required by the task that the teacher became aware of the child's limitation in understanding.

Other teachers mentioned vocabulary difficulties. One said that it showed through *"in things like names of animals, things that you assume are very much part of the English culture, and you think they might know about, and very often they don't"*. Difficulty with SATs was mentioned again, with a teacher reporting children had had difficulty with the word *'barns'*. Mathematical vocabulary was also cited. One teacher stated that in some languages the pupils had, there was *"just one word for big and small, whether it's for tall and short, or wide and narrow"* and that *"having to learn lots and lots of different ways of saying what to them is just big and small takes a very long time"*.

A nursery teacher had noticed that some of the children were unfamiliar with traditional rhymes. The teacher said, *"Some children sit there and don't move their lips. There's one nursery rhyme, Baa Baa Black Sheep or Humpty Dumpty they know, but that will be it."* She had also observed that some of the children were not familiar with traditional stories, nor did they have books containing these tales at home. The teacher reported that one child had listened to the stories, then apparently had gone home and asked for the books. Next day, the child said, *"I've got three books today!"* However, it was unclear whether the pupils might be familiar with nursery rhymes or comparable activities in Asian languages.

One of the interviewees encapsulated majority views in stating *"... it was language in all aspects. It was written language, spoken language, confidence in the language"*.

Formal approach to education

The second most frequent example of cultural differences given by teachers was the formal approach taken to education by parents of EAL pupils. 28% gave examples of this. Parents were perceived as having different expectations about children's learning from that of the teachers. (This is also noted by Edwards (1998) and is discussed in Chapter 5.)

One teacher commented on a particular child who was *"really into this ABC"*. It was all his parents felt was of value, and this had been transferred to the child. The child didn't want to play, particularly not at school, and so he was not engaging in activities to promote his all round learning.

Nursery teachers frequently mentioned the importance of play, and, that in their experience, some EAL pupils found it difficult. A comment was made by one of the teachers,

"They can't play. I'm thinking of He was in this nursery for twelve months practically. He didn't move unless we moved him. And yet he was bringing tables, pages of tables, but he didn't know how to play."

Another teacher had found that some EAL parents were *"very obsessed with structure"*. This teacher was concerned about allowing the child to be a child instead of a *"mini adult"*. Another teacher felt one of her pupils was *"losing the life and vitality bit"* because of an over-emphasis on formal education.

Food and eating

Examples about food and eating were given by 20% of the interviewees. These were mainly nursery and reception teachers, who take lunch with the children, whereas the teachers of older pupils do not.

One teacher of new entrants to the school recounted her experiences.

"Some of the children actually go to pick up their food with their hands, because that's what they're used to, and now they're being presented with this knife and fork, and the English children are saying, "You don't use your hands. You use your knife and fork." I'd explain to the English children that at home, that's how they'd eat, and they'd use a naan bread or a pitta, or chipatti, and this is the way they eat."

The teacher said that the pupils were encouraged to eat with a knife and fork, but *"we don't make a big issue of it"* because *"you want them to feel comfortable with their environment"*.

This same teacher gave a classic example of cultural difference.

"I've noticed that sometime, ... will burp at the table. ... It's a way of saying, "Well, I've enjoyed my meal and this is how I'm expressing it." He'll burp, quite often at the dinner table, and just sit back, as if to say, "Well, I've enjoyed that. I've told you I've enjoyed it, and now you know."

Another nursery teacher commented that some of the children wouldn't eat the school lunches. She commented, *"They're probably put off by the look of it,"* as it was not familiar to them. However, many of the teachers commented that the children were, in fact, familiar with English food. As one said, when asked where cultural differences had been apparent, *"I tend to think immediately of food, but actually when we've had discussions about food, it's amazing how many of the children are given English food"*. Another teacher concluded that a lot of the children *"go to MacDonald's and they do see Western food, but I think at home there's generally more traditional, i.e. Asian, food"*.

Festivals and celebrations

The final two concrete examples related by teachers were those of festivals and celebrations, and additional schooling. Each of these was mentioned by 16% of the teachers. In instances of celebrations and festivals, teachers spoke about Diwali and Eid. One teacher believed that *"the multicultural children can add a lot when we're doing, in the class, different celebrations, and can bring in a different aspect"*.

Another teacher spoke in some detail about attending a Diwali celebration.

"There must have been a thousand plus people there, extremely well-dressed, beautiful, and there must have been about four non-Asians there of whom ... and I were two."

The teacher related how they were treated as special guests, and how much the parents valued their participation in the celebration. *"All these people looking at us, and they wanted us to put our hand over the candle, and feel, and put it on our faces, and she was just so thrilled (because we were taking part)."*

Additional schooling

Teachers welcomed the diversity of celebrations and festivals but expressed concern about additional schooling in the community, such as complementary classes held in the evenings or at weekends for language learning and religious or cultural instruction. Some pupils attend such activities for several evenings per week as discussed in Chapter 5. One teacher spoke about a pupil who she felt was *"overloaded"*. *"There were a lot of worries about him special needs wise, but then, when we found out he was learning three languages, and he was learning Arabic, to write in Arabic, learning English to write in English, and was speaking three different languages, it put things into perspective a little more."*

Other teachers quoted similar examples of children being tired after spending a full day at school, and then having further formal schooling in the evenings. One teacher commented that she had noticed that, *"It makes them very tired when they come into school"*. What emerged overall was that teachers were more concerned than critical about the children's activities outside of the school because of the effect they felt it had on the children's learning. None of the teachers mentioned specific liaison or partnership between

community schools and the LEA schools. It is probable that teachers would judge that any such liaison would be a Section 11 responsibility.

7.3.3. Teachers' choices of useful support for EAL pupils in the classroom.

(N = 30)

Category	%
Human resources	72
Knowledge about cultural background	44
Resources	44
Basic vocabulary courses	16

Table 7.6. Desirable support categories identified by teachers.

Human resources

The key area teachers identified when asked about what sort of help would be most useful in supporting their EAL pupils in the classroom was that of human resources, which had a total of 72%. The teachers wanted support in terms of additional staff in the classroom.

One teacher said, *"Human resources. Someone coming in would be brilliant."* Another commented, *"I think it would be useful by having the support of a Section II teacher to work with small groups of children, with a mixture of different backgrounds, to give them that little bit of extra attention"*.

The latter point of *'extra attention'* was taken up by some of the other teachers. In addition to supporting the children with their learning, they felt it was beneficial for Section II staff to be able to give the pupils this 'extra attention'. As a further teacher commented, *"I've heard some people say they don't need support - their English is too good. Well, I think it's important because it raises their self-esteem."*

Of the 72% of teachers who specified additional personnel in the classroom, 44% particularly said they would welcome bilingual support. This was in terms of both teaching and learning, and also to give EAL pupils a sense of security by hearing their home language in the school.

In terms of teaching and learning, a comment was that, *"although we tend to say things in lots and lots of different ways, it's a worry that the children are not interpreting them correctly. I know ..., sometimes with her maths work, sometimes following instructions is, for her, quite hard, and I think its interpretation."* Another comment was, *"when children come in with quite limited English" what would be "really helpful" would be "somebody who is actually able to translate from their home language to English and vice-versa"*. It should be noted here that it is not DfEE policy to operate bilingual programmes where children are taught in their first language, rather than the majority language, for part of the school day. Bilingual policies, where the L1 is used as a bridging transitional support for second language acquisition is practised in North America and New Zealand. It has been written about widely by Cummins (1996, 2000), Baker and Prys-Jones (1998), and Hornberger (1991).

The comments about bilingual staff helping the children to feel more secure at school came from nursery teachers. One commented, *"I think it's really nice for the children, when they start, to be able to hear their own language, to see that we've got good relationships"*. Another teacher believed that it was *valuable "for the children to see one of their own race and culture."* A further comment was, *"We've got Mrs K..., and she's so nice with ..., sort of brings her confidence out a bit"*,

The teachers interviewed all worked in schools which had Section 11 support, but some of them felt that the level of the support was inadequate. One teacher commented that she felt some of her EAL pupils needed daily support, but they were only receiving one hour each week. Another teacher said that she valued the support her pupils were getting, but *"I don't think there's enough of it"*.

Extra support in the classroom therefore emerged as the chief requirement of teacher. This was followed by two joint categories, those of more knowledge about EAL pupils' cultural background, and resources.

Knowledge about pupils' cultural background

44% of teachers felt they could support their EAL pupils in the classroom better if they had more knowledge about the cultural background of these pupils. One teacher gave her reasons for this.

"I think it's good for teachers to go on courses and find out a little bit more about the background of the children because that gives you a little bit of understanding of what has happened at home, and what you need to build on, really, and not to expect too much too soon. When you consider that they may be speaking a totally different language at home, perhaps with grandparents, or perhaps going to the mosque, and trying to learn the Qu'ran, and trying to build up Arabic as well, that's a lot of outside influences on top of school as well."

Another comment was that courses informing teachers about *"how different cultures behave, and the different foods they eat, their religious customs,"* would be informative. This tied in with the perceptions of a further teacher, who believed *"We're not really informed, are we, as a staff? We're relying on you and outside people to come in and help us out, whereas we could be better informed ourselves."*

Resources

An equal 44% of teachers stated that they would be helped by having more resources in their classrooms. These included books, toys, games and artefacts. Story tapes and music tapes were also mentioned, from a range of cultural and linguistic sources.

One teacher was quite adamant that books would be an asset, *"more books definitely. More books that are bright and attractive."* The teacher commented that there was a good supply of dual language books, *"but not attractive ones"*. Another teacher believed that multicultural resources should be *"represented round the classroom in jigsaws, books"* so that pupils could see *"an ethnic mix of people there"*.

A further observation was made that multicultural resources were important not only for the Asian pupils, but also to enable the English pupils to understand that other cultures existed. This teacher stated, *"We don't always use the same utensils or wear the same shoes or the same clothes, and it's a multicultural society now, so we should have these things readily available for these children to see, 'cos it's interesting for everybody. You're broadening everybody's minds."* This is a further value-added statement because it suggests that, potentially, EAL pupils can broaden the cultural resource base of a school for everyone's benefit.

Basic vocabulary courses

16% of the teachers who were interviewed mentioned that it would be useful to have a basic knowledge of key words from pupils' home languages. They believed it would help them support their pupils' learning, and also be an aid in a wider pastoral sense.

One teacher addressed both the foregoing issues. This teacher felt it would be valuable to know "*basic words*" to convey meaning. She also felt that some knowledge of the child's home language was an asset in a pastoral role, "*because sometimes, when they come in with no English at all, to a room that's huge, with all these children, and four or five adults they have never seen before, and mum has gone... But if you just had a few words, comfort words, something like "Oh mummy's coming back in a little while" to help, then I think that would be useful.*"

An alternative position was given by another teacher who had attended Gujarati lessons. This teacher pointed out that though she was able to say, "*What is the matter?*" in Gujarati, she was not able to understand very much of the child's reply. This teacher did not therefore believe that this "*was the way forward*". This seems to indicate that knowledge of a few words only in children's 'home' languages may not achieve much or may even be misleading. More likely, there is a minimum threshold of knowledge that is necessary to understand pupils, rather than simply to produce a few words.

7.3.4. Instances of EAL pupils' concept learning observed by teachers.

(N = 30)

Category	%
Vocabulary concepts	28
Increased language proficiency/confidence	20
Taught Vocabulary	16
Developmental	16

Table 7.7. Instances of EAL pupils' concept learning.

Many of the teachers found this question problematic as they were not able to recall specific incidents, but rather had a generalised overview.

Vocabulary concepts

28% of the teachers mentioned vocabulary concepts. 24% of these gave examples, though some of these examples referred back to earlier discussion.

One of the teachers was able to recall a number of examples. This teacher cited an example of a child who got a bucket, and said, *"Well, now I'm going to put a bucket in this spade."* In the child's mind *"bucket was spade and vice-versa"*. The teacher pointed out that *"right up to then that was her conceptual knowledge - a spade was a bucket because obviously in the past, when she referred to a bucket and spade, those two items were there, and nobody noticed her confusion."* On this occasion, however, the child was informed that the container was a bucket, and realised that up to then she had been confusing the two words.

The same teacher related an example of how a group of EAL pupils had been confused by the question, *"How do you feel?"* which came up in a reading scheme, relating to emotions. The pupils *"thought about it in a tactile sense of feeling materials etc,"* until it was explained that *feel* in this sense had a different meaning.

Another teacher referred to some Somali pupils who had been *"totally baffled"* by the language side of mathematical concepts, but when she *"did it practically and explained it"* they understood the concepts. *"They said, "Oh, yes! I can add. I can take away" and then they were off, and there was no stopping them."*

A further example was given of a child going to see a pantomime. The child was unsure what this involved as *"she hadn't any idea what theatre was"*. The teacher noticed that the child was sitting pondering on the coach, and about half-way there she said, *"I know, Cinderella!"* The child had *"sat there and worked it out, and it suddenly came to her"*.

The same teacher referred to another pupil. The teacher stated, *"I ought to be able to think of something for ____, because he's really coming on. He must be picking things up everyday, but I can't think of an instance."* This also happened with other teachers, in that they were not able to recall a specific incident during their interview, or bring it to mind at that time.

Increased language proficiency/confidence

20% of the teachers interviewed referred to increased language proficiency, where pupils seemed to suddenly 'click', and the increased confidence that this brought, i.e. a perceived breakthrough after a period of apparent difficulty.

These accounts tended to be very similar. Teachers described particular pupils with low levels of English acquisition, who were withdrawn and isolated in the classroom situation. These pupils avoided communicating with either the teacher or with their fellow pupils. Progress would seem very slow, but then, teachers reported, there would come an increased acceleration of English language proficiency. With this would also come increased confidence, better social skills and greater interaction with the teacher and with their peers. Examples of this situation are cited below.

One teacher spoke about a pupil who initially *"wouldn't speak - she was very, very isolated. She wouldn't even try and communicate with other Asian children."* However, as the child became more proficient in speaking in English, there was a considerable all-round change. The teacher noted that *"from standing on her own in a corner in the playground"*, the child moved on to *"being involved in running around and laughing with the other children, was quite a big change"*.

This same child also progressed academically. The teacher related that, *"suddenly, for whatever reason, she produced this book ... and she's just gone from strength to strength"*.

A comparable situation was related by another teacher. The teacher spoke about a pupil who came into school with a low level of English acquisition. Within one term, the child had *"transformed in her learning,"* as her fluency in English increased. The child's confidence also increased. The teacher reported that the child was now *"so self-assured. She used to walk round here like a waif, and (now) she was so confident"*.

A further example was given of a pupil from a non-English speaking home, who had been on an extended overseas visit. The teacher was very concerned about this pupil's progress and *"would have put her towards the bottom of the class"*. This pupil had a lot of support, and this proved beneficial. The teacher said, *"You work on it, and work on it, and it's just clicked"*. Along with this came a rise in confidence. *"It's like her whole personality has changed, and it was really to do with the work, 'cos she couldn't do it, and she wasn't sure*

what to do. She wasn't sure of the expectations and it's taken her this long to settle and make friends, and all the social side as well. But now the work side has clicked, she's friendlier." The teacher emphasised that the child *"was worried that she couldn't, couldn't, couldn't, and now she's found that she can. It's not just the work. It's everything."*

As can be seen from the reports of the above teachers, a similar pattern of behaviour was observed in pupils in this category of increasing proficiency in English linked to growing confidence within the child. While the teachers clearly notice, and welcome, such developments in the EAL pupils' language learning, they do not seem to offer explanations about *how* this happens, or for the conditions under which it occurs. On the contrary, the word "click" (analysed by Cortazzi, (1991) as used by British primary teachers in general) suggests a lack of explanation for learning which simply happens and remains a mystery.

Taught vocabulary

16% of the teachers, when asked about EAL pupils 'picking up' or 'cottoning on' to something, replied that they used any situation where the child was confused or unsure as a teaching situation. If, for example, a child was unable to follow an instruction because he or she didn't understand it, or did not know the meaning of a particular word, then the teacher would explain it, as part of the teaching and learning process within the classroom.

One teacher replied in answer to this question, *"No, not really, because if they don't understand, we tend to show them. If we say, "Go and get a pinafore" and they look at you as if to say, "Well, what's that?" you go and show them a pinafore."* While this shows that the teachers see the need for modelling action, mime or demonstration, it may also reveal the teachers' lack of awareness of alternative strategies to help the children develop lexical meanings.

Another teacher commented that there were lots of instances of vocabulary misunderstanding *"where you have to be alert and aware and observing them - picking up on them"*. A third related that during a geography lesson, some EAL pupils did not know what a tent was, and said learning this would be part of the teaching process.

In this category, therefore, teachers responded by stating that occasions when EAL pupils had acquired a skill or a concept was as a direct result of teaching.

Developmental

An equal percentage of teachers (16%) in this category responded that noticing an EAL pupil acquire a concept, 'pick up' or 'cotton on' to something was part of the developmental process. As mentioned previously, these 'breakthroughs in learning' have been analysed by Cortazzi (1991).

One teacher explained, *"With all children, there's a developmental stage, and they suddenly think "Ah yes, I've got it". This teacher believed that this was "not just a bilingual issue," but that it was also "a lot of developmental stage"*.

Another teacher stated that *"there are many times when you see the little light go on"*. This teacher referred to specific pupils who were very bright and would 'pick up' or 'click on' to something quite often. These pupils were compared to another child who could not speak any English when he entered school. This child had made 'fantastic progress', but had had to concentrate much harder to understand what was going on. The pupils were all developing and progressing, but this had been much easier for the former pupils than for the latter child.

A further teacher commented on a pupil who was not responding well, *"yet her work isn't so far behind to have warranted her being that slow"*. The teacher concluded that there must be 'cultural factors' which were slowing the child down from her expected level of progress.

A different situation was given by another teacher who commented on the rapid progress of a particular child. The teacher ascribed his progress to a developmental process, aided by a good attitude at school. She commented that the child had good listening skills and was keen to learn and had therefore benefited from being at school.

Overall, these teachers spoke about child development in, presumably, Piagetian stages, in that each child develops at an individual rate. There were, however, references to language and culture, as reported above. Yet these references were not elaborated. The use of metaphors (click, etc.) for learning was also unelaborated and it may seem, on this evidence, that the teachers did not have explanations for language or conceptual learning, beyond using metaphors.

7.3.5. Perceived problems of EAL pupils in the English classroom.

Category	%
Not understanding/lack of English	60
Different experiences/background	55
Communicating with parents	8
Lack confidence in speaking	8

Table 7.8. Perceived problems of the EAL pupils noted by teachers.

Not understanding/lack of English

60% of the teachers interviewed stated that EAL pupils had problems with not understanding classroom discourse, and with a lack of English. 44% of the interviewees specified not understanding as a problem for these children, and 16% referred to a lack of English. 8% of teachers mentioned both. The percentages have been combined because the pupil's lack of understanding was implied to be a result of their lack of English language acquisition. Some of the statements made are recorded below to illustrate this category.

One teacher commented, *"Interpretation and understanding is a big one isn't it? So much is done by giving instruction, explaining things, discussions. Introducing new topics. In fact, virtually everything we do must be very hard for them, and hard for us to know if they've interpreted it in the right way."* This teacher thought that EAL pupils sometimes looked for 'clues' from other children to help them with their understanding. This might suggest that the teacher would be receptive to Vygotskian notions of peer tutoring and learning in collaborative groups.

Another teacher had found that *"you've got to say things twice... I've found children, not in maths so much, but maybe when you're explaining things, they haven't understood as well"*. A further teacher remarked, *"And coping with tasks that you don't understand - only half of them understand. And they do it with an air of, "Well, I'll do it, but I hope I'm doing it right."*

Particular curriculum areas were also referred to. A teacher used history as an example, where the class might be looking at photographs. This teacher had found that if EAL pupils were not understanding what was being said, then they would lose interest, start

fiddling or even become disruptive, and this was felt to be *"quite a problem"*. Another teacher referred to maths, and the difficulties pupils had with *"maths terms"*. This teacher cited the example of *mass* as a mathematical concept, and pointed out that *"in a Catholic school it would be something else altogether"*.

Other comments related to the importance of ensuring that EAL pupils had understood explanations and instruction. A teacher stated, *" I think that's one of the main things, making sure the child understands. Even if they say yes, they may not understand. They might just be trying to please you, and later you find that they haven't got a clue."* A very similar observation came from another teacher, who also emphasised the necessity for ensuring EAL pupils understood the classroom discourse. This teacher had noticed *"Children you can see who are just watching what others are doing. They haven't really understood what to do."* The teacher also observed that there were others, *"that just go their own way because they don't understand"*. A further comment was that, *"at group times, story times, they nearly all sit so nicely, but they can't possibly be understanding, just like the sound of it"*.

Therefore, overall, 60% of the teachers believed that EAL pupils had problems in an English classroom because they did not understand all that was said to them. In these responses, as stated previously, this was referred to as lack of English acquisition and limited vocabulary.

Different experiences/background

The above category was closely followed by that of teachers referring to the pupils' different experiences and different backgrounds. 55% of the teachers cited this as being a problem for EAL pupils in their classrooms. It is not clear from this account whether the teachers had used the insight presented by such incidents to consider cultural and linguistic differences in reading and to construct strategies to develop children's awareness of reading in English, or, more broadly, to build on the home/community experiences of some of the children to develop the awareness of all of them about the ranges of scripts and text conventions as an aspect of EAL or multicultural awareness.

One teacher explained her perceptions about this. *"Experience as well. Some of the topics it's quite evident that they had no past experience of at all, and yet they are part of what is considered fairly basic National Curriculum work, and most Western children would not*

find it difficult, but second language learners have had less experience of those particular things." This teacher gave an example of work about the family. The teacher had found that *"the way their family works, the extended family, you end up with more brothers and sisters than they've actually got, because of cousin-brothers and cousin-sisters, and sometimes it's very difficult for us to know how their families are arranged, or who lives in their house, or who lives next door, or down the street, and it can make it more difficult for them when they are doing project work"*.

Another specific example was given by a second teacher, who had found some EAL pupils had difficulties with phonics, *"this sound system that we have"*. This teacher spoke about pupils who had a lot of initial difficulties cueing into the sounds system, and would just stare blankly with a look that seemed to say, *"What on earth is she on about?"*

A further aspect was given by a teacher who referred to EAL pupils having to get *"into a new kind of (school) society"* and commented, *"Their background might not have prepared them for this, and it's a nerve wracking experience to be put into an English classroom, particularly if you can't speak English"*.

Another problem was cited by a teacher who referred to a pupil who experienced great difficulty with reading because, *"he had totally different models at home"*. This pupil was modelling his reading by following the example of his elder brother at home reading the Koran. The teacher related that, *"every single time he got his book out of the bookbag, he'd turn it upside down and back to front and start at the back. And he'd be reading it, the words, obviously mummy had helped, so he was reading ... but upside down and back to front"*. This child had obviously been supported at home, but was relying totally on memory in his reading of the book, and he was obviously unfamiliar with the text conventions in English. This gives an example of diverse practice in literacy acquisition, as discussed in Chapter 5 of this study. Again, this presents a case for raising teachers' awareness of cultural and linguistic differences in reading to enable them to construct strategies to develop children's ability to read in English, or more broadly, to build on the home community experiences of some of the children to develop the awareness of all of them about the ranges of scripts and text conventions as an aspect of the multicultural classroom.

Some nursery teachers who were interviewed mentioned perceived problems relating to different backgrounds and different experiences. One teacher had noticed that children were unfamiliar with some of the equipment, toys and materials in the school. The teacher observed, *"they do tend to go and play with it as if they haven't used it before"*. Another nursery teacher commented, *"I think they find it strange"*. This teacher believed entering school could be *"a most horrendous situation"* if there had been little pre-school experience, and that EAL pupils might have an added disadvantage because of language problems. Further comments were given by a teacher who spoke about differences between home background and school. This teacher believed, *"They do have a lot to contend with. It's amazing how easily most of them adapt"*. This was a further instance of a teacher's positive attitude towards her EAL pupils.

Communicating with parents.

Some teachers also commented on the difficulty of communicating with parents and grandparents (it is quite usual in minority ethnic families for children to be in the care of their grandparents whilst their parents are at work) 16% of the interviewees mentioned this.

One of the teachers interviewed gave an example of a typical situation.

"... communicating with parents. That's one of the big things where I feel I'm lacking, that some of the children's parents or grandparents come to see me to tell me things, and I haven't got a complete understanding of what they're saying. They haven't got a complete understanding of what I'm saying, and everybody's nodding in agreement, when really nobody knows what's going on."

The teacher believed this to be one of the 'big problems' for EAL pupils, *"the understanding between the families as well as between the actual children you're teaching"*. She had concerns about it impacting on parents helping their children to read at home. If the parents had very little English acquisition themselves, then this support for a crucial subject in their child's education must be *'impossible'*.

Problems about communication with parents, with a particular reference to developing reading skills, were also mentioned by another teacher. This teacher had found that, in her experience, some parents of EAL pupils found the structure of the English language *'confusing'*. The teacher noted that many Asian parents in particular were anxious to

support their children's reading and writing, but didn't understand the phonic system of English. The teacher related, *"When I say do you understand what I mean, they say no. And you have to go back, so again, you're almost teaching the parents as well as the child."*

Nursery teachers also found a problem with communicating with some parents of EAL pupils. One teacher explained that if a child came to school with very little acquisition of English, the problem could be compounded if the carer could not communicate either. A similar observation was made by another nursery teacher. This teacher also spoke about the difficulties of communicating with parents who did not speak English and said that it was difficult to build good relationships in such situations. An example was given of a particular child, whose *"mum speaks no English, and dad doesn't appear"*. The teacher believed that this had made the child's entry into the nursery very difficult, and had also made it difficult for the staff. Such comments indicate the need for greater home school liaison and the dissemination of practice in such situations as advocated by Edwards (1998) and Gregory (2000).

Lack of confidence in speaking

A further problem that teacher perceived EAL pupils had was a lack of confidence in oracy. 8% of the teachers commented on pupils' reticence in this area.

One teacher believed that her EAL pupils were *"not that far behind"* the rest of the pupils but *"that it's more of a problem that they lack the confidence to speak"*. The teacher had observed that EAL pupils would answer direct questions with a single word response, but would not extend this into a longer utterance. Another teacher commented on this. *"And also the confidence. If you discuss something, then you ask them a question, and they might have understood it, but they haven't got the confidence to actually answer you, because they don't feel they've got the vocabulary."* This teacher also believed this lack of confidence also transferred to other curriculum areas. She cited the example of a child who *"wouldn't play an instrument in music"* and ascribed this to the fact that the child *"probably did feel different"*. This gives another example of where increased awareness about cultural differences and learning patterns would enable teachers to respond in an informed way to their pupils' needs.

7.3.6. Teachers' opinions on the relevance of the National Curriculum in meeting the needs of EAL pupils.

Category	%
Yes	28
No	24
SATs/Assessment problems	24
Adapt the curriculum	16
Aimed at average pupil/does not cater for individual	16

Table 7.9. Relevance of the National Curriculum in meeting the needs of EAL pupils.

This question proved to be the most problematic of all those included in the teachers' interviews. There was some debate as to whether to include it in this study because of the considerable changes to the National Curriculum since it was first introduced in the 1988 Education Reform Act. This was amended in the 1993 Education Act, and a 'slimmed down' curriculum came into effect from August 1995 for all year groups in Key Stages 1 and 2. Further changes proceeded from the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy in 1998, and following this, the National Numeracy Strategy in 1999. Teachers were therefore being asked to give an opinion about an area that was being continually modified. Interviews undertaken early in this study would refer to a different curriculum to those that took place later. As one teacher remarked, *"I'm wary of commenting at this stage because it's all in a state of flux, and we're not sure what's in the National Curriculum any more"*. It was decided, however, to include this question to learn more about how teachers' opinions on how well the National Curriculum overall catered for the needs of EAL pupils between 1993 and 1999. In addition, as Wertsch points out, sociocultural study should have an historical perspective. Comments and observations were therefore analysed following the same procedures as the previous questions.

In addition to the difficulties of the shifting National Curriculum, teachers had a wider spread of views about how well the National Curriculum was relevant to EAL pupils and many discussed wider issues than in the previous questions.

'Yes' responses

Of the 28% of teachers who believed that the National Curriculum did cater for the needs of EAL pupils, 20% added qualifying statements. This left 8% who gave a positive response without any criticism.

One of the teachers in the latter category believed, *"It actually might help" as teaching would be more structured. Instead of saying to the child, "Go and write some news," it was now a case of setting a task and explaining how to do it. This teacher also thought that the introduction of group reading would be advantageous for EAL pupils because "the ones that are more quiet and shy, ... they're going to get more confidence to join in"*.

The 20% of teachers who believed that the National Curriculum did cater for the needs of EAL pupils, but had some qualifications made the following statements. *"I think the children I have, it seems to cater for very well, or as well as any other child. I think maybe a school where there are more New Commonwealth children who are bilingual may not find it the same."* A similar view was expressed by another teacher. This teacher felt her EAL pupils had equal access to the curriculum, but stated, *"I could see where it could be a problem. I could see where it's difficult. I can see there being problems, and needing to change the curriculum sometimes to accommodate them."*

Another teacher believed that the National Curriculum *"has got a lot to offer all children from all backgrounds,"* but added, *"you don't actually have enough time in the timetable to put in things that would really be of benefit to particular groups of children who might need to be doing more of something to help their particular cultural background"*.

A further teacher replied, *"From the children that I've had, I would say the majority, yes"*. This teacher had noted, however, that a few pupils had difficulty because of language problems, but felt that these were a minority.

'No' responses

Opposing the teachers who gave a positive response to the question of the National Curriculum catering for the needs of EAL pupils were the 24% of interviewees who gave a negative response. One teacher emphatically stated, *"No I don't think the National Curriculum caters for individuals, full stop. Nor special needs, or bilingual children, or children from different cultural backgrounds."* This teacher believed that even when

pupils had reached a *"certain level where they're speaking English fluently, and they're confident, they've got all their skills, I think there's still a little bit of disadvantage"*. The teacher compared this to being an excellent speaker of French, but still being at some disadvantage in France compared with native speakers. She therefore concluded, *"The National Curriculum doesn't make a lot of allowances for that"*.

Another teacher commented that she thought that the National Curriculum, particularly in the way it was worded, was *"a bit above most of the children in this school"*. This teacher expressed concerns about the speaking and listening skills of EAL pupils, and was unsure whether it was she personally who was not able to cater for the language needs, and not able to deliver a full curriculum to them. Specific curriculum difficulties were mentioned, such as the language difficulties in explaining about significant historical personalities.

Another recount involving history was given by a further teacher. This teacher did not believe the National Curriculum catered for the needs of EAL pupils. The teacher referred to a situation in a secondary school. A particular pupil in a GCSE History class did not understand the difference between a fact and a point of view. *"No matter how many times you explained it to him he didn't have the background English to understand that saying, "This artefact is made of silver, " is a fact, and saying, "This artefact may have been worn by a princess or a queen." is a point of view."* The teacher believed that the current curriculum involved understanding, whereas in the past the pupil could have relied on rote learning of dates and events. This meant not only learning content, but concepts as well, which the teacher summarised as being *"very, very difficult"* for some EAL pupils.

A further teacher stated that the curriculum did not *"take account of language differences"*. A similar statement came from another teacher, who observed, *"Thinking about the English, there's lots of speaking and listening, and following instructions, which if they haven't got the English language to do that, there's going to be a problem"*.

A general perspective was given by one teacher who did not believe that the National Curriculum catered for the needs of EAL pupils. This teacher stated, *"Their whole cultural background, reading books and literature and history is very different. Are we saying we don't value their literature, their arts, their music? That could be the message that's coming across to them."* This teacher encapsulated the need for increased knowledge about the social and literacy cultural practices of minority ethnic groups.

Assessment/SATs problems

24% of the teachers spoke about difficulties in assessing EAL pupils in teacher assessment and SATs, in response to the question of how well the National Curriculum met the needs of their EAL pupils. Assessment of pupils and SATs are statutory in schools, and thus can be included in this area of discussion.

One teacher stated, *"When we're testing, and testing their concepts, we haven't got the ability to test their concepts in another language."* This teacher also pointed out that there were no bilingual teachers on the staff. A similar viewpoint was put by another teacher, who perceived the need for qualified mother-tongue support to assess pupils' competencies. This teacher believed, *"It needs to be somebody trained to know what their right stage is, so having a mum, or someone like _____, who isn't actually a qualified teacher, you can't always be quite sure that what they're saying is true. It may just be their opinion. They need to be specifically trained for this age, to know what signposts they are looking for."*

Another teacher also spoke about the problem of having access to qualified bilingual support. This teacher specified the difficulty of *"getting someone to come in"* and support the SATs, and also spoke about the funding aspect and the associated paperwork. The teacher stated, *"If you've got a child that speaks very little English, then you can't do your teacher assessment accurately, 'cos you're not aware of what the child is actually answering, and what they know. Are they actually getting everything they know down on paper? 'cos a lot of the time, it would be a lot easier for them to explain it in their language than it is in English, so I think they're at a disadvantage immediately."*

A comment about SATs also came from one of the teachers who overall believed that EAL pupils had few problems with the National Curriculum. This teacher spoke about a very able EAL pupil, who was predicted to achieve a Level 3 SATs, but had failed the reading comprehension and only achieved a Level 2. Although this would be the norm for the pupil's age, because of his good ability in decoding, and because he was an able pupil, he had been predicted to achieve a higher grade. The teacher commented, *"He only got Level 2 because he couldn't talk about the text... he didn't articulate"*.

There were concerns among teachers, therefore, about difficulties attached to the assessment of EAL pupils and to SATs. These were largely language based, in that either

there was no adequate mother-tongue support, or that the child's English language acquisition was not well-developed enough to allow the child to achieve the higher levels of SATs.

Adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of EAL pupils

16% of the teachers who were interviewed spoke about their perception of having to adapt the curriculum to cater for the needs of their EAL pupils. 12% of these were nursery teachers. Although they too had been subject to changing guidelines for early years education, they felt they were able to adapt their practice to cater for the needs of EAL pupils because they were outside statutory regulations for Key Stages 1 and 2.

As one of the teachers stated, *"Well, we are more flexible. That's because it's a wide area of knowledge and understanding. We can put a lot into that - language. Yes, I think we can put a lot more in, and we also have more staff."*

Another nursery teacher explained that *"the way we've interpreted it"* ensured that the curriculum matched the needs of EAL pupils. The teacher involved bilingual support staff in the planning *"so they will support what we've been doing"*. It was also stressed that if there was any concern that EAL pupils were *'missing out'*, then the bilingual staff would provide support in the appropriate language. The teacher concluded, *"Yes, I would say that we do cater for them"*.

Within Key Stage 1, comments were made on the importance of adapting practice to meet the needs of EAL pupils. A teacher stated, *"You have to adapt the curriculum for them at their level so they can share, and work with the curriculum in their own way"*. A further comment was that there was *"room for improvement"* in extending and widening the curriculum, for better resources and for delivery of the curriculum.

Aimed at average child/doesn't cater for individuals

Of the teachers who were interviewed, 16% expressed an opinion that the curriculum was aimed at the average child, and that it did not cater for individuals. This included EAL learners at an early stage of English acquisition, but teachers also referred to pupils designated as SEN and those in inner-city schools. The latter two categories might also include EAL pupils, but teachers were giving a general overview of the curriculum inclusive of all pupils.

One teacher stated that the National Curriculum *"is very directed at white, middle-class children"*. Nevertheless, the teacher had found that her EAL pupils were *"very bright"* and *"very able"* and that the curriculum catered for *them "very well, or as well as any other child"*. She did feel, however, that there might be problems *"further up the Key Stages, and in different areas"*.

A second teacher believed that the National Curriculum did not cater for SEN pupils. This teacher stated, *"It goes over their heads. SEN pupils get lost."* He also noted that, *"It can be the same for those with poor language skills"*. This particular teacher felt strongly felt that whether or not the curriculum catered for EAL pupils was very much an *"individual thing"* and that each pupil had individual needs that needed to be met.

Another teacher compared SEN pupils and EAL pupils as both having individual needs. The teacher commented that, *"within the curriculum, there's no sort of exception"*. She believed that, *"the National Curriculum doesn't make a lot of allowances"* for EAL pupils. This was also the case for SEN pupils, in the teacher's opinion. *"But it's the same for SEN pupils. It doesn't make allowances for their special needs."* The teacher concluded that the National Curriculum was *'lacking'* in catering for the needs of pupils with special requirements.

7.4. Concluding remarks.

This chapter has given an analysis of the interviews undertaken with the Project Managers of the Section 11 Service and with mainstream teachers. The Project Managers believed that a key objective of their work was to raise awareness about linguistic and cultural issues related to the teaching and learning of EAL pupils in schools. The primary concern of the teachers was with the level of English proficiency of their minority ethnic pupils. This emerged in all relevant sections of the interviews.

The Project Managers were aware that the Service had to change perceptions and practice in schools in addition to the practical issues of providing support to staff, INSET and resources. The interviews with the teachers were useful in indicating the level of awareness which existed in schools. They were also useful in providing teachers' own assessments of their particular training needs and the type of support they would most welcome in their classrooms. The teachers themselves acknowledged a need to know more

about their pupils' cultural backgrounds. Such knowledge could inform them about the key area of home language and literacy practices, and this could be used to guide their teaching. One aspect of the teachers' awareness about the language learning needs of their EAL pupils that this study addressed was vocabulary comprehension. The results of the pupils' vocabulary test are in the following chapter, and these are subsequently compared to, and contrasted with, a teachers' questionnaire.

CHAPTER EIGHT: RESULTS AND ANALYSES OF PUPILS' VOCABULARY TESTS AND TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRES

Introduction

A key objective of this study was to examine the hypothesis that EAL pupils reading at the same surface proficiency as their L1 peers did not have the same level of understanding of key lexemes within the text. It was further argued that any language comprehension barriers might affect EAL pupils' development of concepts, with a possible effect on their learning. It was also argued that teachers might be largely unaware of these possible comprehension gaps. They might presume that, because both groups of pupils could decode the text at a similar level, then their understanding was also parallel.

To test this hypothesis, vocabulary tests were undertaken with one hundred Year 2 school children, consisting of fifty EAL pupils and fifty L1 pupils. The tests consisted of twenty-seven lexemes. The way in which these tests were compiled and administered has been discussed in Chapter 6.

The overall results of the tests showed that, on the raw scores, the L1 pupils outperformed the EAL pupils on twenty-five of the twenty-seven lexemes. Seven of these lexemes were statistically significant. This was over one quarter of the total lexical items contained in the test. The key hypothesis of the study outlined above was therefore confirmed for these particular words. The L1 pupils had a better understanding of the meaning of key lexemes within the texts than their EAL peers did. The results and analyses of the vocabulary test appear in Sections 8.1 to 8.4. Following this a comparison is made between the same pupils' results in the national Standard Attainment Tasks (SATs) for the Reading Task and for Reading Comprehension, and the results of the Vocabulary Test conducted in this research. It was found that the teachers' allocations of EAL/L1 pairs broadly matched the SATs results, but did not match the findings of this study. This is discussed in Section 8.5.

The final part of this chapter presents the results obtained from the Teachers' Vocabulary Questionnaire, and gives an analysis of these results. It was observed that there was no clear match between the EAL pupils' actual understanding of the target lexical items, as found by this study, and the teachers' estimates of pupils' likely understanding of these lexemes. This is addressed in Section 8.6.

Following this, the results of pupils' vocabulary tests are compared against the results of a teachers' questionnaire. The teachers had been asked to assess the level of difficulty of some of the lexemes from the vocabulary tests for first, L1 pupils and second, EAL pupils. The teachers' rating are analysed and discussed in the final part of this chapter.

The following sections give an analysis of the Vocabulary Tests in a particular order. First, the seven statistically significant lexemes are analysed (Group 1), followed by the two units where the EAL pupils gained the higher score (Group 2). Next is a group of words which were not statistically significant, but in which the L1 group had a much higher raw score (Group 3). The final group of words are those on which both groups had a comparable score (Group 4). Each word is given in the sentence in which it appeared in the reading book used in the test to give external readers some idea of the context.

8.1. Group 1: Statistically Significant Lexemes

Emeralds

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	400	400
Actual score observed frequency	15	46
χ^2	14.75*	p<1%
Percentages	3.75%	11.5%
Nil answers	31	19
Rank order of difficulty	2	3

Table 8.1. Analysis of lexeme *emeralds*.

"Emeralds" said the rabbit. "Emeralds make a lovely gift".

Emeralds had the highest statistically significant difference of all the words in the vocabulary test. The chi-square score was 14.75, ($p < 1\%$) based on raw scores of 15 for the EAL group, compared to 46 for the L1 group. The percentage scores were 3.75% for EAL and 11.5% for L1. The rationale for these scores appears in Chapter 6: Methodology and Research Design.

Though both groups found this word problematic, it proved more difficult for the EAL cohort. *Emeralds* was second in the rank order correlation list of difficulty for EAL, and was third in the L1 list. There was, however, a considerable difference in the number of responses of "I don't know." 31 of the EAL pupils gave this response, whilst only 19 of the L1 pupils did.

Some of the wrong answers that were given can be seen to be a result of children looking for context and picture cues. The story is set in a wood, and features a girl and a rabbit. Knowing the setting and characters of the story make some of the children's answers understandable. These include "You have to find the rabbit" and "Emeralds means you've got a friend" from EAL pupils. A less comprehensible answer from an EAL pupil was "That means you can't do it. She's afraid." This might imply that the girl was afraid of the rabbit, or afraid of being in the woods, but since neither was true, the answer given shows that the pupil involved did not understand the meaning of the story.

Other answers related to the picture of a pastoral scene on the particular page on which emeralds occurred. Definitions from EAL pupils contained the following statements. "It's like a plant, but it's a little bit darker green." "Little sorts of green trees." "That means types of flowers." Some EAL pupils responded with a question. Examples of these are, "Emeralds? What are emeralds anyway? Are they flowers?" and, "Are they some kind of birds?"

There were some similar answers from L1 pupils, including berries, trees and flowers. Some examples of these follow. One pupil said, "Like some lovely flowers". Another L1 pupil described emeralds as, "Like little green berries, but you can get them big and small". A further L1 pupil stated an emerald was "A tree".

Some answers were unrelated to the context. In these examples, the pupils were hazarding a guess. Two answers from L1 pupils can be given as examples. One pupil asked, "Is it a

car?" Another guess was, "Like a little star that you win". This child explained that his answer was connected with a computer game, which had different levels of achievement, including an emerald star level. This particular answer was interesting as it indicates that the schemata that the child brings to the reading and comprehension process, can, as on this occasion, lead to a misconception.

Overall, *emeralds* proved to be a difficult word for both groups, but statistically more significantly difficult for EAL pupils than for L1 pupils.

Tea

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	300	300
Actual score observed frequency	34	73
χ^2	13.49*	p<1%
Percentages	11.3%	24%
Nil answers	0	0
Rank order of difficulty	6	14

Table 8.2. Analysis of lexeme *tea*

The Tiger who came to *tea*.

The second most statistically significant word in the vocabulary test was *tea*. This had a raw score of 73 for L1 pupils and of 34 for EAL pupils. The chi-square score was 13.49 (p<1%). This word was ordered at number six on the rank order of difficulty list for EAL pupils. In comparison, it was ordered fourteenth on the L1 list. The EAL pupils scored 11.3% compared to an L1 score of 24%.

It can be argued that this particular word, and the children's interpretations of it, show different patterns of cultural awareness. In the story, the tiger comes for *tea*, i.e. an afternoon meal. Most English children would be familiar with this. To be invited to tea would be understood as an invitation to a light meal between lunch and dinner. 'Tea-time' is a familiar ritual in English social customs. By contrast, an invitation for coffee would be understood to be just that of sharing a beverage. In the vocabulary tests, 64% of the EAL pupils referred to tea only as a drink, despite the context of the story, compared to 26% of the L1 pupils. This would seem to indicate that the notion of *tea*, as in tea-time, is less familiar to EAL pupils, and shows evidence of cultural differences.

A further example of culture specific examples can be found in comparing definitions given by pupils from both groups. When asked what *tea* meant, an EAL pupil gave the Gujarati word for tea, which is *chi*. By contrast, an L1 pupil said, "something that you drink in the morning that wets your whistle". Both of these pupils referred to *tea* as a beverage, which it was not in the context of the story. However, it is not probable that the L1 pupil would be familiar with the Gujarati word for *tea*, or that the EAL pupil would be familiar with the idiomatic expression "wets your whistle". These two answers would therefore seem to indicate cultural differences within the category of pupils who only referred to *tea* as a beverage.

Three of the L1 pupils specified that there were two kinds of tea, "one that you drink tea, and two, that you have tea to eat." Two of the pupils asserted that, in the story, *tea* had the latter definition. One pupil said, "Where you have some sandwiches. It doesn't mean tea that you drink." The second pupil said, similarly, "But it doesn't mean the *tea* that you drink." None of the EAL pupils mentioned any such distinction.

Some EAL pupils did, however, give instruction on how to make tea. Five of them outlined this process, compared to only one from the L1 group. An EAL pupil said, "You get a teabag, and you put hot water in and you drink it". The single L1 pupil stated, "Where someone does it with a kettle, and they boil water and put a tea bag in, and milk and sugar". Although these numbers were small, it might be an interesting survey to investigate if instructions featured more largely in EAL responses in a larger pupil study.

Overall, L1 pupils were able to give a more correct definition of *tea* in the story than their EAL partners. A probable explanation for the large differences between the scores is that

of culture. Tea-time is an English tradition and the result indicates that many EAL pupils are unfamiliar with this.

Statue

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	800	800
Actual score observed frequency	87	129
χ^2	7.8*	p<1%
Percentages	10.8%	16.1%
Nil answers	1	0
Rank order of difficulty	5	8

Table 8.3. Analysis of lexeme *statue*

The balloon was on a *statue*.

Statue was the third most significantly different word in the vocabulary test, with a chi-square score of 7.8 (p<1%). This shows, that within, the context of the test, L1 pupils were much significantly aware of the meaning of this word than their EAL partners were. It was eighth in the rank order of difficulty for L1 pupils, and fifth for EAL pupils.

In the test, the picture of the statue was covered. This meant that pupils had to rely on text cues, which were limited without the picture cue, and their own schema. Within the eight acceptable criteria, L1 pupils scored 16.1%, whilst EAL pupils scored 10.8%. The word was a difficult one for both sets of pupils, but the high number of criteria would also have influenced the scores.

There are no obviously apparent reasons to explain the differences in EAL and L1 scores for this particular word, as, for example, *tea* as an English social custom was used to

explain the highly significant different score of the previous word. Statues are also common in the Indian sub-continent. Many Hindu homes in India or in Britain, for example, have a shrine with a statue of a god. There are also large statues erected as monuments also seen in temples in India and in Leicester. The situation is different in Africa and the Caribbean, where few statues exist. Wooden carving would be more common in these areas. However, the African/African Caribbean number of pupils in the study was small, and would not have produced the highly significant difference alone.

This would seem to indicate that the word was more unfamiliar to EAL pupils than the concept. This word would not be a high frequency word, or a key curriculum word, for pupils of this age. It is highly probable, however, that all of the pupils would have seen British statues in Leicester city centre. One L1 pupil said, for example, "It's always in town". Most pupils would therefore have viewed a statue, but the results indicate that EAL pupils were less aware of the term for one, and they may not have been taught the lexical item in school.

One of the EAL pupils did state that, "In India there are statues". The remainder of his answer showed a good awareness of what a statue was. "They put it up, like famous people who died, and some are still alive." Another EAL pupil referred to "Nelson's column, in London," which showed that he had seen a statue, a very famous one in fact, and was able to recall this information and name it. By contrast, a further EAL pupil showed a total unawareness of the meaning of the word when he said, "It's a balloon".

There were some illustrative descriptions of statues, though these could not be awarded extra marks since they were outside the set criteria. An L1 pupil described a statue as being "carved out of stone." Another L1 pupil stated, "It's a rock where it's been carved into a person who's important". The use of the verb *carved* in both of these answers was good for pupils of this age. A further L1 pupil added to her definition, "and birds can sit on it". There were also references to "Queen Victoria" and "Diana". An EAL pupil added, "It's a lion and it's just standing there," which may have been a reference to the stone lions in the city's town hall square.

The pupils' response showed that many of them knew *statues* as a P.E game common in schools. The rules of the game are that children run about until they hear the command "Statues". They then have to stand still, and at any sign of movement they are out of the

game. The winner is the person who remains after the majority are 'out'. Overall, 40% of the pupils gave an answer which related to this game. The highest percentage of 22% came from the EAL group, whilst 18% came from the L1 group. Definitions from the EAL group included, "When you go like that and you stay still," and "You have to stand still". Some L1 descriptions were "Somebody that it's not moving" and "it's a person what's standing still". This again indicates how pupils draw inferences, and how their apparently held schemata can lead to the incorrect concept.

The game of statues frequently incorporates the instructions "Stand still" or "Freeze". This could be an explanation for the common use of the adverb still as a descriptor. Overall, 38% of pupils used this, with an equal number from each group making the total. 'Freeze' or 'frozen' was used by 6% of the EAL group, but not used at all by any of the L1 group.

Bluebottle

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	300	300
Actual score observed frequency	7	19
χ^2	6.75*	p<1%
Percentages	2.3%	7.3%
Nil answers	1	2
Rank order of difficulty	1	2

Table 8.4. Analysis of lexeme *bluebottle*
"I am blue", said the bluebottle.

Bluebottle was the fourth most highly statistically different word in the vocabulary test, with a chi-square score of 6.75, which gives a 1% significance level. This word was the one EAL pupils had the most difficulty with. It appeared in first place on the rank order of difficulty list for these pupils. It was also a difficult word for L1 pupils, and was listed second in the rank order of difficulty for this group. The percentage scores were low, being 7.3% for L1 and 2.3% for EAL.

This word had only three criteria, and it appeared in a very simple text. In order not to make the definition too easy, the picture was covered. The pupils therefore had to rely on the text, and the fact that bluebottle was a single word. In the pilot test, pupils had scored highly with this word, when the picture cue was available. It became much more difficult when this was withdrawn.

The most common answer was, "It's a bottle and it's blue" or variations of this. Overall, 63% of the pupils gave this type of definition. There was, however, a significant difference between the two groups, with 72% of the EAL pupils describing 'a blue bottle' against 52% of L1 pupils.

The answers given relating to a blue bottle show that EAL pupils were less familiar with the name or label for a bluebottle than L1 pupils were. They would be as familiar with the fly of this name as the L1 pupils, so the difficulty they had with this word can be attributed to labelling. The EAL pupils also split the word into smaller ones, *blue* and *bottle*, to make meaning more often than the L1 pupils. Interestingly, none of the pupils who used this strategy, from either group, commented that they thought it should be two separate words, rather than the single one which appeared in the text.

Within the correct definitions, one EAL pupil gained the maximum score by giving a simple short answer, "It's a fly that is fat and blue". Another L1 pupil gave a much more detailed and analytical answer, but did not score as highly as all the criteria were not covered. This pupil said, "It's kind of like a fly, but two sections of the body is blue, and the head is different". This is another example of where a very descriptive answer could not gain extra marks because the test was firmly based on reading comprehension.

A proportion of the pupils gave answers relating to birds and flowers. 11% defined a *bluebottle* as a bird. There are no native bluebirds in England, for these are a North American species of songbird. It may be that the children were making an association with a blackbird. Of the 11%, 7% were L1 and 4% EAL. 6% of the L1 group also referred to flowers. These answers seemed to refer to bluebells. One of the pupils gave the following description. "It's blue and they hang down. A blue flower." This would seem to describe a bluebell.

The definitions of 'birds' and 'flowers' refer to living things, rather than inanimate objects, as in "bottles that are blue". They therefore show more awareness of the correct definition. Overall, 13% of L1 pupils gave definitions in these terms, compared with 4% of the EAL pupils. This may indicate that they had more knowledge that a bluebottle was a living entity than the EAL group, but they were not awarded a score for this.

There may also be a slight cultural difference illustrated here. L1 pupils are likely to be more familiar with blackbirds and bluebells than EAL pupils. The percentages involved, however, are too small for this to be conclusive.

Some illustrative definitions came from some of the EAL group. One pupil stated, 'It means when there's water in it, and it stays in there for so long, people pour it down the sink'. This is an obvious reference to a stagnant liquid. Another pupil stated, "A bottle what baby drinks and it is blue". A further definition was, "You need to drink tea". None of these answers were linked to the text, and must have been drawn from the children's own experiences.

This word, therefore, proved to be a difficult one for all pupils, but significantly more difficult for EAL pupils. They were likely to have scored more highly with the picture exposed, but this would also be the case for the L1 pupils, so the differentials are likely to have remained.

Flats

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	500	500
Actual score observed frequency	38	63
χ^2	5.7*	p<5%
Percentages	7.6%	12.6%
Nil answers	4	1
Rank order of difficulty	4	4

Table 8.5. Analysis of lexeme *flats*

In all the flats in Roger's house it's nearly supper-time

Flats was one of the three words that were statistically significant at the 5% level. The chi-square score was 5.7. It ranked fourth on both the EAL and the LI rank order of difficulty with percentages of 12.6% for L1 and 7.6% for EAL.

There were five criteria for this word, as opposed to three for the previous word, *bluebottle*. This could, in theory, have allowed the pupils to achieve a greater score overall for *bluebottle* than for *flats*, but they did not. Again, *flats* was one of the most difficult words for pupils, but the LI group still significantly outscored the EAL group.

It is likely that adults might use 'apartments' or 'a set of rooms' as a synonym for *flats*. The key word that the pupils used as a synonym was *house*. 66% of the EAL pupils used this in their definition, and 62% of LI pupils did also. This may have a contextual relation, as both *flats* and *house* appeared in the same sentence in the text that the children read.

Two of the pupils, one from either group, showed evidence of searching their mental lexicon for the requisite synonym. An LI pupil stated, "It means one house with loads of apart... with loads of little houses in it". An EAL pupil said, "They're called sky scrappers". Both of these pupils had apparently stored the words in their lexicon, but were not quite able to retrieve them correctly.

One EAL pupil, who had decoded the text well, and was reading fluently at a surface level, stated "Flats means if somebody squashed something, and it's all flat, like a flat paper". This was a prime example of a pupil appearing to read proficiently, but having no understanding of a key word in the text. A comparison can be made with an LI pupil who described a flat as, "It's just a roof. It's just flat." The EAL pupil made no connection with a building, whereas the L1 pupil, although demonstrating misunderstanding, had linked *flats* with *roof*, which is connected to a building. Another L1 pupil described *flats* as "It means a flat house, a really flat house". Here again, the pupil had a misconception, but the definition was related to a building. Another L1 pupil referred to *flats* as a "hotel", again, a building or a place to live.

Overall though, *flats* was one of the most difficult words for all pupils to understand and explain, it was significantly more difficult for the EAL pupils.

Met

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	400	400
Actual score observed frequency	60	89
χ^2	5.26*	p<5%
Percentages	15%	21%
Nil answers	3	0
Rank order of difficulty	10	11

Table 8.6. Analysis of lexeme *met*

She met Grandmother Yellow-hat.

Met appeared in the same text as *saw*, which was another of the target words, though not on the same page. It was anticipated that all pupils would find both words difficult, as they were verbs. However, EAL pupils found *met* much more difficult to define than *saw*. The chi-square score for *met* was 5.26 (p<5%). By comparison, the figures for *saw* were too close to allow any chi-square score. The percentages for *met* were 21% for L1 and 15% for EAL, with rank order of difficulty placed tenth for EAL and eleventh for L1.

From the semantic content of the context, one of the purposes of the book in which both the target words appeared is to enable pupils to learn to differentiate between the verbs *saw* and *met*. The text of the book is simple, and there are associated picture cues. As mentioned previously, it was anticipated that both words might be difficult to define. It is therefore useful to examine why EAL pupils found *met* significantly more difficult.

One of the reasons why L1 pupils scored more highly was because they extended their answers by giving concrete examples of 'met' more often than EAL pupils did, and these

examples included the criteria for defining 'met'. 44% of the L1 pupils gave extended answers compared to 28% of the EAL pupils. L1 definitions included, "You've met somebody. If you see somebody and you don't know them, you can say "Hello. How are you doing today? and you have met them," and, "When you have gone into a new school and you meet some new friends". These examples show the children involved were aware of *met* involving personal contact.

There were also examples from the EAL pupils. One child said. "It means where you shake hands like that. Met means you see someone .. I don't know." Another child said, "That somebody like they go to the house, or they come to see you, or meet them, or you met them on the street". These examples, however, were less frequent than the examples from L1 pupils.

Another reason for EAL pupils' low scores was that there were some 'don't know' replies. 6% of EAL pupils said this, whereas none of the L1 pupils did. There was also a slightly higher number of EAL pupils just reiterating the text, as in, "you met someone." 18% of EAL pupils did this, compared to 14% of the L1 pupils.

Within both groups, some children tackled the complexities of verb tense, and matched *met* to *meet*. Here again, the L1 pupils gave more extended answers, with examples of what they were explaining. As the number of pupils involved was small, all the examples can be quoted.

The L1 definitions were, "You're meeting someone. It's wrong to say, "I metted someone yesterday." You say, I met someone yesterday."

"You don't metted someone, so you met them."

"It's already happened. Like you met somebody before, and you keep on meeting them after."

These L1 pupils were engaged in sophisticated use of language to explain *met* in the past tense and its correct usage. Their definitions were very good for pupils of this age. These can be compared with the attempts of the EAL pupils, who found it more difficult to articulate their meanings.

Two EAL definitions were, "You meet someone. It's another word to met."

"It's short for meet."

These two answers were much less clear. The first may show some confusion about the infinitive form (to met?). The second example is also problematic, as it may not have been an attempt to explain met as the past tense of meet, but instead a genuine confusion about 'met' as a shortened form of meet.

As shown by the definitions given by both groups, the L1 pupils gave clearer answers, with appropriate examples to illustrate what they meant. In contrast, the EAL pupils' answers were ambiguous, and they did not give any illustration or examples to clarify these.

Overall, the L1 pupils performed better in defining the meaning of *met* than the EAL pupils, and this resulted in a score that was statistically significantly different.

Beard

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	400	400
Actual score observed frequency	73	102
χ^2	4.5*	p<5%
Percentages	18.2%	25.5%
Nil answers	4	0
Rank order of difficulty	13	15

Table 8.7. Analysis of lexeme *beard*

She put on a big beard.

'Beard' was the most surprising of the words that were statistically significantly different. It might be generally supposed that some EAL pupils would be part of a social group or culture where beards were more common than in the West (e.g. the wearing of beards by Sikh men). There was also a strong picture cue with this word.

Beards would also be more common in the children's life experience than would be some of the previous words, such as emeralds or statue. They would see, for example, men in the street with beards. Beards would appear on character illustrations in books, and personalities and characters on television often have beards. Despite this, it proved to be one of the most difficult words for the EAL pupils. The statistics show that they had significantly less understanding of the meaning of the word than the L1 group. The chi square score of 4.5 was significant at the 5% level. The L1 pupils scored 25.5% whilst the EAL pupils scored 18.2%. This lexeme was thirteenth in rank order of difficulty for EAL pupils, and fifteenth for L1 pupils. One factor here might be that the spelling of the word and the triphong in the pronunciation may distract attention from meaning.

10% of the EAL pupils gave a "don't know" answer, whereas none of the L1 pupils did this. This of course, would have an immediate effect on the scores. All the pupils had the picture cue in addition to a simple text, but this did not help the EAL pupils in the reading comprehension as much as it did the L1 pupils.

The picture actually showed Santa Claus' beard and there were many references to 'Santa' in the children's answers, showing use of context and picture cues. 24% of the L1 pupils mentioned Santa, and 18% of the EAL pupils also did. Santa is an important figure for L1 pupils. They particularly liked this book because it evoked memories of Christmas, presents, celebrations, and, of course, Santa Claus. The proportion of EAL pupils mentioning Santa may have been less because not all of their families celebrate Christmas. In Western culture, however, it is an important time for children, and EAL pupils would inevitably have had experience of this both at school, and in the wider society.

Some of the comments from L1 pupils referring to Santa were, "Beard means Santa Claus' beard," and "Something that Santa wears when people go to see him". There were no extensions in these particular answers to show any knowledge of the word 'beard' outside the context of something relating to Santa Claus.

Answers from EAL pupils which related to Santa Claus included, "One of these ones what Santa has," and "You know, like Santa Claus' beard". Again, in these examples, no reference was made to any type of beard apart from that belonging to Santa.

18% of the EAL pupils referred to a beard as being a 'moustache', or 'like a moustache'. Only 2% of the L1 pupils did this. There is no obvious explanation as to why EAL pupils should relate beard to moustache more than L1 pupils. Moustache originates from Greek (Chambers English Dictionary), so there are no etymological explanations for the word being more familiar to EAL pupils. As it is a word that does not appear widely in the curriculum, it is probable that EAL pupils are more familiar with it from their home background than are L1 pupils. Some of the EAL pupils also split the word into two syllables, mus/tach, with stress on the first one.

A further reference pupils made when defining this word was to *old*, in that it was old people, and old men who had beards. 16% of EAL pupils used this adjective, compared to

6% of L1 pupils. There may be a cultural explanation for this difference, as some older men in ethnic minority groups may be more likely to have beards than their Western counterparts. One of the L2 pupils commented that, "Some of the Sikhs do (have beards)" in this context.

It can be argued that the picture accompanying the text showed Santa Claus, whom most of the children regard as an old man. This was equal for both groups, however, so it cannot stand as a valid reason for the differentiation between the groups in the use of the adjective *old*.

None of the children from either group used *adult*, or a more likely alternative for this age group, *grown-up*, as a descriptor. It was consistently *old* that was used. This indicates that children may relate beards to older men and be more familiar with older men having beards than adult or grown men. This would relate to a grandfather figure, rather than a father figure. It would also correlate with the Santa figure illustrated in the text that the children read.

Some L1 comments about beards were, "Old people wear it when they're old," with the reinforcement of old appearing twice in the statement, both as an adjective and an adverb, and, "It's a long beard and when you're old you get a beard".

EAL pupils stated, "Some old men have it on their chin," and "When you are old, you have a beard". There was therefore a definite association in 22% of the answers overall between advanced age and beard, and this was most marked in answers from the EAL pupils.

Overall, despite strong supporting cues, the word *beard* was a difficult one for EAL pupils to give the meaning of, and this was statistically significant at the 5% level. This concludes the analysis of the significantly different lexemes found by the Vocabulary Test. The next items to be discussed are those for which the EAL group had a higher raw score.

8.2. Group 2: Lexemes with a higher EAL raw score.

Cloth

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	200	200
Actual score observed frequency	28	26
χ^2	—	n.s.
Percentages	14.0%	13.0%
Nil answers	2	0
Rank order of difficulty	8	5

Table 8.8. Analysis of lexeme *cloth*

The cloth was wet. They took the cloth outside.

Cloth proved to be an interesting word as it was one of only two where EAL pupils outscored L1 pupils in the whole test. The margin was slight, with raw scores of 28 for EAL pupils and 26 for L1 pupils, and there was no statistically significant difference in the scores. It is useful to examine, however, as there are some apparent indicators as to why EAL pupils were more successful with this word. The percentage scores were 14% for the EAL pupils and a lower 13% for L1 pupils. It was fifth in rank order of difficulty for L1 pupils and eighth for EAL pupils.

The text in which the target word *cloth* appeared featured a Muslim family. They all wore traditional clothes, and much of the detail in the illustrations would be more familiar to EAL pupils from an Asian background than to white L1 English speakers. The family lived above a shop, which sold rolls of cloth, and this cloth was the target word. The context of the story, its ethnicity, and the clothing made from cloth, were all cues which proved slightly more informative to the EAL pupils than to the L1 pupils.

The most common answer from all pupils was that *cloth* was a cleaning material, as in dish cloth, floor cloth, duster and such. 50% of the L1 pupils gave answers like this, as did 36% of EAL pupils. There was, however, a 14% gap between the two groups, with L1 pupils giving this answer more frequently. Some of the definitions follow. A typical L1 reply was, "It's something that you wipe a table with, or wipe a mess up with". An EAL pupil gave quite a detailed account of wringing out a cloth, "Like if the table's wet, you have to clean it. You twist it and all the water goes out and you clean it".

There were other references to cloth as something for domestic use. 14% of the pupils said it was a towel. A further 6% referred to it as a face flannel and 4% replied that it was a tablecloth.

There were also answers referring to cloth as a carpet or decorative floor covering. 16% of the pupils responded in this way. 12% were from the EAL group and 4% were from the L1 group. Whilst the L1 answers were straightforward statements relating to a carpet or mat, the EAL answers were more complex. Answers referred to a cloth for the floor which may have meant a decorative rug. One child said, "Some kind of decoration you put somewhere on the floor." This might refer to rangoli patterns common to Asian festivals such as Diwali; these include floor designs placed near thresholds.

The most accurate answer came from an EAL pupil who said, "It's like a material we use to make clothes and stuff like that". Another EAL pupil responded, "Cotton. You make clothes from." There was evidence that some of the other EAL pupils were searching their mental lexicon to retrieve the correct vocabulary. An example of this is a pupil who stated, "It's like a little piece of material that's made out of clothes". In this instance, the pupil probably meant to say "into" or "from" instead of "out of", but did not retrieve this correctly from his personal lexicon. Another pupil said, "Like rags, but it ain't ripped". It is likely that this pupil knew what cloth was, but was either unable to select the correct vocabulary, or the vocabulary was not part of his store of English words, so he retrieved the nearest alternatives.

Most clothes in the West are now manufactured, so children would not be familiar with bales of cloth for dressmaking. However, many Asian families in particular, wear traditional dress at least some of the time, and particularly for festivals and celebration.

The children of these families would therefore be more likely to recognise cloth, as for example, a length of cloth is used to make a sari. This is a probable explanation for the Asian pupils making more correct references to cloth being used to make clothes.

Overall, it would seem probable that the culture-specific text and accompanying illustrations in this particular book were contributory to the EAL pupils gaining a slightly higher raw score.

Sting

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	400	400
Actual score observed frequency	83	78
χ^2	0.04	n.s.
Percentages	21%	19.5%
Nil answers	3	0
Rank order of difficulty	15	10

Table 8.9. Analysis of lexeme *sting*

This is a honeybee. She has one tongue and one sting!

The *sting* referred to in the text here was a noun i.e. an insect's sting. The picture was covered so that the definition would not be too easy a task, as the text was simple. The raw scores were similar, at 83 for EAL and 78 for L1. There was not a significant difference. The percentage scores were close, at 21% for EAL and 19.5% for L1, with rank order of difficulty fifteenth for EAL and tenth for L1. What was noticeable, however, was that this was the second of the only two words in which EAL pupils gained a higher raw score. This was in spite of 6% of "Don't know" answers from the EAL group.

One of the EAL pupils gave a definition that covered all the criteria, and this gained a maximum score. This was, "When they get sting, and they've got a sharp thing on the end of their tail, and it points right into your skin, and it really hurts". Another comprehensive answer from an EAL pupil covered all but one of the criteria. This pupil said, "When they get their sharp bit at the end, and they poke you with it". In comparison, none of the L1 group managed to cover the same number of criteria in their answers.

A common attempt at explanation made by members of both groups of pupils was to reiterate sting in their answer, without any further qualification. 32% of the pupils overall did this. They changed the noun *sting* to its verb form. A parallel pair of answers from EAL and L1 partners can be used as an example. The EAL pupil said, "She goes sting people, and when she stings people, bee dies". The L1 partner said, "Sting people". Another matched pair gave similar answers, with the EAL pupil stating, "It's like, say a bee's on you, if you annoy it, it stings you," and the L1 pupil's response was, "If a bee landed on you and you moved it, it might sting you. And then it would die." Although the latter pair of answers were much fuller than the former, none of the children actually responded to the required noun form. There were text cues for this, but because the picture of the bee's sting was covered, they did not have access to this clue.

Again, there were some interesting answers. An L1 pupil showed a good grasp of the word when he replied, "It's one of them little things that tarantulas have, and scorpions have, and if you touch it, it stings you and leaves a mark". By relating a bee's sting to that of a tarantula and a scorpion, the child associated the target word with rear defence weapons.

An EAL pupil answered, "One that goes on there, and it *chucks* people". The use of *chucks* was unusual. As the child had recently arrived from the Caribbean, it may be that this particular lexeme is used there. A descriptive answer from another pupil was, "When you try to hit them, they get the sting out like a tail, like a *tiger's nail*. And it hurts." If this had been an exercise in descriptive writing, the use of the simile, 'like a tiger's nail', would have scored highly.

Another answer from an EAL pupil was "Nettles". This was association, as although nettles do sting, the text concerned bees. A further pupil said, "You put *medicine* it". The use of medicine may have reflected a cultural slant on a *cure*. It would be more usual to say cream, ointment, or some other specific antidote. Another pupil said, "You have to

cook something". Although, during the test, it was often possible to trace the children's thought processes though sharing the text with them, this one proved difficult. A possible chain of association could have been that bees produce honey, which is used in cooking. This pupil, however, was not able to use the text to inform her comprehension and did not make such a chain explicit, and so it was just a surmise on the researcher's part.

A main problem for both groups in defining the meaning of this target word was identifying the noun *sting* as opposed to the verb form. If the picture cue had been available to them, it is likely that pupils would have identified the correct meaning more often. This emphasises the importance of making as many cues as possible available to pupils to assist their reading comprehension. However, ultimately pupils cannot rely on visual cues in a text or assistance from an adult if they are to read independently and, of course, even at KS1 not every text has accompanying cues and, where there are cues, these do not assist the comprehension of all possible target items (i.e. words not known by readers).

The next section of lexemes to be discussed, the Group 3 words, were outside the statistically significant level of difference, though the L1 groups gained a higher raw score on each one. They have been arranged in order of differences between the observed EAL scores and the observed L1 scores.

8.3. Group 3: Lexemes showing greater L1 observed frequency.

Fruit Salad

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	400	400
Actual score observed frequency	69	92
χ^2	3	n.s.
Percentages	17.2%	23.0%
Nil answers	5	4
Rank order of difficulty	12	13

Table 8.10. Analysis of lexeme *fruit salad*

Some apples, some oranges, some banana. Some fruit salad.

Fruit Salad had a chi-square score of 3, which made it the first subsequent word in order of difficulty outside the list of those that were statistically significant. The raw scores were 92 for L1 pupils and 69 for EAL pupils. The percentage scores were 23.0% for L1 pupils and 17.2% for the EAL groups. *Fruit salad* ranked twelfth in difficulty order for EAL, and thirteenth for L1.

There were strong word and picture cues for *fruit salad*, but on the target page, the picture was covered. The text throughout the book was simple, and the final page just read '*fruit salad*'. It is probable that the pupils would have scored more highly if they had been able to see the picture accompanying the text. It was covered to ensure that the task was not too easy, and that it would involve the child in using the preceding cues to inform his or her answer.

The most common error for both groups was to confuse fruit salad with the green salad or vegetable salad. There are some technicalities to be addressed here, as both tomatoes and

cucumbers are actually fruits. The preceding text of the book, however, had actually referred to fruits such as oranges and pineapples, so the cues were clear, and a *fruit salad* patently does not consist of either tomatoes or cucumbers.

10% of L1 and 10% of EAL pupils referred to fruit salad as a vegetable salad. Answers from the LI pupils included, "It's some salad with tomatoes in, and cucumber," and "It's some leaves of a plant". The latter answer probably referred to lettuce. An EAL pupil said, "All fruits mixed up, like cucumber, tomatoes". This was technically correct, as discussed earlier, but was not correct in the required context of the test. Another EAL pupil answered, "Like a salad. It's round and green". This was probably another reference to a lettuce.

There was evidence of one EAL pupil confusing the two types of salad. This pupil said, "Salad means there is tomato and there is strawberries and orange, and you can put cream in it, and apples and stuff".

Two examples can be given of L1 pupils associating the word with another in their lexicon. One pupil said, "You can pour it over your sandwich and you can eat it". The verb *pour* here indicates that this child was probably referring to *salad* cream. The second example is one where a pupil stated, "Where it's brown, and it's got all flicks on and a bit of grass". This pupil had a clear mental picture, but what he was describing is unclear and not obviously related to the word in question.

The majority of pupils from both groups would be familiar with fruit salad from school meals. All pupils in the participating schools commonly stay at school at lunch time, and fruit salad is regularly served. However, as a traditional English dessert, it would be more familiar to L1 pupils with the home. This may explain their higher raw score. In this particular instance, simple two-word phrases and accompanying pictures showing fruit being prepared might well be assumed to be using the child's existing vocabulary to teach the child a new lexical unit, in this case, *fruit salad*. As these results show, this is not always the case, and it cannot be assumed that children have assimilated lexical units because these appear in a simple and well-constructed text.

Eyebrows

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	300	300
Actual score observed frequency	62	82
χ^2	2.5	n.s.
Percentages	20.6%	27.3%
Nil answers	10	6
Rank order of difficulty	14	18

Table 8.11 Analysis of lexeme *eyebrows*

Mum put on big eyebrows.

Eyebrows appeared in the same book as *beard* but although the L1 group outscored the EAL group on raw scores, which were respectively L1 82 and EAL 62, the chi-square score of 2.5 was not statistically significant. The L1 percentage score was 27.3% and the EAL score was 20.6%. The rank order of difficulty was fourteen for EAL and eighteen for L1.

As an EAL pupil remarked, "Everybody's got them". Despite this, the pupils had difficulty with articulating exactly what eyebrows were. As discussed previously, one mark was given when the children correctly pointed to their eyebrows, as this gave evidence that they knew what eyebrows were, and had used the gesture to support their answers during the text.

The one pupil who gained full marks was from the EAL group. She stated, "They're like little arches of hair above your eye". This was an excellent answer, and equivalent to one that an adult might give. None of the L1 group scored full marks, though a close answer

was, "The hairs what go like a bridge," from an L1 pupil. This response, though very good, lacked the positional description that the EAL pupil had included.

However, overall, the EAL pupils confused eyebrow with eyelashes in 12% of answers, whereas the L1 group did not. One EAL pupil gave a detailed description of eyelids. This pupil said, "When you close our eyes, it covers your eyes. It goes down and covers your eyes so you can get more sleep."

The word *eyebrow* is a universal one in the sense that they are visible in most people's faces and therefore lexically available, and one it might be assumed that would be known to all the pupils. The results show that such an assumption does not hold. The text had a clear accompanying picture, but the answers given indicate some confusion, which was greater for EAL pupils. It gives evidence that it can be assumed that children have a clear knowledge of basic vocabulary, when, in fact, this is not always the case. This raises issues about the teaching of vocabulary, as discussed in this study.

Pirates

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	500	500
Actual score observed frequency	120	146
χ^2	2.34	n.s.
Percentages	24.0%	29.2%
Nil answers	5	1
Rank order of difficulty	19	20

Table 8.12. Analysis of lexeme *pirates*
The ship, the pirates...

Pirates was another word where L1 pupils outscored EAL pupils in giving a definition in the raw scores. These were 146 for L1 pupils and 120 for EAL pupils. The chi-square score of 2.34 was not, however, statistically significant. The percentage scores were 29.2% for L1 pupils and 24.0% for EAL pupils. *Pirates* was nineteenth in the rank order of difficulty for EAL pupils, and twentieth for L1 pupils.

If defining this word, *pirates*, had been a descriptive exercise, the pupils would have scored highly. There were many vivid descriptions of pirates. For example, one L1 pupil said, "They wear black hats and some of them have a cloth on their head, and it's got white spots". This, however, was a purely descriptive answer, and did not meet the criteria for defining the meaning of the word.

An L1 pupil gave a description of 'walking the plank'. He stated, "Them nasty things that come on the island to get treasure. They get kids and put them on the edge on that bouncy thing to go in the water." Although this answer did score some points, under the rules of the test no additional marks could be given for the pupil's account of 'walking the plank'.

There were also some sound effects from EAL pupils. One said, "They have swords and they say, "Arrgh," whilst another stated, "It's a pirate. Hi Ho!" Another EAL pupil referred to the captain of the pirates as a headmaster. This pupil said, "You've got a headmaster. He's head of the pirate ship."

There were many references to eye patches. In some of these instances, EAL pupils were not always able to express themselves coherently. One pupil, for example, said, "When one eye is open, and one eye is closed." Another EAL pupil said, "Somebody who's got something on their eye". Overall, 10% of L1 pupils used the term 'eye-patch' compared to only 4% of EAL pupils.

Many of the pupils in both groups gave descriptions that included peg-legs, skulls and crossbones and parrots. An example from an EAL pupil was, "They look for treasure, and the boss of the pirates had a black thing on his eye, and a peg-leg". An L1 definition was, "It's someone who is evil, and they've got one eye, 'cos they cover one eye up. They've got a black hat with four bones sticking up on it, and they're always looking for jewels and money".

Some of the children referred to pirates as people who lived in the past and did not exist any more. It is probable that many of the other children thought this, though it was not part of their answers. Examples of this idea of pirates being part of history and not the present day can be given from both groups. An L1 pupil stated, "It was from about a million years ago, and they swim in the ship". Comments from EAL pupils were "They don't live. They used to be on a boat," and "These men a long time ago. They used to find treasure."

Most of the pupils gave longer answers than the norm to this definition, and, as illustrated above, showed good use of adjectives and adverbs. Overall, they presented a view of the Long John Silver and Captain Hook type of pirate, commensurate with story books and films of this genre. The nature and extent of their responses for '*pirate*' show the popularity of such a genre, and may indicate the depth of a stereotype here.

Stream

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	400	400
Actual score observed frequency	111	136
χ^2	2.33	n.s.
Percentages	27.7%	34.0%
Nil answers	2	0
Rank order of difficulty	22	22

Table 8.13. Analysis of lexeme *stream*
The children went to the stream.

Stream had raw scores of 136 for the L1 group and 111 for the EAL group. The chi-square score of 2.33 was not statistically significant. Percentage scores were 34.0% for L1 and 27.7% for EAL. *Stream* appeared in twenty-second place in rank order of difficulty for both groups.

A common synonym for *stream* given by both groups of pupils was 'river'. 40% of the L1 pupils used this word in their answers, and 36% of the EAL pupils also did. Definitions included, "Like a river," "a small river," and "a river that runs quick".

Two of the EAL pupils gave descriptive answers referring to a stream disappearing in the distance. One child said, "It means it's loads of water and it leads far far away". A second child stated, "but we don't know where it goes". A further EAL pupil used a metaphor, "It's like a long rope of water".

Two of the EAL pupils also displayed factual knowledge in stating that a stream goes to the sea. Technically, it is a river that flows to the sea, but these pupils displayed some geographical knowledge. One of these answers was straightforward, but the other was more confused. The pupil said, "It's not like the sea. It goes to the sea, but it's like the countryside, but it's not so deep." This pupil was probably trying to say that a stream flowed through the countryside until it reached the sea, but could not formulate his answer correctly. It is interesting, however, that it was two of the EAL pupils who spoke about a river or stream flowing to the sea, whilst none of the L1 pupils did. This may indicate some more formal education from parents, as noted by teachers in their interviews, but the number of pupils involved is too small for this supposition to have any validity.

In contrast, 8% of the EAL pupils stated that a stream was a bridge. This was a result of the picture accompanying the text, which showed a group of children crossing a bridge over a stream. These pupils were unfamiliar with the word *stream*, and deduced it was a *bridge* from the picture cue. This result is an important indication that intended visual cues can negatively prove to be distortions from meanings, as well as positively supporting deductions of meanings. None of the L1 pupils gave this definition, though some included it in their answer as an extension of their explanation.

With this particular word, the L1 pupil gave more technically correct definitions overall, but the EAL pupils gave more descriptive answers.

Scarecrow

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	500	500
Actual score observed frequency	127	153
χ^2	2.23	n.s.
Percentages	25.4%	30.6%
Nil answers	4	0
Rank order of difficulty	20	21

Table 8.14. Analysis of lexeme *scarecrow*

Mum was a scarecrow.

The L1 raw score for *scarecrow* was 153 and the EAL raw score was 127. Although the L1 group outscored the EAL group, the chi-square score of 2.23 was not statically significant. The percentage scores were 30.6% for L1 and 25.4% for EAL. *Scarecrow* was twentieth in rank order of difficulty for EAL pupils, and twenty-first for L1 pupils.

This word was similar to pirates in that it evoked strong mental images, and many of the pupils used a descriptive variety of adjectives and adverbs. In some cases, the pupils gave detailed descriptions of a scarecrow, but omitted to mention its function. This occurred with 18% of L1 pupils and 15% of L2 pupils. Examples of this can be given. One L1 pupil answered, "It's this man and you make out of straw. You put gloves on it, a hat on it. You put a carrot on it. You put some patches on his clothes and you put some old scruffy boots on." Although this pupil had given a very good verbal description of a scarecrow, the fact that no function was mentioned meant that the pupil's score was reduced in the present scoring system.

A comparable answer was given by an EAL pupil. This also relied on description and did not mention function and so did not gain maximum marks. The pupil said, "They's these men, but they're not real. They're made like a hutch. Yellow thing come out. Put some old cloths and some old trousers, then they make it. They make the head, and they make some things."

It is likely that most of the pupils from both groups would have seen scarecrows in books, and perhaps on television, but not in real life. The children attended city schools and lived in the city, where they would obviously not see a scarecrow. In fact, scarecrows are not a common sight in the countryside any more, but have lived on in folklore and as popular characters in children's books. It is from these secondary sources that most children would therefore get their knowledge about scarecrows.

The L1 pupils were more familiar with the idea of a scarecrow than the EAL pupils, as shown in the raw scores. This may be because the scarecrow is a part of traditional English countryside culture, and therefore more integral to the background of L1 pupils than EAL pupils. 8% of the EAL group gave the answer, "Don't know," whereas none of the L1 group did. In addition to this 8%, there were other answers from some EAL pupils which gave evidence that they did not know what a scarecrow was. One of these pupils just answered, 'Animal'. Another pupil said, "People make on pumping day". This may have been a reference to a *pumpkin* being made into a lamp, with a cut-out face, for Halloween. The child may have confused this with a scarecrow, but this is just a surmise. A further EAL pupil stated, "It is some men and it lives in a locker and some men build in there and it's got all clothes on it". There is no obvious explanation for this answer, the child may have had a particular instance of use in mind, but it illustrates that the child had little understanding of the general meaning of the target word.

This was a popular word with the children, and on average, they gave longer answers with good use of descriptors. The L1 group outscored the EAL group because of the nil scores of some of the latter group who either answered, "Don't know," or gave an incorrect definition.

Cowboy

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	600	600
Actual score observed frequency	129	156
χ^2	2.37	n.s.
Percentages	21.5%	26%
Nil answers	7	0
Rank order of difficulty	17	16

Table 8.15. Analysis of lexeme *cowboy*

Katie saw a cowboy in a big hat.

Cowboy fitted into the same genre as both *pirate* and *scarecrow*. There were many vivid descriptive answers from both groups of pupils, though, overall, the L1 pupils again outscored the EAL pupils. The raw scores were L1, 156 and EAL, 129. The chi-square score of 2.37 was not significant. The L1 percentage score was 26% and the EAL score was 21.5%. *Cowboy* was seventeenth in rank order of difficulty for the EAL group and sixteenth for the L1 group.

A factor affecting the scores was the number of EAL pupils who answered, "Don't know". 14% of the EAL cohort gave this reply, whereas none of the L1 group did. In addition, two further EAL pupils gave answers that merely reiterated the target word. One child said, "It's a cow and a boy," and the second answered, "It's got a cow with it, and a boy's riding". These replies, in conjunction with the "don't know" answers, effectively reduced the EAL total score.

There were good descriptions from both groups of pupils. An EAL pupil stated, "They wear big hats and some cowboys have a wrestle, a shoot with Bad Black Jack. They ride

on horses and the horses go fast, and the cowboys go "Yee-hoo." This pupil was able to articulate his strong mental picture of a cowboy, with only the function, or the role of the cowboy, being omitted. Another EAL pupil gave an answer that contained fewer descriptors but more factual information, and so scored more highly. This pupil said, "A man that used to fight Indians, and it had a rope to catch cows, and, oh, I don't know, horses".

Similar examples can be quoted from the L1 group. One pupil said, "It means somebody who goes on a horse, and they have a rope, and a thing they put their gun in, and a hat". This pupil gave an oral picture of his vision of a cowboy, but, as with the first EAL example, no mention was made of function or role. A more functional answer was given by another L1 pupil. "They ride on a cow's back with hats on. Sometimes they have two pistols and they shoot the Indians if they come to attack."

It is likely that all the pupils who took part in the test knew about cowboys from television and film. Cowboys would not be part of the everyday experience of these children, just as pirates and scarecrows would not. Whilst the latter two commonly appear in children's literature, cowboys do not. The 'Western' novel is very much an adult genre. Children would not be likely to read books in which cowboys appeared. It can therefore be deduced that the pupils were familiar with the idea of a cowboy from the previously mentioned sources. This is likely to apply to both groups, as for example, watching films and videos is a popular Asian pastime, as it is for many white British families.

The answers the children gave also explained the source of their knowledge. Cowboys were often mentioned in association with Indians, as in fighting the Indians. It was interesting that only 6% of EAL pupils mentioned this compared to 18% of L1 pupils. This may be because the traditional western film, with cowboys versus the Indians, is not now politically correct. One L1 child spoke about watching a traditional Western film with his grandfather. The child said, "I watched some films with my granddad, and cowboys were against Indians". More recent films would be less likely to portray this, and this might be a reason why L1 children mentioned it more often than the EAL pupils.

Many references were also made to guns, shooting and fighting, which are common in films of this genre. The pupils did not appear to perceive this as violent or aggressive, as the element of remoteness in time or of fantasy was too strong. *Cowboys*, as one pupil

said, are "something what's a long time ago". Another pupil similarly said, "Someone who used to live in the Western days". Many children's traditional tales, such as Red Riding Hood and Hansel and Gretel are covertly violent, but are too far removed from the children's everyday experiences to have any semblance of reality. It is likely the children view cowboys as firmly belonging to the past, and so totally unthreatening.

With this target word, there were some examples of vocabulary difficulties from the pupils. These were most marked with the EAL group. One pupil defined a cowboy as, "Like it's green stuff. Like they're in this place, but they're spiky." It seems obvious that this pupil was referring to a cactus. He had cued into the initial *c* phoneme, but could not retrieve cactus from his mental lexicon, and the word he was searching for was not the correct one. Another EAL pupil said, "It's a boy and he rides on a horse and he chases after something and he throws this string and he catches them". *String* here was used as a synonym for *rope*, which the pupil could not retrieve or did not know. *Something* may also have been used in place of cow or horse. A further pupil spoke about cowboys having "ropes to strangle your neck". This pupil probably had seen a film that featured an attempted lynching or hanging, but these words, the former in particular, would be difficult for all pupils, and be outside their experience. An example from the L1 group was a child who defined *cowboy* as "Where they're in like an army". Here again, the initial phoneme *c* was a cue, but the child could not retrieve the word she was looking for, *cavalry*. This has some association with *cowboy*, but was not a correct definition. This was one of the few examples from the L1 group compared with the more frequent ones from the EAL group.

Although, overall, EAL pupils gave some good answers, they were outscored by the L1 group, though this did not reach the statistically significant level.

Jack-in-the-box

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	600	600
Actual score observed frequency	134	160
χ^2	2.12	n.s.
Percentages	22%	27%
Nil answers	5	2
Rank order of difficulty	18	17

Table 8.16. Analysis of lexeme *Jack-in-the-box*

Sam put Jack in the box.

The target lexical unit of *Jack-in-the-box* appeared in a story where a boy put his troublesome little brother, Jack, in a cardboard box. There was a play on words in the text, with the literal meaning of Jack being put into the box related to the toy of the same name. Additional marks were given for inference, where pupils were able to demonstrate an understanding of the analogy in the text.

The raw scores were 160 for L1 pupils, and 134 for EAL pupils. Although the L1 group outscored the EAL group it was not at a statistically significant level. The L1 percentage score was 27% and the EAL was 22%. *Jack-in-the-box* was in eighteenth place in the rank order of difficulty for the EAL group, and seventeenth for the L1 group.

10% of EAL pupils gave a "Don't know" answer, compared to 4% of L1 pupil. These "Don't know" answers are notable because, with this particular word, there was more than one option.

72% of the L1 group described Jack-in-the-box solely as a toy, despite the story describing how Jack was being a nuisance, and how, in exasperation, his brother finally put him in the box Jack had been clamouring to play with. This indicates that their perception of Jack-in-the-box as a toy was stronger than their understanding of the story. In comparison, 54% of the EAL pupils similarly answered with a toy description. Although both percentages are large, the 18% difference between the two indicates that the L1 cohort was more familiar with Jack-in-the-box as a traditional toy than the EAL group was.

This also seems to be upheld by the larger number of EAL pupils who gave a literal description of Jack being put in a box, compared to the number of L1 pupils who did this. 18% of EAL pupils gave a literal description as against 10% of L1 pupils.

Illustrative examples from the toy category and person category can be given. EAL pupils' answers referring to a Jack-in-the-box as a toy were, "It's just like a toy, but there's a little box. There's a key. If you turn it, a funny clown comes out, with a funny nose, with springs," and, "A box with a spring, with a person on top. When you let go, it just bounces."

Examples from the L1 group were, "It's kind of like a toy, but you put it in a box, and you wheel the thing, and the Jack pops out, like a funny clown", and, "It's this box with a Jack in it, and every time you wind it up, or press a button, it pops up".

Some EAL definitions of the literal meaning of a boy in a box were, "The baby's in the box", and "You put someone, a boy called Jack, and you put it in the box, and together it makes Jack-in-the-box". L1 answers in this category included, "There's a person in a box," and, "This baby called Jack and you put it in the box".

8% of the L1 pupils grasped the inference of the story, and connected the boy, Jack, who was put in a box, with the toy of the same name. 6% of the EAL pupils also made the same connection. The L1 pupils marginally out-achieved the EAL pupils here, but the numbers were low, resulting in a 2% difference on this point.

Examples of the L1 pupils' answers in this category were, "He's put his brother in the box, or you've got a Jack-in-the-box," and "It means you can put someone in a box if they're called Jack, or it's a little box with a clown on top that springs out".

EAL pupils' definitions included, "Jack was in the box. The other Jack-in-the-box is when you spin it round and the Jack comes out," and "It means, well, it can mean a person, called Jack, in a box, or it can mean a plastic thing. You wind it up and it comes out."

The 14% of pupils who were able to demonstrate an understanding of the humour and play on words in the book scored highly. What was surprising was that the total number of pupils in this category was so small. This is particularly true of the L1 pupils who were more aware of a Jack-in-the-box as a toy, but did not connect this to the play on words in the text, and pick up on the humour. As the book is part of a popular and widely-used reading scheme in schools, many more pupils are also likely to read it without a real understanding of one of the purposes of the text, namely to draw inferences and recognise word-play in texts.

The fourth group of words which follows consists of those that had similar raw scores and no statistically significant difference. However, it must be noted that in each case, the L1 raw scores were higher than the EAL scores. As the difference was not statistically significant, the words are discussed in the order in which they appeared in the pupils' Vocabulary Test.

8.4. Group 4: Lexemes with a similar score for both groups

Spring Cleaning

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	400	400
Actual score observed frequency	102	112
χ^2	0.19	n.s.
Percentages	25.5%	28.0%
Nil answers	8	3
Rank order of difficulty	21	19

Table 8.17. Analysis of lexeme *spring cleaning*

Mum and Dad were spring-cleaning

Spring cleaning might have been expected to have difficulties for EAL pupils on two counts. Firstly, it is a traditional British custom connected with the home. Because of this, EAL pupils may have been unfamiliar with this domestic tradition. Second, it is seasonal, and as the European cycle of four seasons does not occur in most of Africa or Asia, families originating from these continents would be unlikely to be familiar with rituals associated with the seasons, in this case, traditional spring cleaning to symbolise the arrival of spring and mark the end of winter. The scores, however, were not significantly different. The L1 score for this target was 112, and the L2 score was slightly lower at 102. The percentage scores were 28.0% for L1 compared to 25.5% for EAL. This lexical unit was in nineteenth place for L1 and twenty-first place for EAL in the rank order of difficulty.

The "Don't know" scores for the EAL pupils were 16%, compared to the 6% of L1 pupils who gave no answer. There were other examples of EAL pupils attempting an answer, using a picture and text cues, but not being successful, and so demonstrating that they did

not understand the meaning of the word. One EAL pupil stated, "They're cleaning all the springs again". He was referring to spring as metal coils. This had no connection with the text, or the pictures. The pupil had apparently searched his lexicon, which held knowledge of spring as an object, not a season. If he was aware of spring as a season, he could not connect it to cleaning, as seasons are abstract nouns, not things that are cleaned, in literal terms. He therefore produced what would seem to be a sensible answer, for springs can be cleaned, whereas spring cannot.

Another EAL pupil used the text and picture cues to formulate her answer. This pupil said, "You clean all the spring toys and spring things". This answer was much easier to understand than the previous example. The picture accompanying the text showed a box of old toys, so the pupil was referring to these when she said *spring toys* and probably added *spring things* as a rider. Although this pupil did not demonstrate understanding of the seasonal nature of the term *spring-cleaning*, she was able to use its latter part to give some association with cleaning, though it was evident that the whole word was not part of her personal lexicon.

A further EAL pupil gave, "Cleaning the box" as an answer. This pupil was able to read the text well, and had related the *box* of toys with *cleaning*, and formulated an answer. This was incorrect, and demonstrated that the pupil had no understanding of the term *spring-cleaning*. This, however, would not be obvious from her fluent surface reading ability at a decoding level.

Another EAL pupil showed evidence of attempting to use the text and picture cues to define meaning. This pupil said, "In spring, you start to get stuff and you bring it down from the attic and you sell it". In the story, the children's old toys were taken to a jumble sale. The child here was using the story to deduce the meaning of *spring cleaning*, and was partly correct in that some of the criteria for definition incorporated, "you start to get stuff and you bring it down from the attic". However, the final part of the statement, "And you sell it," has nothing to do with *spring cleaning* and shows the child's deduction of the general meaning was partially correct, but that he had not understood the meaning of *spring-cleaning* in terms of a particular instance of use. This illustrates a difficulty faced by children, that of finding the limits to lexical meanings, especially when they arise in particular experiences.

Some pupils from both groups gave comprehensive answers in defining this target word. An L1 pupil said, "It means in the spring you start cleaning out the house. You keep the things you need and throw out the things you don't need." Another L1 definition was, "It means you're cleaning up everything and making the house sparkling". Although this definition did not match the first one in criteria, the use of *sparkling* as an adjective was good.

EAL definitions included, "It means, well, what you do is you clean in the spring. It's a time when you really tidy up your house," and "They were cleaning the house and they were putting the old toys up in the roof". The use of *roof* here is incorrect, as the child should have used loft or attic, but his meaning was clear.

The scores for both groups of pupils were quite close in defining *spring-cleaning*, though it could be described as a culture-laden word. Pupils were helped by strong picture cues and a simple but interesting text.

Junk

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	300	300
Actual score observed frequency	64	65
χ^2	—	n.s.
Percentages	21.3%	21.6%
Nil answers	4	0
Rank order of difficulty	16	12

Table 8.18. Analysis of lexeme *junk*
The children looked at the junk.

Junk had close raw scores. The L1 group scored 64 and the EAL group scored 65. It was also notable that all the pupils gave short definitions, as opposed to the longer, more descriptive answers for other target words such as cowboy, scarecrow and pirate. 8% of the EAL pupils gave 'don't know' answers, whilst none of the L1 group did so. The percentage scores were very close, being 21.6% for L1 and 21.3% for EAL. *Junk* was in twelfth place for L1 and sixteenth place for EAL in the rank order of difficulty.

'Old' was a common descriptor with the L1 groups. 46% of the L1 pupils used this in their definition. In contrast, only 24% of the EAL group used *old*. This was a valid criterion only when it was extended to mean old in the sense of worthless. *Old*, by itself, does not mean junk, as, for example, old antiques can be priceless. However, it is easy to see why children would use this particular adjective to describe junk, though, by itself, it could not be accepted as a synonym.

The next most common synonym was *rubbish*. 22% of the EAL pupils used this, and 20% of the L1 pupils also did. *Rubbish* was an acceptable definition of *junk* in the context in which this target word appeared, and showed good understanding of its meaning. There was one example of *trash* being used. This came from an EAL pupil. It is likely that many pupils would not be as familiar with this word as they would be with *rubbish*, as it is more widely used in North America. It was, however, an acceptable definition and showed the same depth of comprehension as *rubbish* did.

Junk appeared in the same text as the previous word, spring-cleaning. This resulted in references to the toys that were being sent to a jumble sale, such as broken toys, dirty toys and old toys. One EAL child gave a descriptive definition in this vein. She said, "Stuff like a teddy bear that hasn't got an eye. It's like something that's not new like when you bought it from the shop." Another EAL pupil stated, "All old stuff and old toys and ripped clothes that you keep for souvenirs".

The foregoing definitions were among the few that were longer than average, and both came from EAL pupils. An extended definition from an L1 pupil did not score highly, as it did not meet the criterion. This pupil said, "Lots and lots of old things, and people go and buy them, 'cos they're making money for the poor, like the Red Cross".

Answers to this particular target word were marked by short definitions, and resulted in similar scores for both groups.

Nap

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	300	300
Actual score observed frequency	87	107
χ^2	0.9	n.s.
Percentages	29.0%	35.6%
Nil answers	6	0
Rank order of difficulty	23	23

Table 8.19. Analysis of lexeme *nap*

Sometimes, Bear rests. Have a nice nap!

Nap was another target word marked by short answer from both groups. The raw scores were 107 for the L1 group and 87 for the EAL group, but this did not give a significant result. The percentage scores were 35.6% for L1 and 29.0% for EAL. 12% of the L2 pupils gave a "Don't know" answer, whereas none of the L1 pupils did.

The picture accompanying the text in which *nap* appeared was covered, so that the task would not be too easy. *Nap* could also be designated as a culture-specific word. Young children taking a nap is related to child-rearing practice in Britain. Many of the L1 pupils would be familiar with this from their own upbringing. It is also common for the elderly to take a nap, but this might be outside many of the children's experience. Despite the premise that L1 children might be more familiar with *nap* because it formed part of their cultural background, there was no significant difference in the scores, though the L1 group did score more highly on the raw scores.

The most common synonym for *nap* was *sleep*. 88% of the L1 pupil used this, as did 70% of the EAL pupils. This indicates that these pupils had a correct understanding of the word.

Comprehensive definitions, which scored full marks, came from one L1 pupil and one EAL pupil. The L1 pupil said, “A little sleep in the afternoon”. The answer from the EAL pupil was “When you have a little sleep in the day”. Both of these answers cover all the criteria for scoring, and, interestingly, there was a representative from either group.

The EAL cohort, was, however, more highly represented in the group which demonstrated little or no understanding of the word *nap*. 12% of the EAL pupils gave such answers, compared to 2% of L1 pupils. It is useful to examine all of these definitions.

The most unusual definition came from an EAL pupil who stated, “Nap means when they change their nappy”. It is clear that the child related *nap* to *nappy*, probably because *nappy* was the nearest word in her personal lexicon to *nap*, though this was totally incorrect. Another EAL definition was, “You have to play a game”. This may have been a guess, because there are no obvious lexical links, or links with the text. Two further definitions referred to food. These were, “Eat. A lovely snack,” and “You eat something”. There are two possible explanations for these answers. First, in the story, the key character, Bear had a nap after lunch. The pupils may have picked up text cues referring to lunch, and wrongly interpreted *nap* as a meal. Second, the pupils may have identified the phonemes appearing in *snack* and *nap*, and based their definition on this. The two further EAL definitions to be examined both do have more connection to the target word. One pupil said a nap was, “A nice dream”. This has an obvious relation to *sleep*, though a nap is not a dream. Another pupil said nap meant, “Have a sleep and look at a book”. Though the first part of this answer was correct, the second part was confusing. One cannot sleep and look at a book in combination. The pupil may have meant look at the book after the nap, but this would still not be part of the correct definition. This answer was ambiguous.

The single answer from the L1 pupil in this category was, “A snack or lunch”. This was similar to the answers given by the two EAL pupils who referred to a nap as a meal, and may also be a result of the possibilities cited for these previous answers, namely text cues or relating phonemes.

Although the difference in scores between the L1 and EAL groups was not significant, some of the definitions given by the latter group showed much less understanding of the word than the former. However, as discussed earlier, these examples were few and the overall scores did not ratify the premise that this might be a culture-laden word.

Trunks

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	300	300
Actual score observed frequency	141	148
χ^2	0.12	n.s.
Percentages	47.0%	49.3%
Nil answers	4	1
Rank order of difficulty	27	27

Table 8.20. Analysis of lexeme *trunks*

Kipper looked for his trunks.

The target word of *trunks* proved to be popular with both of the groups as it related to swimming. Pupils were able to relate to the story, as the majority of them visit the swimming pool as a leisure activity, and in some cases, as a school activity. There were also strong accompanying picture cues to assist the children's comprehension.

The raw scores were close, with the L1 group scoring 148 and the EAL group 141. The percentage scores were also close, being 49.3% for L1 and 47.0% for EAL. This was the easiest lexeme for all the children and it was at the last place, i.e. twenty-seventh, in rank order of difficulty for both groups. 8% of the EAL pupils gave "I don't know" answers, compared to 2% of the L1 pupils. All the answers were fairly short as this word did not

lend itself to extended description in the same way that pirates, scarecrow and cowboy did. An equal 8% from either group gained the maximum marks by giving simple, yet comprehensive answers. Examples from the EAL pupils were, “Boys’ swimming costume” and “They’re swimming shorts for boys”. L1 examples were, “Swimming pants for boys,” and “They’re swimming pool pants for the boys”. All of these short statements contained all the criteria listed for trunks, and, despite their brevity, were complete definitions.

The most frequent words used were ‘swimming’ and ‘swim’. Overall, 69% of the pupils used these words in their answers. This total was comprised of 37% L1 pupils and 32% EAL pupils, so it was frequent in the answers from both groups. ‘Pants’ and ‘shorts’ were most often used as synonyms for trunks, with some examples of ‘bathos’. This is a local contraction for ‘bathing costume’.

8% of the pupils confused *trunks* with *armbands*. This was equally divided between the groups, with 4% from the EAL and 4% for the L1. An example from an EAL pupil was, “If you can’t swim properly, you have to wear them, and then it will help you swim a bit better”. An L1 pupil said, “When you’re going to the swimming baths, you need ‘em to make you float”. It is evident that these pupils had a misconception about trunks, and believed them to be armbands. As, however, this misconception involved only a small percentage of pupils, and was spread equally across both groups, it had no significance overall.

An EAL pupil was the only one to give two meanings for trunks. This pupil said, “It’s like trunks that you put on to go to the swimming pool, and it’s like trunks on an elephant that they fight with”. The latter definition, referring to elephants’ trunks, was purely additional information, as the text and the pictures clearly showed swimming trunks. but it indicated that the pupil knew two distinct meanings for this lexeme.

For the majority of pupils, the target word *trunks* was simple to define, and there was an average short utterance across both groups when answering. Apart from the larger percentage of ‘don’t know’ responses, the two groups performed similarly, with equal numbers from both giving complete answers which gained the maximum score, and equal numbers holding a misconception about trunks.

Pillow

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	400	400
Actual score observed frequency	136	150
χ^2	0.6	n.s.
Percentages	34.0%	37.5%
Nil answers	1	0
Rank order of difficulty	24	24

Table 8.21. Analysis of lexeme *pillow*

Mum put on a big pillow.

It was anticipated that *pillow* would be a difficult word for all pupils to define. However, both groups found this word less difficult to explain than had been expected. There was just one ‘Don’t know’ answer from an EAL pupil. The raw scores were 150 for the L1 group and 136 for the EAL group. This was not significant. Percentage scores were 37.5% for L1 and 34.0% for EAL. *Pillow* appeared at number 24 on the rank order correlation list for both groups, which also shows it was one of the easier words for pupils to demonstrate understanding of.

The most common lexemes the children used were connected with *sleep*. 60% of the total described a pillow as “for sleeping,” “to sleep on” and “when you go to sleep”. This actually did not relate to the story, where a pillow was used in a non-sleeping function to pad out mum as Santa Claus. There was, however, an accompanying picture cue, and the majority of the pupils from both groups identified a pillow as something for sleeping on.

8% of the total cohort scored the highest marks for demonstrating understanding of pillow, with 4% coming from either group. The EAL definitions were, “When you go to bed, you need to lie your head on a pillow, or it won’t be comfortable,” and “You put it in your bed and you sleep on it to protect your head at night”. The L1 definitions were, “When you go to bed, sommat that you rest your head on so you can go to sleep,” and, “Something you put your head on when you go to sleep and it’s nice and soft”. Each of these pupils mentioned three of the four criteria and each missed one criterion, and there was an equal spread across both the EAL group and the L1 group.

The pupils overall performed better in defining this word than had been expected, and the scores were similar, though, following the pattern for this category of words, the L1 scores were slightly higher.

Upset

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	200	200
Actual score observed frequency	10	13
χ^2	0.17	n.s.
Percentages	5.0%	6.5%
Nil answers	2	0
Rank order of difficulty	3	1

Table 8.22. Analysis of lexeme *upset*

Penny upset her milk.

Upset has particular relevance to this study, as it was from an instance of the use of this word that the idea of a comparative vocabulary test of EAL and L1 pupils originated. It occurred when an EAL pupil was reading a text in which the sentence “Penny upset her

milk” appeared. The pupil was reading confidently and fluently. However, when she was asked, “What does *upset* mean?” she replied, “Penny made the milk cry”. The discrepancy between the child’s ability to decode the text and her level of reading comprehension triggered the idea of comparing how well an L1 pupil would demonstrate understanding of this key word.

It was anticipated that L1 pupils might show a more significant difference in comprehension with this particular word compared with the EAL pupils. However, this result did not occur. *Upset* was a difficult word for both groups of pupils within the set context, and the scores were similar, showing no significant differences.

L1 pupils had a raw score of 13, and EAL pupils had a raw score of 10. *Upset* appeared in first place in the rank order of difficulty for L1 pupils, and in third place for EAL pupils. The percentage scores were low at 6.5% for L1 and 5% for EAL.

Three of the L1 pupils demonstrated a good understanding of *upset* in their answers. These were, “When you spill some milk,” “ It means tip something over or hurt someone and make them cry,” and, “You spilled it”. Two further answers, which contained some of the correct criteria, were more ambiguous. The first was, “It means something if you spill it, and you can upset somebody”. The second answer was, “You spoil your picture and you spill your milk over, and you get upset ‘cos your mum shouts at you”.

The first three answers show a clear understanding of *upset* as meaning something was spilt or overturned. The second set of answers indicate *upset* as being a consequence of spilling milk. These children have linked the split milk with *upset*, but have not demonstrated full under-standing of the word in this context.

One of the EAL pupils gave an answer that showed that this pupil had understood the meaning of *upset* within its context in the story. This pupil said, “It means when you knock something over”. Three other answers from EAL pupils were more ambiguous. First was, “She’s very upset with the milk and she’s spilt it”. Second was, “When she’s spilt something and made a mess on the floor, her mum gets cross with her”. The third was, “when you spilt something, you get very upset”. Although these answers referred to something being spilt, they did not have the same clarity of definition that the first answer had.

In comparing the two groups, the L1 pupils gave clearer definitions of *upset* than the EAL pupils. The numbers overall, however, were too small to be significant: One EAL pupil expressed perhaps what many of the other pupils felt when she said, “That doesn’t make sense to me. Penny *was* upset. When you’re upset at people. When they do something naughty.” For the majority of the children, upset had only one known meaning, and that meant being emotionally disturbed, as in sad or crying.

The pupils frequently gave examples of being upset to illustrate their answers. Some EAL answers were, “You’re upset, like your toy went to the junk sale. It’s your favourite toy, and you are upset,” and “If someone kicks you, you get really upset.” A quite adult definition was given by one child, she said, “You’re feeling low and sad”. The use of *low* to describe feelings is quite unusual in children of this age.

Definitions with added examples from the L1 pupils included, “Upset means when you’re crying, or someone calls you fat or something,” and “When you’re not very happy, and someone keeps calling you names”.

The difficulty that most of the pupils had with this target word is another example of pupils needing to be taught that a word can have many meanings. With *upset* many pupils of both groups seemed unable to escape from the dominance of one meaning to the extension of possible alternatives. This was a particularly difficult example. Many of the pupils could read the word fluently, but only a few of them were able to demonstrate understanding of its meaning.

Vanishing

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	100	100
Actual score observed frequency	42	47
χ^2	—	n.s.
Percentages	42.0%	47.0%
Nil answers	3	0
Rank order of difficulty	26	26

Table 8.23. Analysis of lexeme *vanishing*

Biff dropped a bottle. It was vanishing cream.

Vanishing came from one of the longer stories, but there were clear text and picture cues to assist the children in giving the meaning of this lexeme. The raw scores were close, with L1 pupils scoring 47 and EAL pupils scoring 42. There was no significant difference between the groups, though again the L1 raw score was slightly higher. 6% of the LEA pupils gave don't know answers, which contributed to their lower score. The percentage scores were 47.0% for L1 and 42.0% for EAL. *Vanishing* was placed twenty-sixth in rank order of difficulty for both groups.

The most frequent synonyms the pupils used to define *vanishing* were 'disappear' and 'invisible'. 42% of the L1 pupils used these words, and 38% if the EAL pupils also did. Two pupils used 'fading away', with a representative from either group.

The most common reason for pupils not scoring was that some of them reiterated *vanish* in their answer without defining it. An example of this can be given from an EAL pupil, who gave a comparatively long answer, but did not define *vanish*. This pupil said, "Pretend you were a magician, and I was there watching, and you were there one second ago, and you

vanished off into the air". An L1 pupil, with a much shorter definition, said, "It vanishes you away". In both of these examples, neither child replaced *vanish* with a synonym. This also occurred in answers from some of the other pupils.

Although this did not prove to be one of the more difficult words for pupils to define, there were examples of misunderstandings which emerged. Four of these came from L1 pupils, and three came from EAL pupils.

The L1 definitions can be examined first. One pupil said, "That means it will turn you into a frog. It vanishes all of you". This pupil had picked up *frog*, which appeared in the text, and associated it with vanishing. Another pupil said, "Cream, and it's just cream like". This was because the collocation vanishing cream appeared in the story, and the pupil had taken the noun *cream* to be the meaning of vanishing. A further pupil said, "It's what you put on your body," which was probably another reference to *cream*. Another answer was, "It vanishes all your hands and all the dirt". The latter phrase was likely to relate to a commercial cleaning product called Vanish. This would explain the reference to dirt and might explain the transitive use quoted above. This is a further example of pupils' schema making incorrect associations.

One of the three EAL answers in this category also related to vanishing as a cleaning product. This pupil said, "Means it's a cream, and if you get anything on the table, like stains, you put the vanishing cream on it and it will come off". The two further definitions also referred to *cream*. One was, "It means you can't see if you've got cream on". These pupils were using cream as a synonym for vanishing by incorrectly deciphering text and picture cues.

However, these examples of misunderstanding were quite small. The total scores overall would have been greater if some pupils had not reiterated *vanish* in their answer without any other definition. There were also examples of good answers from both groups. An EAL pupil said, "When you just disappear like magic," and an L1 pupil said, "It's like you go away and you're fading". Both groups of pupils were able, overall, to successfully use text and picture cues to support them.

Saw

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	300	300
Actual score observed frequency	42	45
χ^2	—	n.s.
Percentages	14.0%	15.0%
Nil answers	1	0
Rank order of difficulty	8	6

**Table 8.24. Analysis of lexeme *saw*
She saw Mrs. Blue-Hat.**

The test for *saw* (used as the past form of the verb) resulted in similar scores for both groups. Again, the L1 group achieved a higher score of 45 compared to the EAL score of 42, but the difference was minimal and statistically not significant. One EAL pupil gave a "Don't know" response. The percentages were close, being 15% for L1 and 14% for EAL. *Saw* was in sixth place in rank order of difficulty for L1 pupils, and in eighth place for EAL pupils.

Overall the scores were low. This was expected, as *saw* would be difficult for adults to define, and here pupils of seven were being asked to undertake this task. The reason why the pupil score was low was because the majority were unable to find a synonym for *saw*. Only a few of the children used *look*, which might have been expected to be a suitable alternative for children of this age. What most of the pupils did was to give examples of *saw*, as in the following definition from an EAL pupil, "Saw means if I saw a book. I saw a box. I saw a teddy bear in the town." The other strategy that pupils used was to change *saw* to *see*, as in, "Where you see a cow or a dog, or a man, or a Santa, or a girl or a pig" as one L1 pupil did.

Saw

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	300	300
Actual score observed frequency	42	45
χ^2	—	n.s.
Percentages	14.0%	15.0%
Nil answers	1	0
Rank order of difficulty	8	6

Table 8.24. Analysis of lexeme *saw*
She saw Mrs. Blue-Hat.

The test for *saw* (used as the past form of the verb) resulted in similar scores for both groups. Again, the L1 group achieved a higher score of 45 compared to the EAL score of 42, but the difference was minimal and statistically not significant. One EAL pupil gave a "Don't know" response. The percentages were close, being 15% for L1 and 14% for EAL. *Saw* was in sixth place in rank order of difficulty for L1 pupils, and in eighth place for EAL pupils.

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It was because so many of the pupils' answers followed this pattern that the scores were low. 88% of the L1 pupils gave this type of answer, as did 82% of the EAL pupils. Only two of the EAL pupils and one of the L1 pupils replaced *saw* with look. The EAL definitions were, "When you look at something and you see it," and "She looked at her". The definition from the L1 pupil was, "Jennifer looked, saw her nana, but it means she just looked at her".

Five of the pupils used verb tense in their explanations, in one case using the term 'past' (one would not expect the use of metalinguistic terms such as 'past tense' with this age group). Four of these were from the L1 group, and one was from the EAL group. It is interesting to note the differences in these definitions. The L1 pupils said,

"You seen something. Instead of saying 'I seen', you say 'I saw'".

(This shows the local dialectal use of the "seen" as a past simple form, rather than the standard English past participle; this is also found in children's usage as a developmental feature.)

"Little babies, if they don't know how to say the word properly, they say, 'I seed'."

(Again "seed" is a feature of child acquisition of English, applying the regular past form to an irregular example).

"It means when you see something, but we say saw, or it doesn't make sense."

"Like you see somebody. Yesterday I see a dolphin. It doesn't make sense, so they invented saw. Saw is in the past."

These pupils demonstrated by their answers that they were aware of the complexities of verb tense. The answer from the EAL pupil, however, was much more ambiguous. This pupil said, "When you have just seen something, but it's short for seen".

This pupil was possibly explaining 'saw' as a contraction of *seen*, which it is not. His answer showed some indication of a focus on verb tense, but the nature of this focus was much less explicit and comprehensive than the L1 examples. Verb tense in English is

difficult for the majority of EAL learners to master, of whatever age, and this was an example of how much more successful L1 pupils were in understanding it and to some extent explaining it.

Some of the pupils gave dual definitions. An EAL example was, "There's two kinds of saw. Saw in a reading book. Saw that you chop with." An L1 dual answer was, "A saw that you use to cut wood, and you saw somebody".

Saw was also related to *sore*. Three of the EAL pupils gave this type of definition and one of the L1 pupils did. The L1 pupils said, "When you got a cut and it's sore on you and it's hurting". A similar EAL definition was, "When you get a cut and a bit of dirt gets in it, and it gets sore." None of these definitions related to the text, and they provide further examples of instances where pupils do not use context to promote their understanding of vocabulary.

There were two unusual definitions, one from either group. An EAL pupil said, "It's a sword. The letter begins with *s*. It makes a word." This pupil had a focus on the phoneme, rather than on vocabulary. Another EAL pupil said, "You have to run away". The connection here might be that because of something that you saw, you had to run away. The pupil may have picked this definition up from the context of the book. It was, however, not a correct definition.

Saw was one of the three verbs which appeared in the vocabulary, with *met* and *sink* being the others. Overall, the pupils struggled to explain the meaning of *saw*, and were not able to retrieve the apparently obvious synonym of *look*. This indicates the need for all pupils to be taught about synonyms for verbs in addition to nouns.

Sink

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	400	400
Actual score observed frequency	142	155
χ^2	0.48	n.s.
Percentages	35.5%	38.7%
Nil answers	0	0
Rank order of difficulty	25	25

Table 8.25. Analysis of lexeme *sink*

It can float! It can sink!

Sink, as a verb, was a comparatively simple word for both sets of pupils to define. The L1 group again scored higher with a raw score of 155 compared to the EAL group score of 142, but there was no significant difference between the scores. No members of either group gave "Don't know" answers. Scores for both groups would have been higher, but the wide spread of criteria affected this. The percentages were close, being 38.7% for L1 and 35.5% for EAL. *Sink* came in twenty-fifth place in rank order of difficulty for both groups.

An interesting pattern emerged from the pupils' definition of *sinking*. Only 24% of L1 pupils and 12% of EAL pupils used *under*, as in *go under the water*, as a substitute for *sinking*. The majority of the pupils from both groups instead used *go in* the water, often with an additional explanation, or *go down* in the water. The proportion of L1 pupils who used *under* was much greater than the proportion of EAL pupils who did, but it was still less than a quarter of the cohort. This indicates pupils needed teaching and learning activities based on spatial awareness vocabulary.

The EAL pupils in particular, had some difficulty in expressing themselves coherently, though they were able to demonstrate an understanding of the verb *sinking*. One EAL pupil said, "You are *falling*, down the water". There was some debate among the raters about this pupil's use of *falling*, but his answer would have been clarified if he had added *under*, for example, in "You are falling down under the water".

Another EAL pupil said, "You going down from the water". Again, in this example, if *under* had been used instead of the preposition *from*, the definition would have been much more coherent, i.e. "You (are) going down under the water". A further example was "Like you sink *on* the water". Here again, if the preposition *on* had been replaced by *under*, the definition would be clarified, as in, "Like you sink under the water". Another pupil from this group said, "They go *inside*, just like quicksand, and they don't like it". This is another example of an incorrect use of a preposition.

Some answers from EAL pupils included one of a pirate's boat sinking. This pupil said, "If someone, if there were two pirates and one pirate shot a gun, it will sink. The pirates will sink." This had no connection with the text being read, but probably referred back to the earlier book about pirates. The pupil was not able to define sinking, so he instead substituted an example. Another EAL pupil said, "When you're just too heavy and you can't stay on top of the water". This pupil substituted "can't stay on top of" for sinking, using an opposite lexical unit for definition.

The L1 group also produced some more unusual answers. One pupil gave a definition of drowning. He said, "Sink means if you're in the water, you say, "Help me, I'm sinking. You go down in the water and you come back up, then sink." This was a realistic recount of *drowning*, though the pupil did not use this verb, or *under*, using *go down in (the water)* instead. Another L1 pupil said, "If you're in the water, and you're too small for it, you might sink". *Too small* here probably related to the water being *too deep* for a child. A further L1 pupil gave additional information, saying, "You sink down in water, or mud, it it's too wet". This imparted the information that one can sink in mud as well as in water.

The children's responses overall to this word showed they had a good understanding of sinking. There were some examples of using floating as an opposite, as in *sinking and floating*. The simple text gave good support for reading comprehension, and the

accompanying picture was clear. Nevertheless, what did emerge was that the majority of the pupils were unable to use a full range of spatial awareness vocabulary.

Pails

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	300	300
Actual score observed frequency	41	49
χ^2	0.1	n.s.
Percentages	13.6%	16.0%
Nil answers	23	20
Rank order of difficulty	7	7

Table 8.26. Analysis of lexeme *pails*

In go the fish heads. In go the pails.

It might have been expected that the L1 pupils would score highly with this particular target word. *Pails* appears in traditional tales and nursery rhymes, which L1 pupils might be more familiar with than their EAL peers. The raw scores, however, were very close. L1 pupils scored 49 and the EAL pupils scored 41. These were not statistically different. The percentage scores were low at 16.0% for L1 and 13.6% for EAL. *Pails* was at seventh place in rank order of difficulty for both groups.

38% of the L1 pupils were able to define a pail as a bucket. 36% of EAL pupils also gave this synonym as a definition. This word, however, was notable because of the high number of "Don't know" answers. As one L1 pupil said, "I've never even heard of the word". Overall 43% of the total cohort gave this answer. Of this total, 23% came from the EAL group and 20% came from the L1 group. This indicates that though the children, the L1

group in particular, must have heard this lexeme very often in traditional tales and rhymes, they were either unaware of its meaning, or unable to retrieve the meaning in a changed context.

One of the L1 pupils gave a comprehensive definition. She said, "Pails means buckets of milk and stuff. In the olden days, they called buckets pails." None of the other answers from either group were as full as this. There were, however, some definitions that it is useful to examine.

Some of the pupils confused *pail* with its homonym *pale*, and associated this with illness. An EAL definition was, "It means if you are sick, you can take something to make you better". An L1 pupil said, "Like you're pale. You're poorly". This was not related to the text in any way, so these pupils were retrieving the only lexeme they had in their mental lexicon for this, though it made no sense within the context of the story.

There were other examples of pupils retrieving words that sounded similar. An L1 pupil said, "It's something like paint, but it's sticky. You put wallpaper on with it." This was a very good description of *paste*, but an incorrect definition of *pail*. Another L1 pupil said, "Like hailstones". It is likely that the pupil substituted the initial phoneme *h* for the original *p* to make a rhyming match.

An interesting answer came from an EAL pupil, who asked, "Is it like pale white or pale black?" Neither white nor black can be *pale*, though other colours are often given this adjective, as in *pale blue*. Why the pupil chose white and black instead of one of the primary colours was not clear, though it was evident that he had transposed the noun *pails* for the adjective *pale*.

There were also references to food. These were explainable as food featured in the text. An EAL pupil said, "That their dinner". Another EAL pupil said, "Pails? Pails? Food." An L1 pupil said, "Mixed-up food". All these pupils had used the accompanying picture, showing food, to support their answers.

The large number of "Don't know" answers, and incorrect answers, for this lexeme from both groups indicates that it is one of a number of words whose meaning needs to be

explained. Children in early years education in the participating schools all know the traditional rhyme,

'Jack and Jill went up the hill,
To fetch a pail of water'.

What emerges, however, is that they either do not know the meaning of *pail* or are unable to transfer it to a different context.

Patchwork

Criterion	EAL	L1
Maximum possible score	500	500
Actual score observed frequency	78	88
χ^2	0.1	n.s.
Percentages of maximum score	16.0%	17.6%
Nil answers	11	2
Rank order of difficulty	11	9

Table 8.27 Analysis of lexeme *patchwork*

The Patchwork Cat.

The target word *patchwork* had close scores, with the L1 group achieving 88 and the EAL group scoring 78. Again, the L1 group outscored the EAL cohort on the raw scores, but there was no statistically significant difference. What was notable was the number of 'Don't Know' answers from the EAL pupils. These numbered 11, compared to 2 from the L1 group. This indicated that the L1 pupils were more prepared to attempt an answer, even though it might be incorrect, than the EAL pupils. The percentages were low, partly due to

the larger number of criteria involved, being 17.6% for L1 and 16.0% for EAL. *Patchwork* was in ninth place for rank order of difficulty for L1 pupils and in eleventh place for EAL pupils.

There were good comprehensive answers from either group, which covered many of the criteria. Examples from the EAL pupils can be given first.

One child said, "Lots of different parts. Lots of different colours. All the parts stick together". Another answer was, "Different colours, different patterns in squares".

From the L1 group, a pupil gave a good definition, which only lacked a reference to colour. This pupil said, "Say someone cut up loads of material, and sewn them all together, it would be patchwork". Another L1 pupil said, "All multicoloured, and got little patches on it".

Two pupils from the EAL group also provided particularly descriptive answers. One child said, "Prettiful decorations that's all covered with flowers and decoration". A second pupil said, "All kinds of colours. A bit like a rainbow, but it's squared." However, as discussed previously, the nature of the test was dependent on the criterion, and not the use of adjectives and similes. Despite this, the children's replies can be valued for their use of language.

In contrast to the children who had a clear idea of what *patchwork* meant, and were able to articulate this, there were children who had misconceptions. With many of these answers, it is possible to make a deduction about the children's chain of thought.

Some of the children had taken the lexeme *patchwork* and split it into two words, *patch* and *work*. They then proceeded to define each word separately. Three of the L1 pupils did this. One said, "It's where you're patching the stuff, and then you work". A second definition was, "It means if there's a hole, you have to patch it, and then you have to work on it". The third was, "You work, and you're patching stuff up". These pupils were drawing the word *patch* from their mental lexicon, and then associating it with *work* to make sense of the lexeme *patchwork*.

Other pupils, who may not have had *patch* stored in their personal lexicon, just referred to *work*. An L1 pupil said, “It’s something, that works”. The reply from an EAL pupil was, “He works all day”.

Some answers can be attributed to the children drawing the incorrect word from their mental lexicon. This may have been because of sound association. An example is where an EAL pupil said, “A patchwork means there’s a fire”. A possible association here may have been *firework*. An L1 pupil said, “It’s a path and you put it down on the ground”. The association in this example might refer to *pathway* or *crazy paving*. Another example is from an EAL pupil who said, “It’s a *clockwork* cat, not a real one”. In this instance, the pupil substituted *clock* for *patch*, but retained the word *work*.

A pupil from the EAL cohort gave the answer, “It’s the author that writes the book”. The word was evidently an unfamiliar one to this pupil, and he was drawing on his experience of being taught during the school’s literacy hour to find the name of the author from the cover of the book. As the pupil was examining the front of the book during his reply he deduced that this unfamiliar word referred to the person who wrote the story. This word was one of the more difficult ones for both sets of pupils to define. It proved interesting, therefore to follow the misconceptions that the children made, and to trace why they may have given the answers that they did. As *patchwork* consists of two combined words, it was possible to make some possible deductions about their definitions.

This section has given a statistical analysis of the individual lexemes that were used in the Pupils' Vocabulary Tests, and has discussed particular aspects of the pupils' responses for each lexeme. The next section compares the results of this research with the pupils' achievements in the relevant national statutory Standard Attainment Tasks (SATs), which are the Reading Task and the Reading Comprehension.

8.5. A comparison between pupils' SATs scores and the results of the Vocabulary Tests.

Following the analysis of the Pupils' Vocabulary Tests, a comparison can be made with the national statutory tests taken by these same pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. All pupils initially take a reading task which results in them being graded as attaining Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3. Level 2 is the expected norm for this age group, and it can be achieved at Level 2c, 2b or 2a, with 2a being the highest score within this level. Pupils achieving below

Level 1 are graded in a "working towards" category. The most proficient readers attain Level 3. The results of the Reading Task appear in Table 8.28. Pupils who attain a Level 2 grade are entered for the Reading Comprehension task. This provides the most relevant comparison with the Vocabulary Test undertaken in this study, as both investigate pupils' understanding of what they are reading, rather than surface text decoding.

The results of the SATs levels obtained in Reading Comprehension obtained by the pupils who were tested in this study appear in Table 8.29. These SATs results broadly support the teachers' allocations, with 76% of the results showing an exact match. Statistical correlation could be used to check if the pairs have been matched, but it is not necessary in this case as the data as it is presented provides sufficient evidence. 38 pairs correlated with the teachers' allocations. In the 22% of non-perfect matches, equal to 11 pairs, the scores were close, with 8 pairs being within one level of difference. In practice, this difference can be as little as one mark. In addition to these scores being observed as relatively close, two potential sources of error exist within the SATs. First is teacher error, and second, test error, in that the test that has graded the pupils will have unreliability and error within it. A further 3 pairs of disparate scores were within two levels of difference. These are not significant differences, and are also subject to the error criteria outlined above. Another indicator of the closeness of the scores is the ratio of higher/lower scores between the two groups, being 6 (EAL): 5 (L1). One set of scores was disappplied, as one of the pair was a non-entrant because of unknown factors. The close match between both groups of pupils in the SATs Reading Comprehension is further illustrated in Table 8.30.

Table 8.28. SATs Reading Task Results (1998 & 1999) for Pupils' Pair-Matched for Reading Ability by their Teacher.

PUPIL PAIR No.	EAL	L1
1	3	3
2	2a	2b
3	2b	2a
4	1	1
5	1	1
6	2c	2b
7	2b	2c
8	2b	1
9	2b	2c
10	3	3
11	1	1
12	2a	2a
13	2b	2c
14	2c	2a
15	1	1
16	1	1
17	1	1
18	2c	1
19	2c	2b
20	1	2c
21	3	3
22	3	3
23	1	1
24	2c	2b
25	3	3

PUPIL PAIR No.	EAL	L1
26	1	1
27	3	3
28	2b	2b
29	2b	2b
30	2b	2b
31	23	3
32	2c	2b
33	2c	2c
34	2b	2c
35	2b	2b
36	3	2b
37	2b	n.e.
38	1	1
39	2a	missing
40	2b	2a
41	1	1
42	2b	3
43	1	1
44	2b	2c
45	2a	2a
46	2b	2c
47	3	3
48	3	3
49	2a	2a
50	2c	2c

Table 8.29. SATs Results for Reading Comprehension (1998 & 1999) of Pupils' Pair-Matched for Reading Ability by their Teacher.

PUPIL PAIR No.	EAL	L1	
1	3	3	
2	2a	2b	*
3	2b	2b	
4	n.e.	n.e.	
5	n.e.	n.e.	
6	2b	2b	
7	2c	2c	
8	2c	n.e.	*
9	2c	2c	
10	3	3	
11	n.e.	n.e.	
12	2a	2a	
13	2a	2c	*
14	2b	2a	**
15	n.e.	n.e.	
16	n.e.	n.e.	
17	n.e.	n.e.	
18	n.e.	n.e.	
19	2c	2b	**
20	n.e.	2c	**
21	3	3	
22	3	3	
23	n.e.	n.e.	
24	2c	2c	
25	3	3	

PUPIL PAIR No.	EAL	L1	
26	n.e.	n.e.	
27	3	3	
28	2c	2c	
29	2c	2c	
30	2b	2b	
31	3	3	
32	2c	2b	**
33	2c	2c	
34	2c	2c	
35	2c	2c	
36	3	2a	*
37	2a	n.e.	*
38	n.e.	n.e.	
39	2a	2c	*
40	2a	2a	
41	n.e.	n.e.	
42	2b	3	**
43	n.e.	n.e.	
44	2b	2b	
45	2a	2a	
46	2a	2b	*
47	3	3	
48	3	3	
49	2a	2a	
50	2c	2c	

Key: * EAL pupil obtained higher score.
 ** L1 pupil obtained higher score.
 n.e. not entered for reading comprehension. Pupils have to obtain a minimum Level 2 on the Reading Task before they can be entered.

The results of the SATs have been shown to broadly confirm the teachers' allocations of matched pairs of EAL and L1 pupils as being at the same level of reading ability. However, the SATs results did not match the findings of this study. The analysis of the

Pupils' Vocabulary Test undertaken in this research revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the understanding of target lexemes in over a quarter of instances between the two groups, with the L1 pupils showing a higher level of understanding than their EAL partners. The raw scores from the Vocabulary Test appear in Table 8.31. This shows that between the matched pairs, the L1 pupils scored higher than their EAL partners in 35 instances. The EAL pupils scored higher in 15 instances. A chi-square calculation gives a score of 7.22, showing a significant difference at the 1% level. This shows that, overall, the L1 pupils had a greater understanding of the target items at the higher level of statistical significance. It is argued that the test in this study discriminated better between the two groups than the SATs, and reasons for this are discussed below.

For the SATs reading comprehension, pupils undertake a written paper. Verbal interaction with their teachers is confined to instruction. The pupils read the text independently, and then give written answers to written questions. This contrasts with the present study, where pupils read to the researcher on an individual basis, and were asked to give meanings for target words in the text. The test in this study was therefore both oral and interactive, with a one-to-one pupil-teacher ratio, whilst the SATs reading comprehension was static and formal.

It is further argued that the Vocabulary Test in this study was more authentic as it involved pupils in reading a spread of texts which are found in most primary schools. Moreover, the range of the test was also wider as it consisted of books from a variety of genres. It was also more comprehensive than the SATs, in which pupils are tested on a limited number of text extracts.

Another argument that can be put forward is that the Vocabulary Tests were conducted in a much more conducive and non-threatening context than the SATs. The pupils were not aware of being in a test situation. As discussed in Chapter 6, the pupils felt that they were engaged in a normal classroom routine, i.e. one-to-one reading with a teacher. This is an activity the majority of the pupils enjoy, as they have the teacher's undivided attention and support. In contrast, the SATs reading comprehension is undertaken in a formal, examination-like context where pupils sit separately from their classmates, and are expected to work incommunicado. This is not normal practice for Key Stage 1 pupils, and, for the majority, it provides an unfamiliar and unusually formal situation. It is likely that

the context in which the Vocabulary Tests were undertaken helped to give a more realistic result.

The difference in understanding reading comprehension between EAL pupils and L1 pupils overall, as found by this study was significant, with L1 pupils scoring higher. As noted previously, this was markedly different from the SATs results. It has been argued that the Vocabulary Test was more comprehensive and administered in a more natural context for the pupils than the SATs. It therefore follows that the results of this study are likely to be more valid than the SATs scores. This concurs with concerns about the masking effect of EAL pupils' surface proficiency in English within standardised texts which have recently arisen. The QCA document "A language in common" (QCA 2000) notes, "Even when EAL pupils are attaining the same level as monolingual pupils, closer inspection of their scores within the level may be needed to reveal whether or not the attainment is secure." (p. 9). This study has undertaken a "closer inspection" of EAL pupils' comprehension of vocabulary in school reading texts, and the results obtained from the research indicate that for some EAL pupils, teachers' allocations of matched pairs of EAL and L1 pupils was *not* secure. To investigate this further, a Vocabulary Questionnaire for teachers was constructed. This is introduced in the following section.

Table 8.30. Comparative SATs Results in Reading Comprehension for the EAL Group and L1 Group.

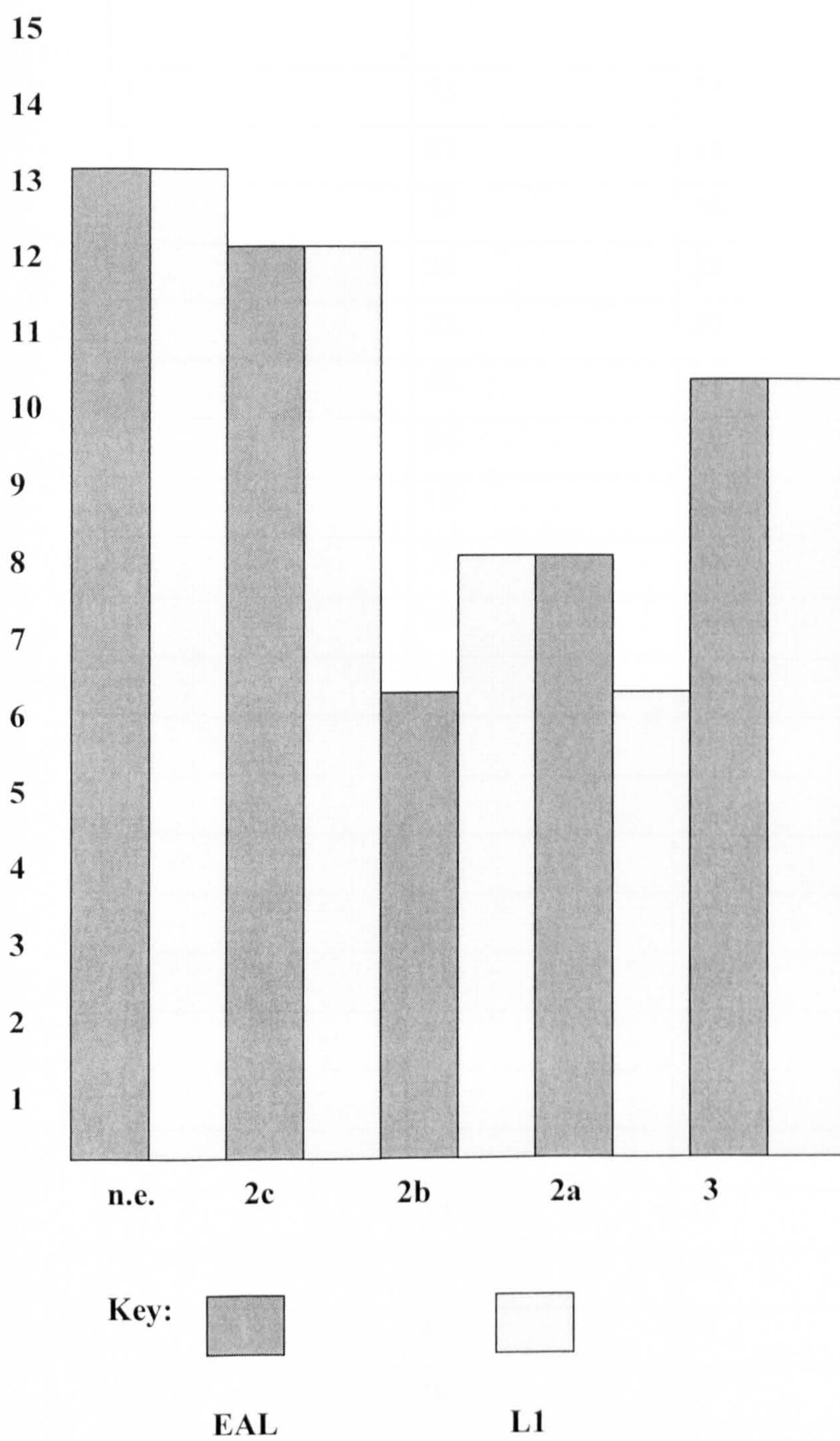


Table 8.31. Observed Raw Scores for Pupils' Vocabulary Tests.

PUPIL PAIR No.	EAL	L1	Higher Score
1	52	55	**
2	57	45	*
3	22	56	**
4	33	32	*
5	22	57	**
6	10	51	**
7	34	36	**
8	18	38	**
9	30	44	**
10	36	90	**
11	38	25	*
12	52	62	**
13	26	32	**
14	15	66	**
15	51	62	**
16	31	38	**
17	52	45	*
18	35	55	**
19	8	37	**
20	40	41	**
21	66	60	*
22	49	91	**
23	16	37	**
24	18	45	**
25	60	70	**

PUPIL PAIR No.	EAL	L1	
26	66	27	*
27	79	72	*
28	32	41	**
29	21	32	**
30	41	46	**
31	73	63	*
32	38	59	**
33	26	50	**
34	29	55	**
35	39	43	**
36	43	47	**
37	60	91	**
38	49	39	*
39	43	55	**
40	70	52	*
41	38	45	**
42	67	49	*
43	54	30	**
44	43	46	**
45	30	58	**
46	67	48	*
47	54	45	*
48	39	78	**
49	44	50	**
50	31	24	*

Key: * EAL score higher.
 ** L1 score higher.

8.6. Teachers' Vocabulary Questionnaires

The teachers' questionnaires were distributed after the Pupils' Vocabulary Tests had been completed and scored. The objective of the questionnaires was to see how closely the teachers' perceptions about vocabulary comprehension correlated with the results of the pupils' tests. Six of the seven statistically significant lexemes were included in the thirteen item questionnaire (to have tested more items would have meant a longer questionnaire and it was believed this would have seemed cumbersome and would have had a negative effect on teachers' participation). Each lexical unit was given in the sentence in which it appeared in the relevant test. The compilation, distribution and analysis of the questionnaire is detailed in Chapter 6.

The results of the questionnaire were tested for significant differences by using a t-test. These results showed that the teachers had identified eleven of the thirteen lexemes as being significantly different. This was a much greater number than the actual units of significant difference which resulted from the pupils' tests. An explanation for this might be that the teachers had taken an overview of EAL pupils when they completed the questionnaire, whilst the Vocabulary Tests were undertaken on an individual basis. The teachers were basing their rating on the average EAL pupil, whom, they would be likely to presume, would be less proficient in English Vocabulary comprehension than the average L1 pupil. Overall, the expectations of the teachers were belied by pupil performance. Certain lexemes that were believed to cause difficulty did not.

The teachers identified five of the six significantly different units (see Table 8.28). These were *tea*, *statue*, *bluebottle*, *flats* and *beard*. They did not identify *emeralds*. This had been the word with the highest score of significant difference in the pupils' tests. An analysis of the scores shows that the teachers rated this word as difficult for both groups, but not significantly more difficult for the EAL group. The remaining lexemes, *spring cleaning*, *upset*, *stream* and *cowboy* were all rated as likely to be significantly more difficult for EAL pupils than for L1 pupils by the teachers. However, this did not match with the results of the pupils' tests. None of the words was significantly difficult. The results are discussed in more detail below, and, as with the pupils' results, are ordered in groups. Group 1 discusses lexemes statistically significant at 1% level, Group 2 discusses those at the 5% level, and the lexemes estimated not to be significantly different between groups of pupils appear in Group 3.

Group 1. Lexemes statistically significant at the 1% level.

Flats.

Teachers estimated that this lexeme would be the most difficult for EAL pupils to understand in comparison to L1 pupils from the thirteen items contained in the questionnaire. It had a t-test result of 10.29, significant at the 1% level. The mean score for L1 was 2.88, with a standard deviation of 1.13. For EAL, the mean was 3.76, with a standard deviation of 0.99. 65.1% of respondents predicted that *flats* would be 'Quite Difficult' or 'Very Difficult' for EAL pupils. This can be compared to 28.9% on the same ratings for L1 pupils.

Flats was a significantly different lexeme in the Pupils' Vocabulary Tests at the 5% level. It was a difficult word for both sets of pupils, though the L1 scores were significantly greater. It was placed fourth in rank order of difficulty for both groups of pupils. In this instance, the teachers' estimates matched the pupils' performance.

Tea.

Tea was estimated to be a significantly more difficult lexeme for EAL pupils to understand than the L1 pupils by the teacher respondents. The t-test result of 9.53 was significant at the 1% level. The mean for L1 was 1.78, with a standard deviation of 0.83, compared to an EAL mean of 3.18 with a standard deviation of 1.11. Just 2.9% of respondents thought *tea* would be 'Very Difficult' for EAL pupils, compared to a zero rating for the L1 group.

Tea was identified as the second most difficult lexeme for EAL pupils to understand by teachers, within its specific context. This may indicate that teachers had an awareness that *tea* was a culture-specific word which related to L1 social practice and might be less familiar to EAL children.

Cowboy

Teachers estimated that *cowboy* would be a significantly more difficult word for EAL pupils to understand in comparison to L1 pupils. The t-test result was 9.13, giving a 1% level of significance. The L1 mean was 2.33, with a standard deviation of 0.90, compared to the EAL mean of 3.31, with a standard deviation of 1.10. The highest percentages for both groups occurred in the 'Average' rating, with an L1 score of 40% and an EAL score of 41.8%. However, 52.8% of teachers estimated that this lexeme would be 'Very Easy' or

'Quite Easy' for L1 pupils compared to 50.3%, who thought it would be 'Quite Difficult' for EAL pupils.

Cowboy was not, in fact, one of the statistically significant lexemes which emerged from the Pupils' Vocabulary Test. The L1 pupils did outscore EAL pupils on the raw scores, but this was not at a significant level. This lexeme was also in equal seventeenth place for both sets of pupils in the rank order of difficulty list. The teachers' results indicate that they may have believed *cowboy* to be a culturally biased word. However, as discussed in the analysis of the pupils' vocabulary test, most children are likely to know about *cowboys* from films and videos, and both groups of pupils are likely to watch these. This may explain why this lexeme was not significantly different for either group of pupils.

Bluebottle.

Bluebottle was estimated as a significantly difficult word for the EAL pupils to understand by teachers. The t-test score was 8.48, significant at the 1% level. The L1 mean was 3.88, with a standard deviation of 0.98. The EAL mean was 4.72 with a standard deviation of 0.60. The greatest percentage score of 79.1% came in the 'Quite Difficult' rating for EAL pupils. This compares with a score of 29% for L1 pupils on the same rating.

In the Pupils' Vocabulary Tests, this was one of statistically significant words at the 1% level. It was the most difficult word for EAL pupils to understand in a reading test, and was first in the rank order of difficulty list. It appeared in second place for L1 pupils. In this instance, there was a match between the test results and the teachers' estimates.

Cloth

Cloth was an instance of mismatch between teachers' estimates and the pupils' performance in the Vocabulary Tests. These showed that teachers believed that this would be a significantly more difficult word for EAL pupils to understand than L1 pupils. The t-test result of 8.32 was significant at the 1% level. The mean for the EAL group was 3.05, with a standard deviation of 1.09. For the L1 group, the mean was 2.04, with a standard deviation of 0.93. 33% of teachers estimated that this lexeme would be 'Quite Difficult' or 'Very Difficult' for EAL pupils, compared to a 6% rating of 'Quite Difficult' and a zero rating for 'Very Difficult' for L1 pupils.

This particular lexeme did not have a statistically significant result in the pupils' vocabulary test. It was, in fact, one of the two lexemes on which the EAL group outscored the L1 group when the raw scores were observed, although this was not at a significant level. *Cloth* was fifth in rank order of difficulty for L1 pupils, and eighth for EAL pupils. An explanation for the teachers' estimates may be that they were working from a decontextualised sentence, rather than the full test provided for the pupils, and may have been unaware that the book had a multicultural setting. From the teachers' perspective, *cloth* might be seen as a neutral word with no particular cultural bias. They may have judged that *cloth* would be a difficult lexeme for EAL pupils because of possible spelling and pronunciation difficulties. Overall, *cloth* gave an example of a gap between teachers' expectations and pupils performance.

Pirates.

The results from the teachers' questionnaires showed pirates to be a lexeme which they estimated would be significantly more difficult for EAL pupils to understand than their L1 peers. The t-test result of 8.13 was significant at the 1% level. The L1 mean was 2.45, with a standard deviation of 0.99, whilst the L1 mean was 3.61, with a standard deviation of 1.01. 53.7% of respondents rated this word as likely to be 'Quite Difficult' or 'Very Difficult' for EAL pupils compared to 14.4% for L1 pupils.

This was an instance where pupils' performance belied teachers' expectations. Though the L1 group outscored the EAL group when the raw scores were observed, the result was not significant. The rank order of difficulty was nineteenth for EAL, and twentieth for L1. It is possible that teachers viewed this lexeme as culturally specific, with an L1 bias. There are similarities here with the analysis of *cowboy*, and comparable explanations are possible, i.e. *pirates* feature in books, films and on television and this may indicate that a knowledge of the lexeme is accessible to both groups of pupils.

Stream

Teachers estimated that the lexeme *stream* would be significantly more difficult for EAL pupils to understand than it would for L1 pupils. The t-test result was 8.08, significant at the 1% level. The L1 mean was 2.47, with a standard deviation of 0.90, compared to an EAL mean of 3.54 with a standard deviation of 1.00. 75% of respondents predicted that *stream* would be 'Quite Easy' or 'Average' for L1 pupils to understand compared to 41.3%

for EAL pupils. At the opposite end of the scale, it was rated as 'Quite Difficult' or 'Very Difficult' by 55.6% for the EAL group compared to 11.4% for the L1 group.

There was a further instance where teachers' estimates were belied by the pupils' results. Though the L1 group achieved a greater raw score in the vocabulary test, this was not at a significant level. *Stream* was twenty-second in rank order of difficulty for both groups. Teachers may have assumed that this was a culturally-specific word, i.e. a stream is a feature of the English countryside, or that the medial *ea* vowels might be more confusing for EAL pupils. There was not a match, however, between the teachers' rating and the pupils' scores.

Spring Cleaning

Teachers estimated that this would be a more difficult lexical unit for EAL pupils to understand than for L1 pupils. The t-test result was 7.15, significant at the 1% level. The L1 group mean was 3.38, with a standard deviation of 0.94, whilst the EAL mean was 4.22 with a standard deviation of 0.83. 85.1% of respondents indicated this word would be 'Quite Difficult' or 'Very Difficult' for EAL pupils when reading texts, compared to a score of 51.1% for L1 pupils in the same ratings.

With this particular lexeme, the teachers' estimated did not match the pupils' test results. L1 pupils scored slightly higher than EAL pupils when the raw scores were observed, but this was not significant. *Spring cleaning* was nineteenth in the rank order of difficulty for L1 pupils and twenty-first for EAL pupils. Both scores and ranking were therefore similar. However, this would seem to be an obviously cultural specific lexical unit and it is highly likely that many teachers would estimate it as such. As noted in the analysis of *spring cleaning*, the text in which it appeared and picture clues may have supported the EAL pupils' understanding of this lexical unit.

Group 2. Lexemes statistically significant at the 5% level.

Statue

Teachers estimated that this lexeme would be significantly more difficult for EAL pupils to understand than for L1 pupils. The t-test result was 6.60, at a 5% level of significance. The mean for L1 was 3.20, with a standard deviation of 1.05, and for EAL the mean was 3.97, with a standard deviation of 0.91. 71% of respondents rated *statue* as likely to be 'Quite Difficult' or 'Very Difficult' for EAL pupils compared to 43.5% for L1 pupils.

The teachers' estimates matched the pupils' results from the vocabulary test for this lexeme. It had proved significantly more difficult for the EAL pupils to understand. *Statue* was fifth in the rank order of difficulty for EAL pupils, and eighth for L1 pupils. The teachers' estimate in this instance may have been guided by the decontextualised sentence in the questionnaire, leading them to the correction assumption that this would be a difficult lexeme for EAL pupils to understand.

Beard

The results of the teachers' questionnaire identified *beard* as being a lexeme that EAL pupils would find more difficult to understand than L1 pupils. The t-test score of 6.06 was significant at the 5% level. The L1 mean was 2.78 with a standard deviation of 1.00 compared to an EA: mean of 3.60 with a standard deviation of 1.04. 57.1% of respondents estimated that *beard* would be 'Quite Difficult' or 'Very Difficult' for EAL pupils in reading comprehension, compared to 22.4% for L1 pupils.

Beard was statistically significant in the Pupils' Vocabulary Test. The teachers' estimates that this would be a more difficulty lexeme for EAL pupils to understand were matched by the results. It had a rank order of difficulty of fifteenth for L1 pupils and of thirteenth for EAL pupils. Although, as indicated in the analysis of the test results, this result had been 'surprising', the teachers had correctly judged the lexeme as being difficult for EAL pupils to understand in reading tests.

Upset

The t-test result of 5.31, significant at the 5% level, showed that teachers' estimated *upset* would be more difficult for EAL pupils to understand than it would be for L1 pupils. The L1 mean was 4.05 with a standard deviation of 0.99, compared to the EAL mean of 3.35 with a standard deviation of 0.93. None of the teachers believed that it would be a 'Very Easy' word for EAL pupils to understand, whereas 38.2% believed it would be 'Very Difficult' for these pupils. .

Upset was a difficult lexeme for both groups of pupils, and although the L1 group had a slightly higher raw score, there was no significant difference. In this instance, the teachers' estimates did not match the pupils' performance. *Upset* was the most difficult word in the Vocabulary Test for L1 pupils, being first in the rank order of difficulty for this group and

it ranked third for EAL pupils. Teachers' estimates indicate that they may have assumed *upset* would be easier for L1 pupils to understand than it actually proved to be in practice.

Group 3. Lexemes estimated not to be significantly different by teachers.

Emeralds

Teachers estimated that *emeralds* would not be significantly more difficult for EAL pupils to understand in comparison to L1 pupils. The t-test result was 2.31, which was not statistically significant. The mean was 3.84 for L1, with a standard deviation of 1.10 and for the EAL group the mean was 4.27, with a standard deviation of 1.10. 83% of the respondents estimated it would be 'Quite Difficult' or 'Very Difficult' for EAL pupils, compared with 72% giving the same rating for L1 pupils.

However, *emeralds* was a significantly difficult word for the EAL pupils in the Vocabulary Test. Though it was also difficult for the L1 pupils, their score was statistically significantly greater, and they had less nil answers. This lexeme was second in rank order of difficulty for EAL pupils and third for L1. The teachers had estimated that it would be difficult for both groups, which was correct, but they did not predict the significant difference in comprehension between the two groups.

Pails

The t-test result of 1.98 for *pails* was not significant, and it showed that teachers estimated that this lexeme would not be more difficult for EAL pupils to understand than L1 pupils. The mean was 4.40 for L1, with a standard deviation of 0.67, and 4.63 for EAL, with a standard deviation of 0.74. 90% of the teachers predicted *pails* would be 'Quite Difficult' or 'Very Difficult' for L1 pupils to understand. The same ratings for the EAL group were even greater, being 95.5%. Overall, most respondents estimated that this lexeme would be 'Quite Difficult' or 'Very Difficult' for both groups of pupils.

In this instance, the teachers' estimates matched the pupils' results, as *pails* did not emerge as a significantly different lexeme, although the L1 group had slightly higher raw scores. This lexeme was seventh in rank order of difficulty for both EAL and L1 pupils. The teachers' predictions that this word would be difficult for both groups were correct. A definition from Collins Cobuild Dictionary (1994, p. 1034) states that *pail* "is a slightly old-fashioned word", and it is likely that teachers came to the same conclusion.

Overall, the teachers' ratings did not have a good match with the pupils' actual scores. An obvious reason for this is that teachers' general perceptions are likely to be that EAL pupils in general have more limited proficiency in English and less understanding of the meaning of key vocabulary items than their L1 peers. The teachers were probably basing their answers on the 'average' pupil. Because of this probability, it was decided to compare the results from the Teachers' Vocabulary Questionnaire with the Pupils' Vocabulary Test using an 'average' range of pupils, or a median band. This was calculated by removing the top 20% and the bottom 20% from both groups of scores, leaving a median band of scores. This would normally be calculated by deducting a quartile, i.e. 25%, from the higher and lower levels, but this was not possible here because of the number of pupils involved, i.e. 50 in each group. A chi-square test was then calculated on the new data to observe if the target lexemes would match the teachers' estimates better. There was not, however, any observable difference, and so the investigation was not taken any further.

This section concludes the dissemination of the results found in this research. They are reviewed in the final chapter of this study which is presented next.

Table 8.32. Results of Teachers' Vocabulary Questionnaire.

TARGET WORD		RATING					MEAN	S.D.	t-test result
		Very Easy 1	Quite Easy 2	Average 3	Quite Difficult 4	Very Difficult 5			
FLATS	L1	14.5%	18.8%	37.7%	21.7%	7.2%	2.88	1.13	10.29**
	EAL	1.5%	10.6%	22.7%	40.9%	24.2%	3.76	0.99	
SPRING CLEANING	L1	2.9%	15.9%	29.0%	44.9%	7.2%	3.38	0.94	7.15**
	EAL	1.5%	1.5%	11.9%	43.3%	41.8%	4.22	0.83	
BEARD	L1	9.0%	31.3%	37.3%	17.9%	4.5%	2.78	1.00	6.06*
	EAL	3.2%	11.1%	28.6%	36.5%	20.6%	3.60	1.04	
STATUE	L1	5.8%	20.3%	30.4%	34.8%	8.7%	3.20	1.05	6.60*
	EAL	1.6%	3.1%	23.4%	40.6%	31.3%	3.97	0.91	
UPSET	L1	1.8%	17.5%	38.6%	28.1%	14.0%	3.35	0.99	5.31*
	EAL	0.0%	7.3%	18.2%	36.4%	38.2%	4.05	0.93	
STREAM	L1	12.9%	40.0%	35.7%	10.0%	1.4%	2.47	0.90	8.08**
	EAL	3.2%	11.1%	30.2%	39.7%	15.9%	3.54	1.00	
CLOTH	L1	34.3%	32.8%	26.9%	6.0%	—	2.04	0.93	8.32**
	EAL	9.1%	19.7%	37.9%	24.2%	9.1%	3.05	1.09	
PIRATE	L1	18.8%	33.3%	33.3%	13.0%	1.4%	2.45	0.99	8.13**
	EAL	1.5%	11.9%	32.8%	31.3%	22.4%	3.61	1.01	
EMERALD	L1	4.3%	5.7%	17.1%	47.1%	25.7%	3.84	1.02	2.31
	EAL	6.1%	1.5%	9.1%	25.8%	57.6%	4.27	1.10	
TEA	L1	44.1%	36.8%	16.2%	2.9%	—	1.78	0.83	9.53**
	EAL	7.6%	16.7%	39.4%	22.7%	13.6%	3.18	1.11	

COWBOY	L1	21.4%	31.4%	40.0%	7.1%	—	2.33	0.90	9.13**
	EAL	7.5%	10.4%	41.8%	23.9%	16.4%	3.31	1.10	
PAILS	L1	-	—	10.0%	40.0%	50.0%7	4.40	0.67	1.98
	EAL	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	23.9%	1.6%	4.63	0.74	
BLUEBOTT LE	L1	2.9%	4.3%	23.2%	40.6%	29.0%7	3.88	0.98	8.48**
	EAL	—	—	7.5%	13.4%	9.1%	4.72	0.60	

Key: ** p<1%, t-test; * p<5%, t-test

L1 - Pupils with English as a first language.

EAL - Pupils with English as an additional language.

CHAPTER NINE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.

9.1. Aims of the study and key research questions

The opening section of this study cited QCA concerns, (QCA, 2000) about EAL pupils' SATs results for English, including reading comprehension. In the document entitled 'A Language in Common: Assessing English as an additional language' it is noted that *"across all key stages EAL pupils assessed by their teachers as being relatively fluent speakers of English found some aspects of the tests difficult,"* (p.9) although which aspects and the nature of the difficulties are not specified. This study, which was undertaken prior to the publication of the QCA document, has also found that there are difficulties, but it has attempted to ascertain their nature.

The key objective of this study was to examine if there was a gap in lexical understanding between EAL pupils and their L1 peers of which their teachers were unaware. It had been observed by the researcher that EAL pupils reading the same texts as L1 pupils did not have the same understanding of vocabulary and concepts as did the L1 pupils. The apparent success of EAL pupils in decoding text at a surface level often seemed to mask underlying misconceptions. It also seemed that teachers were not fully aware of these lexical misunderstandings. The key research questions detailed below grew out of these observations:

- Do EAL pupils have less understanding of key lexical items in everyday classroom texts than their monolingual peers when both are assessed as reading at the same level of proficiency?
- Are teachers aware that differences in lexical understanding might exist between the two groups?

A review of the research methods which were used to answer these questions appears in the following section.

9.2. Research Methods

A key feature of this research was that it grew out of reflective practice in the researcher's job as a language support teacher, and it was incorporated into her work in schools, resulting in the dual role of teacher-researcher. The findings of the research are being disseminated back to teachers and to schools. This study therefore has key principles of the

action research cycle. It does not claim to be a paradigm model of this methodology, however, because the research was not a collaborative project, and it also involved a considerable amount of data collection and statistical analysis

The three main strands of data collection used in this research were:

- A Vocabulary Test undertaken with pupils
- Interviews with mainstream teachers, and supplementary interviews with Section X1 Project Managers
- A questionnaire distributed to teachers

The Pupils' Vocabulary Tests

The Pupils' Vocabulary Test was designed to test the lexical understanding of matched pairs of EAL and L1 pupils. The pairs were matched by their class teachers as being at the same, or a very similar level of reading proficiency. The researcher had no input into the matching of the EAL and L1 pupils. It relied solely on each teacher's judgement based on her detailed knowledge of the children and access to standardised reading assessments.

The tests were administered to 100 pupils. 50 were EAL and 50 were L1 children. Key words were chosen from a range of normal classroom texts, including reading-scheme books and story books. The actual books in which the key words appeared were used in the tests so that the testing situation approximated normal classroom processes as closely as possible. The words were not merely extracted from the text and used to compile a more formal type of artificial test. The children read all, or some, of the original text in which the target word appeared. Moreover, all the books were those which would be common in most primary schools.

The testing was undertaken during the school day, and incorporated into normal practice. The pupils were asked to "come and read" individually. This is a usual part of school routine and was accepted as such by the children. The main difference was the number of books to be read, in this instance, 23 books containing 27 target words.

The children responded positively to the test. Some reasons for this can be posited. First, the children did not know they were in a test situation, and this meant they were not anxious. Pupils generally enjoy one-to-one teacher attention, and the tests provided an opportunity for this. It can therefore be argued that the tests were set in a natural and

unthreatening situation, and that this context removed many of the disadvantages of formal vocabulary testing, so that results mirrored what actually happens in the real school situation. There were, however, considerations of contamination and subjectivity that had to be taken into account.

The tests were scored using a standardised set of criteria based on dictionary definitions. The results were ratified by three other highly experienced raters and the original raw scores were revised after this. The ratification process was useful in reducing any subjectivity that existed. The chi-square test was used on these raw scores to calculate if there was any significant difference between the two groups on each of the target words. The chi-square test was chosen as the data was not continuous and was unlikely to fit a normal distribution curve (Siegal, 1956; "Goodness of fit" test", p. 43).

The Pupils' Vocabulary Tests were lengthy and time-consuming to administer and to analyse, but they formed a key part of this research. They have been used to give results and draw conclusions, and they have also been disseminated to teachers and other educators through INSET and conferences.

Interviews with mainstream teachers

A series of 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted with classroom teachers. The objective of these interviews was to investigate teachers' knowledge about their EAL pupils' cultural backgrounds and home literacy practices. The teachers were also asked about their experiences with these pupils in the daily teaching and learning situation, and what support they would find most useful to help them meet the needs of these pupils. A further question about how well the National Curriculum catered for pupils with English as an additional language was included, but the researcher recognized that the frequent changes to this meant the teachers' responses could not be standardized.

The interviews with the teachers were conducted on an opportunity basis in schools. They depended on the goodwill and co-operation of the teachers in giving their time, which was usually about 40 minutes per interview. The interviews were recorded, and subsequently transcribed and analysed. It was an advantage that, by being a colleague and working in the same schools, the researcher found arranging and undertaking the interviews with teachers quite unproblematic apart from the time factor involved. However, it was also recognized

that this collegiality and the likelihood of shared fundamental beliefs and values embedded in both the interviewer and interviewee would be a constraint on the research.

Supplementary Interviews with the Project Managers from the Section 11 Service

These interviews were conducted to supplement the main research through investigating the support that the Section 11 Service (now EMAG) offered to schools. These were also semi-structured interviews. They were not taken on an opportunity basis as the teachers' interviews were, but arranged on a formal appointment basis. The areas for discussion were first, the relevant background and experience of the interviewee, second, how they saw the role of their staff in schools, third, whether they would advocate a "task force" or a "subversive" approach in changing attitudes in schools, and fourth, the way forward for the Section X1 Service. These interviews were recorded, then transcribed and analysed as the teachers' interview were. There were differences in the collegiality aspect in the two sets of interviews, as the Project Managers were line managers to the researcher, and so they had a higher professional status. It is likely, however, that the interviewer and interviewees had intrinsic beliefs and values in common, particularly through working in the same field, and so similar constraints would apply.

The Teachers' Vocabulary Questionnaire

The vocabulary questionnaire for teachers was designed to investigate how closely teachers' perceptions about pupils' lexical understanding corresponded with the results of the pupils' tests. One hundred questionnaires were distributed to schools after these tests had been completed and scored. This fits with the observation that a valid questionnaire should be constructed from theory and previous research (Johnson, 1992).

The questionnaire had 13 items, which were the target words from the vocabulary tests in the sentences in which they appeared in the children's books used in the tests. Teachers were asked to estimate the likely level of understanding of these items for first, EAL pupils and second, L1 pupils, on the Likert scale from 1-5. The method used for distributing these questionnaires was indirect, and involved using an agent. The agents were the Section 11 teachers in the participating schools, who were professional colleagues of the researcher and also of the teachers. These links meant that there was a comparatively high return of questionnaires. The resulting data were analysed on the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 6 (SPSS 6). The teachers' ratings for the pupils were compared using the appropriate parametric statistic, the t-test.

9.3. Review and discussion of the results of the research

The Pupils' Vocabulary Tests

The results of the Pupils' Vocabulary Tests were conclusive in showing that, across the range of target words included, the L1 pupils overall understood the vocabulary items better than their EAL peers, though both groups were judged to be at the same level of reading proficiency by their teachers. The L1 group outscored the EAL cohort on 25 out of the 27 words in the test when the raw scores were observed. When the statistical significance for each of these words was calculated, 7 were significantly different. This was more than one quarter of the total items.

The results of these tests showed that there *was* a statistically significant difference overall between the two groups. The key hypothesis of the study, that EAL pupils reading at the same text decoding level as their peers did not always have the same level of lexical understanding, was therefore substantiated for the target items in the test. If this is transferred to a broader context, then the implications are quite marked. An EAL pupil showing a surface reading proficiency of, for example, 100 in the teacher's assessment, matched with a similar L1 pupil, in fact may only have a comprehension level of, for example, 75 compared to the L1 pupil. This is illustrated in the following diagram.

Teachers' assessment of reading proficiency	EAL 100	L1 100
Observed reading Comprehension as elicited through the vocabulary test.	75	100

Table 9.1. An illustration of the reading comprehension gap between EAL pupils and L1 pupils found in this study

The results of the tests also answered the second key research question, by verifying that, in some instances, teachers are not aware of this difference in lexical understanding. This was because it was the teachers who had actually matched the EAL/L1 pairs for the same, or very similar, reading proficiency.

The teachers' allocations were, however, supported by the pupils' subsequent SATs results. This study argues that the Vocabulary Test taken by these pupils was more comprehensive and discriminated better between the two groups than the SATs did. Moreover, if larger numbers of pupils had been tested, the statistical trend points to a larger EAL/L1 gap in lexical understanding. The QCA (QCA, 2000) document referred to earlier that raises concerns about pupils' SATs results for English is based on maximum national figures, and these are supported by the findings of this smaller research. It notes, "Even when EAL pupils are attaining the same level as monolingual pupils, (in SATs), closer inspection of their scores within the level may be needed to reveal whether or not the attainment is secure" (p. 9). It can be argued that this study pre-empted the QCA's directive through a "closer inspection" of lexical understanding, and found that, for the pupils tested, the SATs scores for reading comprehension were *not* consistently secure. Moreover, it is argued that the problem needs to be addressed before pupils undertake these tests. SATs are important in pupils' academic records. If pupils do not fully understand all that they are reading, then this problem needs to be identified and addressed before the SATs are taken rather than afterwards.

The results of the tests correspond with Cummins (1984) CALPS/BICS distinction discussed in Chapter 3 of this study. The basic interpersonal conversation skills (BICS) can be related to proficiency in text decoding, as displayed by some EAL pupils. The cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) can be used to explain why the EAL group had a lower level of reading comprehension. Apparently, in this study, the teachers matched the L1 and EAL pupils for reading proficiency, which would involve CALP, and within the matched L1 - EAL pairs this would be at the same level. However, one interpretation of the present results is that perhaps the teachers overestimated the EAL pupils' reading CALP on the basis of their BICS proficiency (although the matching process stressed that the matching was on the basis of *reading*).

Through the Pupils' Vocabulary Tests, with the overall mismatch between the EAL and L1 pupils, this study has indicated the extent of the gap in reading comprehension between the groups. The precise nature of that gap is shown to be more complex than might have been envisaged. The scoring, for example, needed to be wide, illuminating the complexity of some words. In a busy classroom, teachers may overlook this complexity. They may also place an over-reliance on context, by assuming that pupils will infer lexical items correctly by using text and picture cues. The findings of this study indicate that this is not always the

case, and in some instances the context can be misinterpreted and the vocabulary items misunderstood by pupils. Where the context is culturally based, and this is likely to be the case quite often in classrooms in the UK, things familiar to L1 pupils may not be part of some of their EAL peers' experiences. This is in accord with the sociocultural theories used to frame this study and explain the findings.

Review and discussion of the interviews with teachers

Key strands recurred throughout the teachers' interviews. Chief amongst these was what the teachers termed "language", i.e. pupils' proficiency in English. Teachers had two perspectives on this, first, language for learning, and second, language for social interaction. The main findings were that, whilst teachers welcomed the additive cultural diversity that EAL pupils brought to the classroom, 80% felt that limited proficiency in English slowed their learning for most areas of the curriculum. In terms of communicative competence, this also had an effect on how well and how quickly EAL pupils integrated socially in school and were able to progress across the curriculum. The teachers did not, however, refer to pupils' home literacy practices, other than a few mentions of mosque school, and this was mentioned as a religious observance rather than a literacy event.

64% of the teachers gave examples of where their EAL pupils had demonstrated misunderstandings because of gaps in their English comprehension. This shows that at one level teachers have awareness of these gaps, but that they readily give examples does not necessarily imply that they are able to locate and remedy such gaps; indeed, this study shows otherwise. Some of the pupils were perceived as being proficient English speakers, and in these cases the examples of misunderstandings came as a revelation to the teachers. If these examples were viewed in isolation, they could be taken to be chance occurrences. However, they are all drawn together here and provide cumulative evidence of teachers' concrete experiences of clear misconceptions held by these pupils. The teacher's surprise at such instances gives support to an argument of this study, namely that comprehension gaps in EAL pupils are not always obvious.

Recent experience of working in schools makes it easier to appreciate such difficulties may go unnoticed. Many of these pupils will display a superficial proficiency in English, as illustrated in Cummins' BICS/CALP distinction (see Section 3.4). Within the average classroom in a city like Leicester, mainstream teachers teach children across a wide ability range and from a variety of backgrounds. Deeper levels of cognitive and academic abilities

may not become apparent until end of year summative tests, such as SATs, have been administered. By this stage, a child may have underachieved for the course of a full academic year. In some instances teachers may have some concerns about EAL pupils' deeper language proficiency, but may not have either the specific training or the time to address these issues. This leads to a further point emerging from the teachers' interviews, namely that of the support they would find most useful in the classroom.

Teachers identified qualified bilingual teachers as being the ideal support. It was perceived that this type of support could utilise pupils' first language. It was also felt that a bilingual teacher would serve as a cultural and linguistic role model with whom EAL children could identify. However, two issues arise here. First, the current funding for EMAG is not sufficient to provide the amount of additional teaching support that the interviewees felt would benefit their EAL pupils. Second, there is a limited supply of qualified bilingual teachers available and an insufficient number to work with EAL pupils. Even if there was a much larger number than at present, to be effective they would need some knowledge of pupils' first languages, which are, of course, very diverse.

Another observation from the teachers' interviews can be linked to the foregoing discussion. There were comments of the effect on EAL pupils of a sudden acceleration in English proficiency. This is a frequently observed stage in second language acquisition, and has been discussed in terms of "breakthroughs in learning" (Cortazzi, 1991). With this "breakthrough" teachers noted increased confidence and improved social skills. An enhanced ability to communicate with teachers and peers led to both improved learning and greater social cohesion within the classroom. These observations from the teachers match Edwards' (1998) statement that EAL pupils "need to learn English as rapidly and efficiently as possible" (p. 2). Increased communicative competence opens a "gateway", to use Halliday's (1999) term, to both better learning and social inclusion. There are arguments for schooling children in their home language, but as South (1999) points out, the curriculum is currently delivered through the medium of English, and realistically, children need to gain proficiency in this to succeed in the education system. As one of the Project Managers stated, proficiency in English is a tool for empowerment to enable EAL pupils to "become as qualified as anybody else" (7.1.3).

A related issue is inclusion, and the key focus put on language support teaching being undertaken within the classroom, though some teachers prefer withdrawal. If the child's

lack of English proficiency has a knock-on effect of isolation within the classroom, then it can be argued that this isolation will be reinforced if the child is withdrawn from the mainstream for additional language teaching. It may also mean that the language support teachers cannot utilise opportunities for learning within the language-rich environment of the classroom.

Another point in this context is that scaffolded support in the classroom can address both the child's English language learning needs and his or her social inclusion. Strategies such as EAL/L1 mixed peer group work can be used for interactive English language development and to aid social integration. What emerges is that "breakthroughs in learning" described by teachers are complemented by an all-round increase in confidence and integration. This strengthens the argument for relevant support to promote EAL pupils' learning of English because increased proficiency has other benefits linked to it.

A further issue for discussion is that some teachers mentioned developmental stages in all children, not just EAL pupils. This raises the Piaget/Vygotsky debate (discussed in Chapter 2). This is often polarised, though there are arguments for incorporating both theories into educational practice (Smith et al. 1998). It can be argued that Vygotsky's ideas provide a much better frame for language teaching, with their focus on guided support and progression. However, as some academics point out (Smith et al. *op. cit.*) a balance between the ideas of Vygotsky and Piaget may be a useful approach. There is a possibility that young children could be subjected to over-intensive language teaching, and this, of course, is a situation to be avoided.

The remaining key findings from the teachers' interviews can be grouped under the general heading of cultural differences between EAL home literacy practices and learning styles, and those expected by the school.

Some teachers spoke about the passive learning style of many EAL children within the classroom. Teachers mentioned pupils listening acquiescently, but not understanding all that was being said, nor asking for explanations or clarifications. This corresponded with another observation from teachers, namely that some EAL pupils were reluctant to speak in the classroom. Possible reasons might be a lack of proficiency in English (see Cortazzi, 1991) and a culture of respect for the teacher. Although such reasons might be obvious to

EAL specialists, they are unlikely to be as familiar to mainstream teachers. This points to the need for raising teachers' awareness of the cultures of learning in their classroom.

Teachers also raised concerns about inadequate pre-school experience amongst some EAL pupils, and what they saw as the lack of preparation for entering school. The teachers' accounts show that, for some EAL pupils, starting school was a stressful experience. The word "traumatic" was frequently used. It is evident that this is a situation that needs to be addressed through greater home-school links. Although not an expected outcome from this study, this additional finding is suggested as an area for further research.

Another finding was that there were concerns about the emphasis put on formal learning by parents of EAL pupils. Teachers, particularly in the early years, spoke about what they perceived to be an emphasis on rote-type learning, and a lack of understanding about the role of play in young children's language learning and cognitive development. In addition, teachers expressed reservations about additional schooling. They believed that young children completing a full day at school, and then having further schooling in the evening, became overloaded. This is an issue which needs to be handled sensitively. Attendance at extra sessions is an integral part of some cultural and religious groups' practices. Teachers need to be aware of the importance of these to some families. A way forward might be for the mainstream school to build on and develop the child's home literacy practices.

Teachers themselves, in a number of instances, were conscious of their own lack of knowledge about their EAL pupils' backgrounds, and the findings of this study indicate that they would welcome input, i.e. through INSET courses, to raise their awareness. Given the large ethnic minority school population of the city, and teachers' comments about their needs, this is a need which could be addressed by provision of the appropriate training.

The teachers' interviews were supplemented by interviews with the Section 11 Project Managers, and these are reviewed and discussed next.

Review and discussion of interviews with Section 11 Project Managers

In 1992, Leicestershire LEA made a successful bid for funding from central government to implement a reorganised Section XI service to support its EAL school population. Eight project managers were appointed to implement policy and practice for language support teaching in schools under the management of a Head of Service. Key ideas that arose from interviews with these personnel are summarised and discussed below. It is argued that they are relevant to this review because the project managers were highly experienced and qualified in the specialist area of EAL teaching and their ideas and perceptions can be used both in constructing support for teachers and pupils in schools, and to show the ways in which it can be usefully disseminated to practitioners.

The project managers identified two key areas of responsibility for Section 11 funded staff in schools. First, staff would be responsible for supporting mainstream teachers to develop the English language proficiency of their EAL pupils. Section 11 staff would work collaboratively with mainstream teachers in planning and delivering lessons, and would be responsible for identifying the language demands, including key vocabulary items, of the curriculum. Second, staff would also have responsibility for developing whole school policies and practice for language teaching. Overall, the project managers had a clear view of strategies for language support. They realised that this would involve expertise. To increase such expertise in language development, weekly in-service training was provided, with the aim of providing a highly skilled team of professionals within the service. Within the sociocultural frame of this study, this can be viewed in terms of providing scaffolded support to meet the social, cultural and linguistic development of EAL pupils. This ambitious project had to be abandoned when funding was cut in 1994. Although good professional development courses continued to be offered, the regular intensive training was lost.

The DFEE has recently commissioned the National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC) to set key criteria for language teachers. The proposed criteria are very stringent and they mirror the aspirations the project managers had for teams of well-qualified professionals to undertake language support work in schools. The project managers can therefore be seen as forward thinking in their approach to staff development.

Two types of approach to school practice were advocated by the project managers. First was a 'task force' approach. The second was a 'subversive' approach. The majority of the interviewees opted for the 'subversive' approach. They saw the need for changing EAL policies and practice in schools, and believed this could best be brought about by diplomacy and persuasion. A minority of the project managers preferred the 'task force' approach. This was perceived as challenging assumptions and setting out direct aims for EAL provision in schools.

It can be argued that the project managers who opted for the 'subversive' approach were most likely to be successful in promoting change in schools. Elliot's (1993) views about individuals bringing about change by being part of the power structure can be used to support this argument. Language support staff working in schools could raise awareness about language development and associated wider issues by collaboration and extension strategies, rather than by a direct challenge to existing practice. A major factor in implementing successful change in schools is to gain the support of the senior management. A 'task force' approach could alienate these key professional. It could also result in a defensive attitude from class teachers. The researcher uses and supports the 'subversive' one, by working collaboratively with schools and with teachers.

Four key areas emerged from the discussion with the project managers about the way forward for EAL support in schools. First, there was an emphasis on the role of Section 11 staff in raising awareness and increasing knowledge about whole school language policies and practice, because it was perceived that, ultimately, schools would have to take on these responsibilities. Second, it was recognised that staff needed both professional awareness and professional competence. This required intensive training for personnel to raise their expertise and their status. Third, the project manager believed that support for developing the English proficiency of EAL pupils would empower these pupils to succeed in the education system and beyond it. Fourth, the interviewees perceived that Section 11 provision did not have a high priority with central government.

Since these interviews were conducted, 85% of the funding for EAL support has been devolved to schools in Leicester. 15% has been retained by the LEA to maintain a central advisory service. This is further evidence of the forward thinking by the project managers, who forecast that schools would ultimately have to take on responsibility for the language

development of their ethnic minority pupils. However, as this study indicates, schools are not always aware of the needs of these pupils.

The ambitions of the project managers to provide a comprehensive professional development programme for their staff was also far-sighted. The aim was to produce teams of personnel with the expertise to undertake language development teaching and to bring about changes to whole school policies and practice related to the academic achievement of ethnic minority pupils. Some of the project managers also felt that the cut in funding was evidence of the low priority given to EAL language development work in schools by central government. Individual schools may also have had the same perceptions. Such perceptions were unlikely to raise the status and influence of Section 11 staff working in these schools.

However, recent developments have been more positive. Leicester City LEA is currently positioned in the bottom ten of the national league tables for achievement. The LEA's 1998 Ofsted inspection identified two key factors. First, the city has a high number of socio-economically deprived white pupils. Second, there are a high number of ethnic minority heritage pupils, currently over 20,000 (EMTAG Principles and Practice, 2000) some of whose lack of proficiency in English may limit their academic achievement. Raising the achievement of all pupils in the City has now become a priority. For the ethnic minority heritage pupils with limited English proficiency, language support teaching will need to be a priority.

This leads to the ideas about empowerment put forward by some of the project managers. Cummins (1996) discusses issues relating to the empowerment of ethnic minority pupils in increasingly diverse societies, and recommends a 'transformational' curriculum. However, in the present system, as academics such as Halliday and Bernstein have pointed out, EAL pupils need proficiency in English to empower them to succeed in their educational careers. Whilst many of these pupils are fluent in English, many others are not. Added to this is the dilemma that some of these pupils are perceived to have achieved fluency by their teachers but their actual level of understanding is lower than that of their L1 peers. These perceptions may be more prevalent in a city such as Leicester, where overall pupil achievement is low. Situations arise where ethnic minority pupils are perceived to be performing better than other pupils. However, this assessment may be made by comparing

EAL pupils with low-achieving L1 pupils. In such instances, the actual deeper language learning needs of some EAL pupils may be assumed to be less than they actually are.

Review and discussion of the Teachers' Vocabulary Questionnaire

After the tests were completed, a questionnaire was distributed to teachers. The results of this were statistically analysed, and compared to the findings from the Pupils' Vocabulary Tests. No strong correspondence was found. An obvious reason for this is that the teachers would be basing their responses on the "average" EAL pupil and the "average" L1 pupil. They would therefore be likely to rate the average L1 pupil as having a greater understanding of the target words than the average EAL pupil. This contrasts with the vocabulary tests where individual pupils were involved, whom teachers rated for reading proficiency based on the criteria discussed previously. It is therefore argued that the results of the questionnaire only produced evidence that teachers believe that monolingual English speakers will have greater lexical understanding than those pupils who use English as a second language.

The key issue of raising teachers' awareness is believed to be the first criterion in addressing EAL pupils' comprehension gaps. This has led to the dissemination of the research findings through Vocabulary Workshops for teachers. This is discussed in the next section.

9.4. Dissemination of the research findings from the Pupils' Vocabulary Tests

The findings of this research study are being disseminated through vocabulary workshops with teachers and through proposed publications. The following diagram illustrates this:

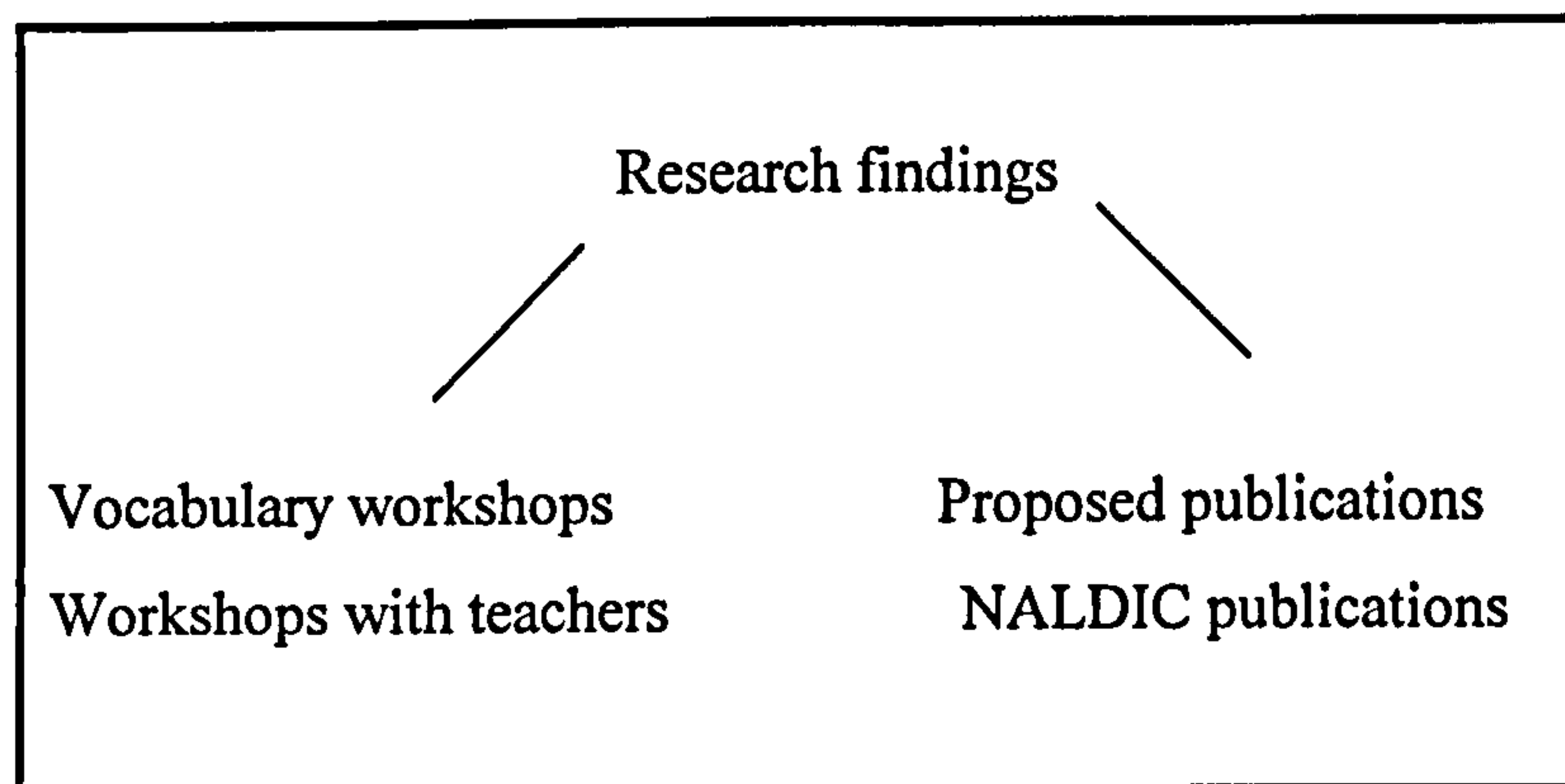


Figure 9.1. Dissemination of research findings to teachers

Within the action paradigm, such dissemination is part of the action towards change. This is why it is considered here along with research results, as feedback during dissemination is, in this case, also a result. The vocabulary workshops are being organised in an interactive way. First, a general introduction to teaching vocabulary to EAL pupils is presented in collaboration with the research supervisor. Teachers are then shown Cummins' iceberg diagram to provide a key visual which clearly illustrates the EAL/L1 comprehension differences found by this study. Following this, the objective of the Pupils' Vocabulary Test is explained, and the overall results are given in statistical data. Teachers are not informed about which words are significantly different words. Next, the teachers are asked to work in small groups to identify which words they believe, on the basis of their professional knowledge and experience, would be significant. During this discussion, the workshop leaders listen and interact diagnostically to try to establish the teachers' awareness both of the word meanings and of likely EAL pupils' lexical understanding in relation to these words. This is parallel to ascertaining a ZPD prior to scaffolding, but it is using groups of teachers rather than pupils. In this sense, the workshop design uses the sociocultural framework.

After the teachers have completed this exercise, the significantly different words are disclosed, and there is then some time for discussing these and other issues. This provides the opportunity for the research and the researcher to be challenged by fellow teachers, and for the researcher to engage with dissenting voices. It also leads to reflection on the content and presentation of the workshops. Teachers are asked to complete a feedback form, including details about any comprehension gaps they may have noticed with their EAL pupils. This will be analysed and the results will be presented to schools in a useful format. Two returns from teachers appear in Appendix 10 to illustrate the different perspectives and different levels of awareness among the participants.

These workshops have been presented in a number of schools and INSET sessions in Leicester and Derby, and more are planned. Their interactive nature makes them useful for both sharing information with teachers and receiving information from teachers.

Following this section on the dissemination of the research results to teachers, the next session gives the conclusions of the study.

9.5. Conclusions of the study

This study has investigated lexical understanding in EAL pupils and in L1 pupils. The results of the research that was conducted substantiated that, for the target pupils involved, there was a significant difference between the two groups in their understanding of key lexical items overall, with the L1 group of pupils scoring more highly than their EAL peers. The L1 pupils had a better understanding of key vocabulary in texts than their EAL peers. This conclusion was compounded by the corroboration of the second research hypothesis that teachers were, in some instances, not aware of these differences in lexical understanding and presumed that their EAL pupils understood the vocabulary in texts as well as the L1 pupils when both sets of pupils appeared to have the same surface proficiency in reading. Moreover, based on the statistical trend of the current research which indicates that the difference in lexical understanding between the groups could rise in a larger study, and on the concerns voiced by the QCA (2000) about teachers' estimates when assessing their EAL pupils proficiency in English, it can be concluded that it is likely that this situation may occur frequently in schools. There are therefore two key issues to be addressed, first, the need to increase EAL pupils' lexical understanding, and second, the need to increase teachers' knowledge about gaps in their EAL pupils' level of understanding. The second point necessarily takes priority over the first if linguistically informed planned strategies for pupils' lexical development are to be put in place rather than simply relying on pupils' informal acquisition of vocabulary.

Raising teachers' awareness about the possibility of vocabulary and reading comprehension gaps in some EAL learners is a prerequisite for enhancing these pupils' understanding of texts, with the implications this can have for their learning across the curriculum. If teachers lack this insight, then they will not put the appropriate strategies into place. This argues the need for a broader approach where vocabulary is more central and where meaning is made more explicit across the curriculum. Teachers need to know what their pupils know about vocabulary. Teachers' knowledge of the reading process needs to incorporate an awareness that pupils' reading levels are not the same as their vocabulary levels. The vocabulary part of reading is complex, and aspects of this were reflected in the scoring system of the vocabulary tests. The Vocabulary Workshops that were initiated through the findings of this study were designed to give teachers an insight into difficulties in lexical understanding that some EAL pupils have, and to encourage them to engage in reflection that could impact on their practice. The workshops also presented strategies that teachers could use with their pupils to develop lexical understanding.

Through the teacher interviews it emerged that many teachers had little knowledge of their pupils' cultural backgrounds and home literacy practices. In some instances the teachers were aware of this gap, and stated that they would like to be more informed about their pupil' home backgrounds. This study has found that cultural and language socialization practices seem the most likely explanation for many instances of vocabulary difficulties. Greater knowledge about these should enable the teachers to be more aware of the precise nature of the challenges for literacy development for ethnic minority pupils in an English classroom, particularly with interpreting English vocabulary. This also involves the issue of context, because this is important in the reading process, and it cannot be assumed that children will interpret this correctly because the context may be unfamiliar to them by not being associated with their home culture.

Other conclusions that emerged from the interviews with the project managers were that to enable practice to be effective and consistent, schools need language policies that inform and standardise good practice in language teaching and learning across the school. The whole school involvement is quite critical for structured on-going language support. This is particularly important as schools take on the responsibility for EAL support rather than it being provided by a central service. Such policies should also have clear aims for lexical development.

Certain areas for further research emerged from this study and these are suggested next.

9.6. Suggestions for further research

The present research could be repeated across a greater number of schools, resulting in a larger scale study. This could also be undertaken as a collaborative research project, which, in addition to allowing much more data to be collected, would also allow for critical enquiry with other researchers. The study could also be undertaken with Key Stage 2 pupils prior to the Level 2 SATs. As well providing information about older pupils, the results could also be compared with those of the current research to see if any significant differences arose. This study also grouped all the pupils with English as an additional language together, though there were a number of different languages within the group. Further observations could be made by testing between these language groups for lexical understanding.

Some other suggestions for further research came from early years' practitioners. Many of these expressed concern about young EAL pupils not being prepared for starting school and thus finding it a "traumatic" experience. These teachers also noted that the parents of these pupils did not appreciate the role of play in the early years and preferred their children to engage in formal learning. The differences in cultural expectations here between the home and the school would make an interesting and useful research project.

9.7. Personal Conclusions

This research has been conducted over a number of years. This time has been one of personal and professional development for me in which this research project has been central. One of the results has been that I have developed a more reflective perspective and become more self-critical. This makes me aware that this study may have some element of subjectivity, and though I have tried to counter this, some subjectivity may remain. Furthermore, reflections on the role of teacher as researcher have also made me aware of the constraints that are inherent in this role by being a part of the research field.

However, there are also considerable advantages to the role of teacher and researcher. My work in schools gave me the opportunity to engage in reflective practice and to develop this into action through undertaking this research. Action and reflection are not necessarily opposite ends of the spectrum; action can be a result of reflection. In the course of this work I have tried to balance reflective practice, through which the research was initiated in the first place, with my desire to investigate if my observations about both pupils' lexical understanding and teachers' knowledge about this could be substantiated.

As a writer I have become aware of the need to represent a range of voices in this study. I have tried to represent the voices of children, teachers, research scholars and theorists, although the attempt to do this has made me aware of the limitations of trying to weave a polyphony of voices together. Some voices are in tension with each other, including my own as teacher-researcher, reader-writer and student-professional. In other ways, these dual roles are complementary. They have resulted in the production of this work which I hope will be useful in adding to the research findings in the field of education.

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Appendix 1.

Questions for Teachers

- 1. From your experience of working with EAL pupils, how much influence do you think their cultural background has on their learning in the classroom?**
- 2. Can you give any concrete examples of instances of cultural differences?**
- 3. What type of support would you find most useful to help you support your EAL pupils in the classroom?**
- 4. Can you recall any instances when you have noticed an EAL pupil grasp a new concept; i.e. “cotton on” to something or “pick something up?”**
- 5. Have you noticed any particular problems that EAL pupils have in an English classroom?**
- 6. Do you think the National Curriculum meets the needs of EAL pupils?**

Appendix 2.

Areas of discussion with the Project Managers

1. Can you give details of your relevant background and experience in EAL teaching and administration?
2. What do you perceive the role of your Section 11 staff in schools to be?
3. Would you advocate Section 11 practice to be “Task Force” or “Subversive?”
4. How do you envisage the future of Section 11? What is the way forward?

Flats		
Spring Cleaning		
Junk		
Nap		
Trunks		
Pillow		
Eyebrows		
Beard		
Statue		
Upset		
Jack-in-the-box		
Stream		
Cloth		
Saw		
Met		
Pirates		

Appendix 3

Sting		
Tea		
Sink		
Cowboy		
Fruit Salad		
Bluebottle		
Pails		
Patchwork		
Scarecrow		

 Teacher Vocabulary Questionnaire

How difficult do you estimate the following words will be for Key Stage 1 children to understand in a reading text?

		Very easy	Quite easy	Average	Quite difficult	Very difficult
<i>Flats</i>	In all the <u>flats</u> in Roger's house it's nearly supper time	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Spring Cleaning</i>	Mum and Dad were <u>spring-cleaning</u>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Beard</i>	She put on a big <u>beard</u>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Statue</i>	The ballroom was in a <u>statue</u>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Upset</i>	Penny <u>upset</u> her milk	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Stream</i>	The children went to the <u>stream</u>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Cloth</i>	The <u>cloth</u> was wet	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Pirate</i>	The ship, the <u>pirates</u> ...	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Emeralds</i>	<u>Emeralds</u> make a lovely gift	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Tea</i>	The tiger who came to <u>tea</u>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Cowboy</i>	Katie saw a <u>cowboy</u> in a big hat	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Pails</i>	In go the <u>pails</u>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Bluebottle</i>	'I am blue,' said the <u>bluebottle</u>	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 4

Teachers' Vocabulary Questionnaire

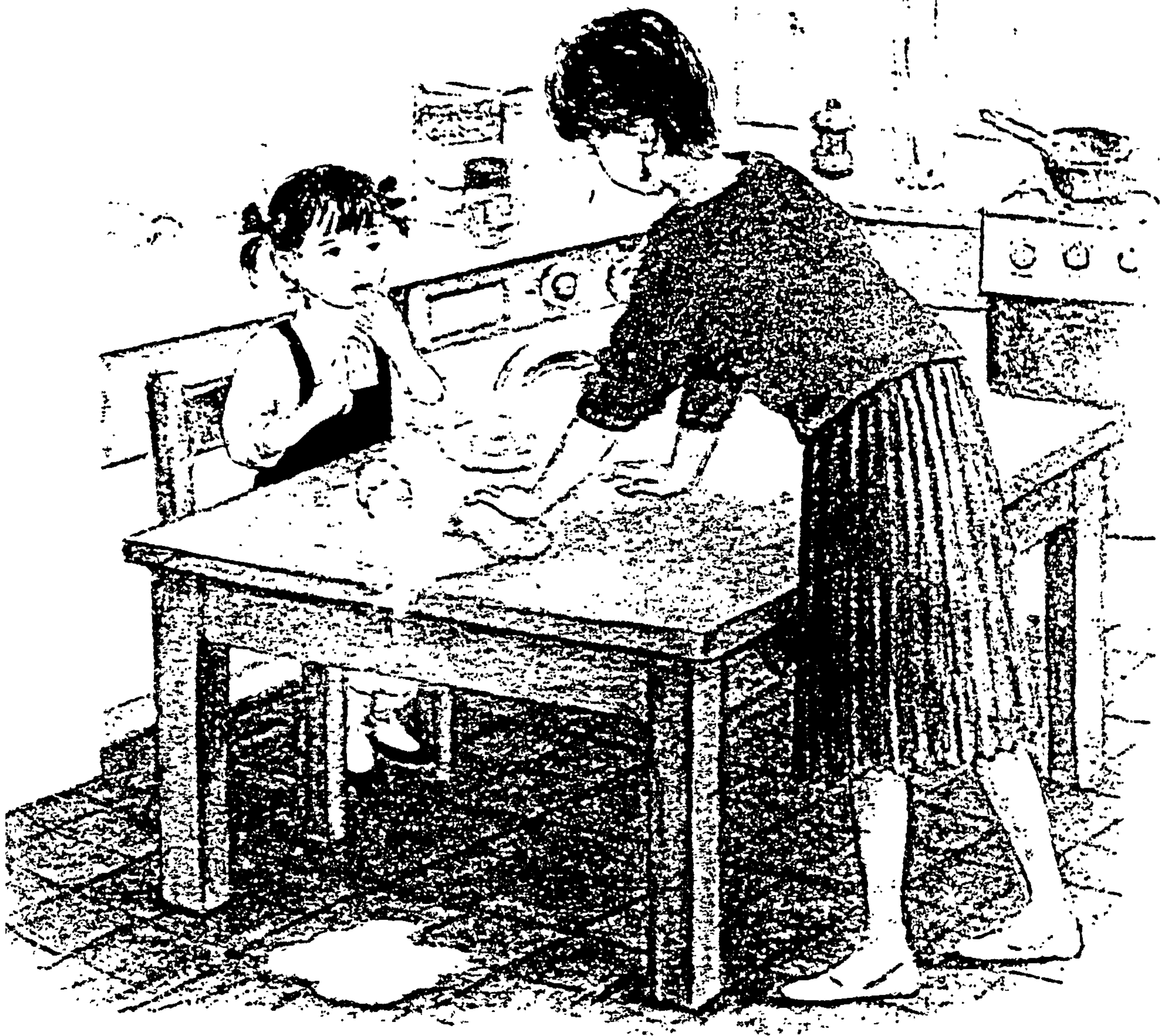
How difficult do you estimate the following words will be for Key Stage 1 children to understand in a reading text?

		Very easy	Quite easy	Average	Quite difficult	Very difficult
<i>Flats</i>	In all the <u>flats</u> in Roger's house it's nearly supper time	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Spring Cleaning</i>	Mum and Dad were <u>spring-cleaning</u>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Beard</i>	She put on a big <u>beard</u>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Statue</i>	The ballroom was in a <u>statue</u>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Upset</i>	Penny <u>upset</u> her milk	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Stream</i>	The children went to the <u>stream</u>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Cloth</i>	The <u>cloth</u> was wet	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Pirate</i>	The ship, the <u>pirates</u> ...	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Emeralds</i>	<u>Emeralds</u> make a lovely gift	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Tea</i>	The tiger who came to <u>tea</u>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Cowboy</i>	Katie saw a <u>cowboy</u> in a big hat	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Pails</i>	In go the <u>pails</u>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Bluebottle</i>	'I am blue,' said the <u>bluebottle</u>	1	2	3	4	5



The balloon was on a statue.

What a mess



Penny upset her milk.
Look at this milk,
Mum said to Penny.
What a mess.

EAL pupil

L1 pupil

Flats	Flats means buildings	Blocks of houses.
Spring cleaning	They're cleaning all the springs again.	They're getting all the old stuff out & putting it up on the loft or somewhere.
Junk	Junk mean a bit of trash and everything like that.	Old stuff and that
Nap	Nap means go to sleep.	He's going to sleep.
Trunks	Trunks means swimming costume like I wear at swimming, not like the ones you wear at school.	so you can go swimming.
Pillow	Pillow means like where you go sleep & if somebody sits on a sofa you put a pillow there & if they fall down you	It's a soft thing that you lay on at night
Eyebrows	Exebrows mean (pointed) it's like hair but it ain't. It's like hair.	You've got them on your head. (pointed)
Beard	Beard means like a moustache, but beards are bigger than moustache.	It's a white thing. (pointed)
Statue	They put it up, like famous people who died & some are still alive. In India there are statues but there are lion ones there	It's this big thing. It's made out of stone.
Upset	Upset means when you're crying, like my dad doesn't like me, and you're sad, you're crying.	You're crying and that

EAL pupil

L1 pupil

Jack in the-box	It's just like a toy, but there's a little box. There's a key. If you turn it a funny clown comes out with a funny nose, with springs.	It's this box with a jack in and every time you wind it up or press a button it pops up.
Stream	It's just like a river, but it's little.	It's like a river.
Cloth	Cloth means like carpet. It's soft & a little bit hard	It's this fabric
Vanishing	Where it goes it, that's what vanishing means, where it goes away.	You disappear.
Saw	Saw mean you see something like I see school, see a teacher, like that.	You see your friends and that.
Met	It means where you shake hands like that. Meet means you see someone - I don't know	You meet somebody.
Pirates	how to describe it They look for treasure and the boss of the pirates has a black thing on his eye & a peg leg.	They're nasty men
Emeralds	It's a diamond & diamonds are shiny	They're sort of diamond
Sting	If you touch it, it really hurts and it starts to bleed and it really hurts you & the	It hurts you.
Tea	They do that sometimes if they don't like you. It's like coffee & (spoke in Gujarati)	You can have it for your dinner.
Sink	You are falling down the water. You can't stand on that so you fall down	You go under water.
Cowboy	They wear big hats & some cowboys have a wrestle, a shoot with Bad Black Jack. They ride on horses & the horses	It's a man who rides on a horse.

EAL pupil

U pupil

Fruit Salad	Salad means is tomato, & there is strawberries & orange, and you can put cream in it, and apples & stuff.	It's got loads of fruits in.
Bluebottle	It's a bottle and it's coloured in blue.	It's this sort of bird or
Pails	Pails means is buckets	It's a bucket and it's got loads of water & things in.
Patchwork	I don't know what patchwork means.	Different coloured.

SCARECROW

It's made out of hay, & it's this way that stands they don't let the birds in a field to keep all come to eat the fruits. the birds away.

Appendix 7.

Interview with Project Leader, Project D.

1. Can you give details of your relevant background experience in EAL teaching and administration?

V.S.O in Ghana, then did PGCE in E²L, then two more years in Ghana, four years as a peripatetic teacher in primary and secondary in Birmingham, seventeen years as Teacher in Charge of the Language Centre in Nottingham, basically secondary as beginners, part of the time in the centre, part of the time in schools, then came to Leicester as Project Leader for Highfields one year ago.

2. What do you perceive the role of your Section 11 staff in schools to be?

Aims overall:

1. Changing children
2. Changing schools.

Changing Schools

Section 11 teachers will work with schools - part of school, evaluate what is going on and be part of on-going school policy and practice. Particular practices I would want people to change would be at policies about bilingualism, policies about first language, policies about appropriate policies in teaching bilingual children, appropriate use of oracy, a strand going through teaching, reading policy, home-school links policy.

Practice.

Section 11 staff should be developing practice and disseminating across whole schools, so they are not just locking expertise into a class, making sure it gets throughout the whole school. Hard role, tough role, one I would particularly be looking at co-ordinators to be facilitating, but one that is actually the responsibility of all Section 11 staff.

Pupils' needs - partnership teaching, assessing pupils' present level, looking at their needs both as bilingual learners and how they are developing both first language and second language together, how they are using their English in order to access the curriculum, and how one can support their English language level so they can gain access to the curriculum more easily - involving direct teaching, putting the two together needs a partnership teaching role. I think that both focuses on the need of bilingual practice and developing good practice with mainstream staff. I have started by looking at expertise that staff need to work in the classroom, because some teachers bring remedial reading skills to work or class teaching skills, but don't bring E²L skills, and they don't bring awareness of the language learning needs of pupils, so they are not able to direct pupil support, and if they can't do that, they can't do whole school issues. My focus at the moment is skilling people up so that they have got some good methodologies, and good approaches to teaching bilingual pupils, hopefully in partnership with mainstream staff. Whole school initiatives are starting, and we have done initiatives on in-service training.

I don't think I understand very much of the cultural background of the children I teach. I work to learn, to learn more. Being sensitive to the children and relating in a way that allows them to share with me where they are coming from at any particular point. It involves listening to them and giving them space and encouraging them to use first language, because all sorts of things come out of that, and I think the problem is that you need to understand at a very subtle level cross-cultural, very subtle differences about the way you behave in different situations; a lot of the stuff you can't do in words, you have to feel through the skin, an attitude of accepting and rejoicing in what the children are and can do, which then allows that understanding to develop between you and them. Being alert to what children don't understand. When I was teaching children who had come from the Himalayas, none of the books had anything to do with the Himalayas in them. The books had lots about the English seaside, which they had never been to. One of the problems from being from the same culture as the books is that you don't actually notice the

3. What approach would you advocate, " Task Force" or 'Subversive'?

Much nearer 'subversive', but wouldn't use the word. Diplomatic, or more than diplomatic - it's to do with partnership and it's to do with accepting that mainstream teachers and head teachers and senior management bring a huge amount of expertise to their job, and it's to do with me as a Section 11 member of staff going in and saying "You know things I don't know, I have ideas and approaches I want to try out" and we get together and put our evaluation together in order to develop this class, this school, and so it's putting yourself alongside where people are at the moment.

The problem with inset is that people say "Oh that was wonderful, bye-bye", and don't change anything. It's quite important to work alongside people to change theories and practice and if you go in as a task force, you might cause a load of fuss. You might get the whole staff working together if you are wonderful, but this subsides after a while. It needs embedding at very low levels, so that recording procedures in school reflect what you are doing, so that every book in the school, perhaps not every, reflects the approach you want. Approach to reading is one that involves children's first language, and children's language experiences, but that takes years, to change people's practice, and it has to be there in the books that you do, in the schemes, in the approaches, policies. Things can't be changed in a term or two terms, you are really looking at a five-year job. Ongoing thing.

4. How do you envisage the future of Section 11? What is the way forward?

This time next year, I hope we will be carrying on, similarly to what we are doing now. I hope there will be a cut of no more than a quarter. Long-term future - if I were under 45, I would seriously be looking to get out of Section 11, because if this Government carries on Section 11 will not carry on long into the next Parliament, because they are saving money all over the place. It's

difference between the books and the children's experience. Last week, someone told me about an interesting one, go home and have some tea, and the children all thought it meant a cup of tea, not the idea of tea being a meal. Also changing culture, another one was one of the heads in my area was teaching a class, and she used the word 'green-grocer'; and not a single child in the class knew what a greengrocer was because the word has changed since the time the books were written, i.e. ten years ago. Coal is another, at Snibston many children didn't have a clue what coal was.

Important issue, because I'm not sure I understand it. I'm not sure that anybody understands how children conceive about things. I think there's a huge amount of assumption made, it's about assumptions; teachers assuming that children understand something, and not identifying concept-loaded words and teaching them - its very difficult. Someone here was asking me how do you teach the word 'energy'. Well, it actually took me two days to get my head round the question. Because I didn't know what energy was, heat and light and kinetic movement. I went out and asked my children - very difficult.

I observed a lesson this morning and I was very concerned about the amount of teacher input, which was obviously not being listened to by any of the kids, and I think there is a great need to look at collaborative group work, so if you're doing something, children can't hear unless they speak, you always think of listening coming before speaking and reading coming before writing. I think that's not actually true. I don't think you can hear unless you speak and the only person you ever really listen to is yourself. Instead of getting all the children on the carpet, the teacher could get the children in pairs and the children talking to each other about what she said, re. Sylvia McNamara - Oracy Project. You need to teach them to do it, sitting knee-to-knee, and take it in turns, and feedback all sorts of things - asking a question and telling each other the answer. Then sample it

not a high priority because Section 11 is put in Labour controlled seats, in some ways a vote loser, so I am pessimistic in the end.

If the Government keep losing by-elections, there might be a General Election, which might save us. They are making such a mess around their ears. If we are lucky, and it collapses first, then they will have to put in Section 11 to prop it up and the fact that there are children who don't speak any English is such a major burden for schools, there may be pressure.

Appendix 8.

Transcript from Teacher Interview 1

1. From your experience of working with EAL pupils, how much influence do you think their cultural background has on their learning in the classroom?

That's a difficult one to answer - for some children if their cultural background is very different from ours, then coming to school, particularly in the Nursery situation, can be quite traumatic. I can think of one or two children in particular, who had no knowledge of our education system, and became quite traumatised. Because they were not used to mixing with large numbers of other children. Whether that's to do with their cultural background or family situation I don't know, but obviously, being in a school situation, children from an ethnic minority background may feel insecure.

2. Can you give any concrete examples of cultural differences?

There's a two-way thing as well. We don't understand what their background is. I know when I first started teaching the children from the Asian sub-continent, the fact that they didn't make eye-contact when you were chastising them was quite normal for them, because it would be disrespectful for them to look at me, but it, well initially, not understanding, it was quite irritating. There are differences in behaviour and differences in expectation. I think that the children who have no English, at the beginning, they don't understand, or misunderstand, and follow what the other children are doing. They don't always understand instructions from the teacher, and often the teacher can assume they have understood something, when in fact they haven't.

3. What type of support would you find most useful to help your EAL pupils in the classroom?

Well, I think having access to translation services, Section 11, and a school-home liaison officer who can talk to parents as well as support in the classroom. To be able to attend courses about their religions and culture are important. There ought to be greater access to bilingual services. Books and resources, things that the children can see, but some tend to be very expensive. Courses, generally at the multicultural centre.

4. Can you recall any instances when you have noticed an EAL pupil grasp a new concept, i.e. "cotton on" to something, or "pick something up"?

Well, I had a child in Y2 who got the bucket and spade and said, "Well I'm going to put it in the spade." Now she obviously knew bucket and spade, but not which was which. In her mind bucket was spade and vice-versa. And she was seven and right up to then that was her conceptual knowledge - a spade was a bucket because, obviously, in the past, when she referred to bucket and spade, those two items were there, and nobody noticed her confusion. It's easy, isn't it? You don't stop and think about it, and this child was seven. Another child surprised me when he called a fish tank a tadpole. He'd been used to looking at tadpoles in a tank and had mixed the names up.

In a large class, there often isn't a focus on teaching specific vocabulary. If you've got a large group, then you would have lots of sessions when you've got children, who, on the surface speak good English, and this particular child spoke English quite well and, as far as I know, spoke English at home, but there was a gap, somewhere. It's hard to pick up. Also, last year, something came up in ORT about "How do you feel?" relating to emotions, and they thought about it in a tactile sense, feeling materials etc.

I was working with someone who taught upper juniors several years ago and he told me they didn't know what the word *liquid* meant. They thought it was Fairy Liquid, washing up liquid, and it's because their experience of the word was washing up liquid.

Well, she did then (bucket and spade). Casting my mind back, although there's lots of general examples, I can't bring any specific ones to mind at the moment. I'll think about that one.

5. Have you noticed any particular problems that EAL pupils have in an English classroom?

If they're in a minority, they can have problems like dress and different food. I notice that with the nursery children they're not happy at lunch time because they have to eat this unfamiliar food. It takes a while to actually educate their taste buds. I've seen children who've made themselves physically sick, 'cos every time they put something like mashed potato in their mouths, they were actually vomiting, gagging. The whole smell, and I suppose even people smell as well, I don't mean in a nasty way, but it varies as to different smells at home. They do have a lot to contend with. It's amazing how easily most of them adapt. We've still got a problem with _____. Although she's beginning, this term, to play with the children, she still doesn't communicate. Then we've got a bilingual Greek child who's just started, his parents are both deaf, so he signs to his mother, he turns his face and says the words so that she can lip-read. And they speak Greek at home, but as they're deaf, their vocalizations are not normal, so it's amazing that he can speak English as much as he does. He's been thrust into school, where everybody speaks a different language.

6. Do you think the National Curriculum meets the needs of EAL pupils?

No, I don't. I don't actually get the support to translate things for bilingual pupils. When we're testing and testing their concepts, we haven't got the ability to test their concepts in another language. We haven't got that facility. In a school like this, where they're in a minority, we haven't got bilingual teachers on the staff. Their whole cultural background, reading books and literature and history is very different. Are saying we don't value their literature, their arts, their music? That could be the message that's coming across to them.

Transcript from Teacher Interview 2

1. From your experience of working with EAL pupils, how much influence do you think their cultural background has on their learning in the classroom?

I think it can help, because you tend to find that the Asian children are more motivated educationally, because the parents are keen, so in fact, they seem to be the ones who do better than your white working class, who don't really appreciate it, so I've tended to find that the Asian children are doing better than the white children because they're being encouraged. Once they've got over the language difficulty at the beginning, so like ____ and ____, doing better than anyone else in the class now, so okay, their speech isn't perfect, but written-wise they're better because it's encouraged at home. Now they've got respect, respect for education. You send a reading book home and they do it and they bring it back the next day. So it's turned full circle, almost. They have an advantage, almost, and do better at school than some of ours.

They were two of the best children I had then. There's a need really, to follow them through. ____ and ____, now, if you were predicting, I'd give a level 3 for SATs. Now, if they don't get it, is why they don't get it. Have they not got it 'cos they've gone to a certain teacher who's not pushed them on enough, or have they not got it because they've not quite got the language? They should get it. They're good enough to get it, depending on what the other factors are.

And how much time you've got to spend with them. In theory, they're not necessarily the children you'd work with, because there are others that are really shy, that I'd want you to talk to and do more with, so even so, even you, I'd rather you had ____, because ____ is too quiet and too shy, and you seem to forget that ____ and ____ need you as well. Because they're good, you almost, well it's just not passing them by, but because they're some of my brightest children, do they actually need any extra help at all anyway?

2. Can you give any concrete examples of instances of cultural differences?

The boys are harder to handle, because I don't think the boys like having a woman teacher, some of the boys. I've always found the girls really really really keen, but some of the boys, not all of them, look at you as if you're a woman and they haven't got respect for you. I've had that before now and that's definitely a sex thing, isn't it? They'd be better with a male teacher, but they'll get that, at secondary school, so whether they are put off before hand... It's not happened here much, because we're only, what, about 20% here, aren't we? So that's really only the odd exception, but there's been the odd exception, when you think they are looking at you in that way, because, well, why should I do what she says?

(BH refers to PC's comments on cultural differences between boys.)

That's interesting, because if you look at ____ and ____, say, that's that difference, isn't it? I mean, almost too good, almost too good to be a boy. I mean, not the sort of boy I'd like at my house. So, so, so good that's he's almost frightened to put anything out of place. And you want a little bit of life. They are losing the life and vitality bit 'cos they ... he's too frightened of his boundaries, isn't he? He doesn't ask a question, almost, because he's told to do exactly as he's told and sit still, and he's almost too good to be true ... We've never ever told him off, but I think if you did he would dissolve into a heap, so desperate, that's never been in trouble, he's always been so good. No, I hadn't thought of it that way. The play side... the trouble is they don't really - you haven't got a list on the board and think, well they're Hindu and they are Muslim, that there's be any difference in the background in that way. That's an interesting point that she's made, isn't it? They are overall much stricter, and kept down. Almost kept down too much.

You're just brought up to different things, and you wouldn't question them, like my mother's always done them, so I've always done them, like to a certain

extent, and you wouldn't think. I always turn my washing inside out, always, 'cos my mum did. She said if you're going to mark a jumper, you want to mark it on the inside, so I always wash everything inside out. Just purely, I've never questioned it. I've just done it. I can see the point, but sometimes, if it's an old pair of jeans, it wouldn't really matter, would it?

3. What type of support would you find most useful to help you support your EAL pupils in the classroom?

Well, support like we've got now. We've never done any courses, have we, as a school? It would be nice to do something as a school. I wouldn't like to, say, go on my own, like Mrs _____ does it or Mrs _____ does it; it would be nice to all do something together, and then you have all got the same sort of attitude, and you've had the same input. I think it's nice that we've got both, like we've got you, and we've got Mrs _____ as well, so she's nice with _____, sort of brings her confidence out a bit. Just a chat, there's not pressure and it's all nice and relaxed, say just for ten minutes on their own, and then we've got the bigger groups working as well. I don't think really as a school we're badly off, but we're not informed are we? As a staff, we're relying on you and outside people to come in and help us out, whereas we could be better informed ourselves. ... If there was something we could do at a staff meeting. We could have somebody in. I don't know what would be useful to have in, but if we could have in an outside speaker in, at least it would be the whole staff. It wouldn't be like a big teacher day, would it? It would be like an after school staff meeting, but what area you'd want to look at would be difficult, wouldn't it?

4. Can you recall any instances when you have noticed an EAL pupil grasp a new concept, i.e. "cotton on" to something, or "pick something up"?

Yes, yes, like _____ is now. She came in at the end of November, 'cos she'd been abroad. And, really, I would have put her very towards the bottom of

the class. And you work on it, and work on it, and it's just clicked. It's taken from November 'till June, and now she's got it, her whole confidence has risen and it's got to the point that even the dinner lady said she's now eating all her dinner, she was eating hardly any dinner. It's like her whole personality has changed, and it was really to do with work, 'cos she couldn't do it, and she wasn't sure what to do. She wasn't sure of expectations and it's taken her this long to still and make friends and all the social side as well, but now the work side has clicked, she's friendlier. She talks to Miss _____ all the time, like laughs and jokes and eats all her dinner, she laughs and jokes to the dinner lady. She's completely coming out of herself, and it's everything suddenly, and, and all we're hoping now is that she'll bring _____ along, 'cos she's still on that borderline. She can do the work, but she's not come out of her shell, and being friendly, we're hoping that she'll sort of liven up a bit, and get the confidence going. But she's almost a different child since I wrote the report, and that's only a few weeks ago. 'Cos in her report I've got that she's very quiet, very shy. She's not now, that's just clicked.

5. Have you noticed any particular problems EAL pupils have in an English classroom?

Well, going back to _____, he was, with the reading, he had totally different models at home, so it's taken, I don't know what he's like with Mrs _____ now, but he's taken .. that whole term he was making hardly any progress at all. Well, he was watching his brother all the time, and his brother was three years older so I suppose his brother was reading, is it the Koran? Starting at the back, working to the front, and every single time he got his book out of the bookbag he'd turn it upside down and back to front, and he couldn't do any of the flash cards. And going back to ... em ... _____'s sister, _____, remember she went through a phase of being really really tired. 'Cos she was progressing lovely. She was really coming along, a really, nice, a really happy little girl and they started her at the after-school school, and she started coming in really really tired, and all her work went down, but that was just too much for a five year old. If she went at 8 or 9, but she was just shattered, and she'd just done

too much. I don't know what she's like now, but she definitely went through a down phase, and it was because she was so tired, trying to do work in the evening as well. But _____, certainly that was interesting. Not really had any other Asian boys that are that have done that. Not to that extent.

You don't associate the background, that's the trouble. You sit there and think, "Why on earth is he taking his book out, and doing it the wrong way round?" and then it happens again, and happens again, and it doesn't click that his older brother is doing that - he's watching him as a model at home, and it's logical that he'd do that - do the same as the older brothers. It probably ... we've had the parents' evening in November and I had a chat with him, but again, that's hard, depending how well the parents speak English. I tend to find they take criticism very badly, because they want them to do well in education. You're saying something about a 5 year old - oh, he can't do this very well and they take it very personally. They get very worried too quickly and then you worry that they are going to put too much pressure on the child, 'cos they are so desperate that they do well. You know, I don't mind a bit of pressure at 6 and 7, but at 5! I still would rather he played, and had come on like that really. So I didn't make a big thing of it, at the parent's evening in November. Of course, we've got another one coming up. I just said he's settling down and he's progressing, because I didn't want to frighten them off either, but we said about the reading. We abandoned the flash cards completely, because he was just totally confused. Whether it was because it was two sorts of writing, or whether he just wasn't ready for it. You never know whether that's because of his background, or because he couldn't have done that sort of reading anyway. So that's hard.

We were thinking of putting him on Stage I (S.E.N) last September, but then you hold fire, don't you, because how much of it is a language problem, and how much isn't. If I'd put _____ on Stage 1, she doesn't need it now, 'cos it's just all clicked. I think we were just hoping that _____ would click... _____ was a great problem. I was really worried about him. That's another one. I would have put him on Stage 1. Then he went to the others class, had the

summer holidays. We explained to dad what the problem was at the parents' evening in June and really, from that first term he's come on brilliantly. That was also a bit of knowing what I expected from him and daddy explaining what I expected from him, but I think it all sorts of clicks together.

6. Do you think the National Curriculum meets the needs of EAL pupils?

It's hard to say. It could benefit them, this whole class bit, 'cos you tend to find that they were the quiet ones getting on, and they're not the ones who would approach you and ask for help, so if you're working in the classroom, then at least in here they are more involved with a discussion over a big book, so I think it might actually benefit them more, and the fact of what's expected. "This is what we do", and you're explaining to the class and with these plenaries, "This is what this group did, and it's going to be your turn to do it tomorrow, and this is how it worked". I think it actually might help because it's sort of tied it in, made it more specific, rather than, like, "Go and write some news", it's made it "Do this, and this is how you do it". So we're explaining more what we want. Now presuming they understand what we want, that's the bit. We've tended to have children that's English isn't good enough to know what we expect ... The ones that are more quiet and shy, like in this (group) reading, they're going to get more confidence to join in, rather than being picked out – "Oh, can you just do that?" it's far more a class type thing. I think it will be interesting won't it? But I think it will benefit them, the literacy hour. And then, the maths, you can't say yet, can you, but if it's a similar way of teaching, if it's a explain to the whole class, do something together, I can see it might ... sort of be easier. You see, I think maths is easier to pick up anyway. It's much more concrete, much more five, is five, whatever, isn't it? It's just learning the symbols, and they tend to find learning the maths easier.

Appendix 9.

One Sunday night, already getting on to the small hours, I chanced to find myself walking alongside a band of six tipsy artisans for a dozen paces or so, and there and then I became convinced that all thoughts, all feelings, and even whole trains of reasoning could be expressed merely by using a certain noun, a noun, moreover, of utmost simplicity in itself. (Dostoevsky had in mind here a certain widely used obscenity - v. v.). Here is what happened. First, one of these fellows voices this noun shrilly and emphatically by way of expressing his utterly disclaimful denial of some point that had been in general contention just prior. A second fellow repeats this very same noun in response to the first fellow, but now in an altogether different tone and sense - to wit, in the sense that he fully doubted the veracity of the first fellow's denial. A third fellow waxes indignant at the first one, sharply and heatedly sallying into the conversation and shouting at him that very same noun, but now in a pejorative, abusive sense. The second fellow, indignant at the third for being offensive, himself sallies back in and cuts the latter short to the effect: "What the hell do you think you're doing, butting in like that?! Me and Fit'ka were having a nice quiet talk and just like that you come along and start cussing him out!" And in fact, this whole train of thought he conveyed by emitting just that very same time-honoured word, that same extremely laconic designation of a certain item, and nothing more, save only that he also raised his hand and grabbed the second fellow by the shoulder. Thereupon, all of a sudden, a fourth fellow, the youngest in the crowd, who had remained silent all this while, apparently having just struck upon the solution to the problem that had originally occasioned the dispute, in a tone of rapture, with one arm half-raised, shouts - What do you think: "Eureka!" I found it, I found it!?" No, nothing at all like "Eureka," nothing like "I found it." He merely repeats that very same unprintable noun, just that one single word, just that word alone, but with rapture, with a squeal of ecstasy, and apparently somewhat excessively so, because the sixth fellow, a surly character and the oldest in the bunch, didn't think it seemly, and in a trice stops the young fellow's rapture cold by turning on him and repeating in a gruff and expositilatory bass - yes, that very same noun whose usage is forbidden in the company of ladies, which, however, in this case clearly and precisely denoted: "What the hell are you shouting for, you'll burst a blood vessel!" And so, without having uttered one other word, they repeated just this one, but obviously beloved little word of theirs six times in a row, one after the other, and they understood one another perfectly." (*The Complete Works of F. M. Dostoevsky*, Vol. ix, pp. 274-275, 1906).

Have you noticed EAL pupils experiencing difficulty with understanding vocabulary, i.e. in reading books, SATS, classroom discourse? Can you give any examples?

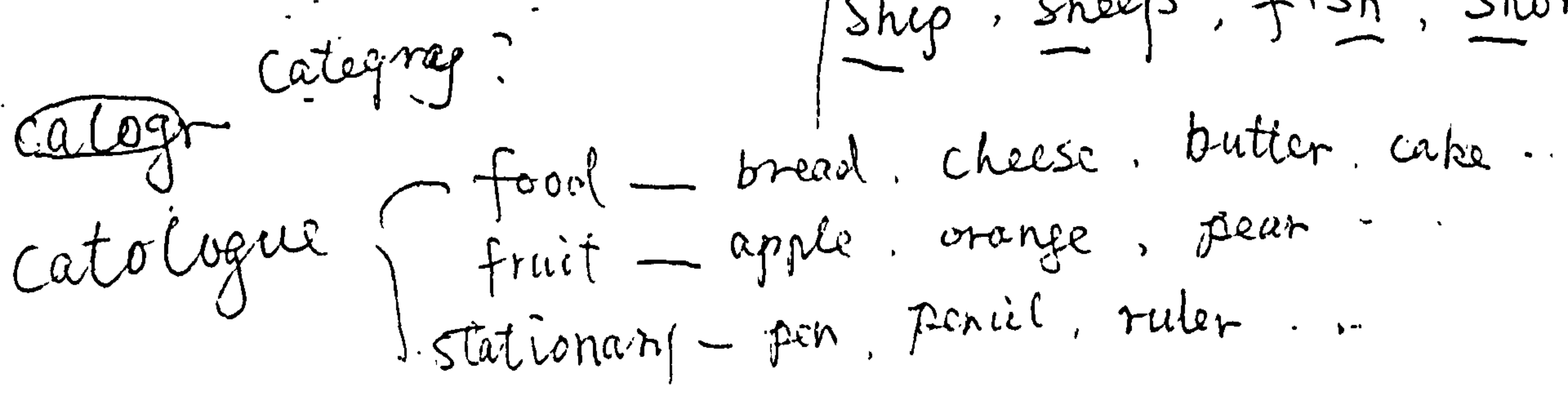
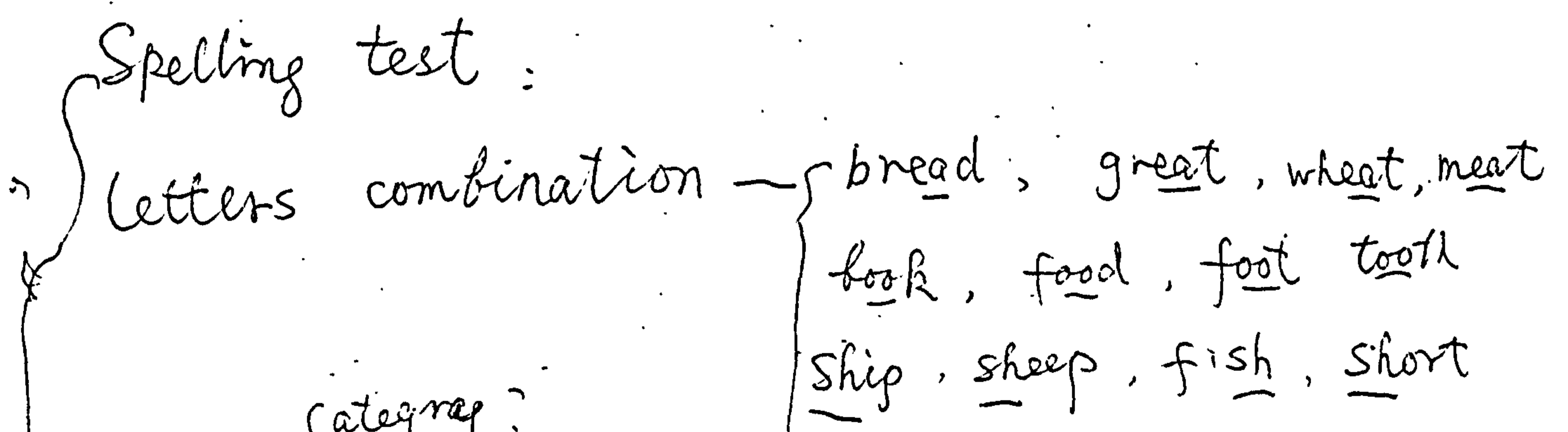
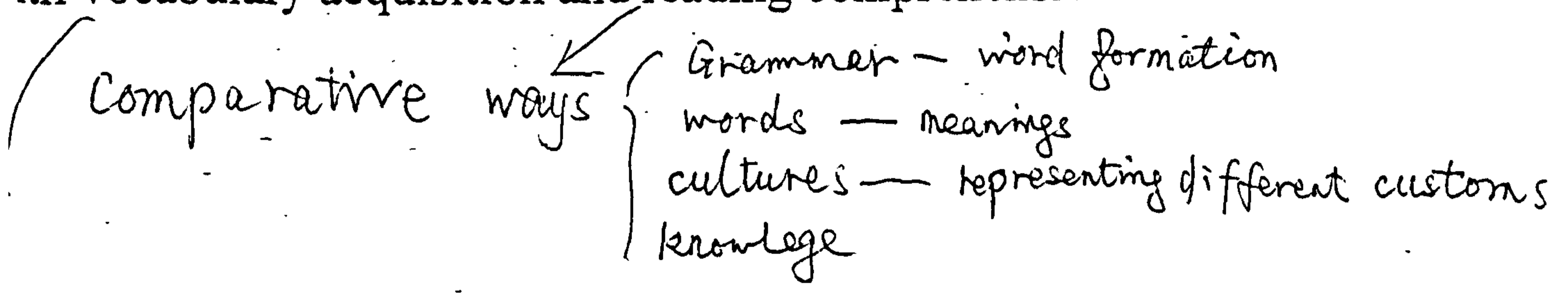
Spoken English vocabulary;

old English vocabulary; thou, Shakespeare's ...

Descriptive vocabulary, adjectives.

American and Britain English which are different from each other.

Can you think of any ways in which EAL pupils can be supported with vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension?



Have you noticed EAL pupils experiencing difficulty with understanding vocabulary, i.e. in reading books, SATS, classroom discourse? Can you give any examples?

Sherlock Holmes - Hound of the Baskervilles.

Shakespeare KS3 -

History - Monks, nuns, medieval terms. out of experience.

Can you think of any ways in which EAL pupils can be supported with vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension?

1:1 reading / asking questions / discussing text.

Using pictures -

diagrams.

Appendix 11.

Children's books used in the Vocabulary Tests

Bayley, N. & Mayne. W. (1988) *The Patchwork Cat*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Butler, A. (1989) *Monster Meals*. Melbourne, Australia: Octopus Publishing Group.

Butler, A. (1989) *Fruit Salad*. Melbourne, Australia: Octopus Publishing Group.

Gretz, S. (1986) *It's Your Turn, Roger*. London: Bodley Head.

Hunt, R. (1991) *At the Pool*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hunt, R. (1995) *Fancy Dress*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hunt, R. (1995) *Good Old Mum*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hunt, R. (1989) *Kipper's Balloon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hunt, R. (1989) *The Jumble Sale*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hunt, R. (1993) *The Rope Swing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hunt, R. (1993) *Vanishing Cream*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hunt, R. (1993) *Yasmin and the Flood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jarman, J. (1995) *Clouds*. Bucks: Ginn & Co. Ltd.

Kerr, J. (1992) *The Tiger who came to tea*. London: Harper Collins.

McCullagh, S (1992) *Jennifer Yellow-hat went out in the sunshine*. London: Collins.

Mitton, T. (1995) *The Treasure Hunt*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers.

Mitton, T. (1995) *The Robot*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers.

Paice, S. (1994) *Honeybee*. Bucks: Ginn and Company Ltd.

Simon, M. (1994) *Jack in the Box*. Bucks: Ginn and Company Ltd.

Thackray, D. & Thackray, L. (1973) *This is my Colour. I am Blue*. Birmingham: George Philip Alexander Ltd.

Thwaite, A. (1987) *What a Mess*. London: Macmillan Educational Ltd.

Ziefert, H. (1986) *Bear's Busy Morning. A Guessing-Game Story*. Middlesex: Viking Kestrel.

Zolotow, C. (1973) *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present*. Middlesex: Picture Puffins.