

Institute of Education  
University of London

Reading Cultures: A study of the reading experiences of bilingual students and their parents/carers.

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February 2011

Submitted to the Institute of Education, University of London, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Doctorate in Education (EdD).

## Acknowledgments

I could not have completed this research without the encouragement of many different people. I wish to thank particularly, all the students, parents and teachers who gave of their time and energy so generously. Also I would want to mention colleagues at work who supported me through official channels with funding in some cases, and informally through advice and critique in others. Particular thanks go to Leslie Monk, who is both friend and colleague, and always manages to remain interested in my academic pursuits.

I am indebted to Professor Andrew Brown and Dr. Maria Kambouri for their invaluable support. Equally, I would like to thank Dr. Charmian Kenner and Dr. Rose Drury who helped the 'light to shine out' from my research study. Finally I would also like to thank Dr. Liz Brooker who helped me so much at the end. I was also privileged to be part of several EdD cohorts, whose humour and interest made the path easier.

Undertaking an EdD whilst working full time has been both extremely challenging and intensely rewarding. I would like to thank my daughter Emelia who has persistently supported me and my daughter Ellie who came through in the end. Without their love and understanding the work would have been impossible. Finally, I would like to thank my parents Tom and Lottie Butterley, who supported me unreservedly and whose financial contribution made my studies possible.

## DECLARATION AND WORD COUNT

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Word count (exclusive of appendices, list of references and bibliographies but including glossary, diagrams and tables): 44,363 words.

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February 2011

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## **Reflective statement**

The undertaking of the Doctorate in Education (EdD) programme has ultimately been an eventful but transformative learning journey. In this reflective statement I seek to explore what have been the key learning experiences for me and how these have been integrated with my personal and professional knowledge and practice.

Completing my M.A. in education introduced me to the excitement of action research. I undertook the EdD wanting to broaden my experience of research, as well as undertake research into my own practice of education. However, I was unsure of what this would look like, as I was no longer an advisory teacher but managing a special needs service for the then local education authority.

The first assignment of the taught courses moved me forward into doctoral writing and thinking as I discussed the impact of new public management on the education professional. This assignment also allowed me to reflect back, as concepts such as 'quality', 'marketisation' and the 'standards agenda' which were emerging as signifying elements within education, were in sharp contrast with the understandings underpinning the educational landscape as I started my own professional career in the late 1970s. Undertaking this assignment enabled me to reflect more positively upon the challenges that I was experiencing within my own management role, within a local education authority. This in turn allowed me to re-think my attitude towards concepts such as the 'marketisation' of education and to develop a pragmatic position, whereby I was able to reorganise the service for which I have responsibility, onto a trading account basis.

The second assignment described a hypothetical questionnaire based survey, which sought to elicit the views of parents about the support their children had received from a local authority SEN service. The choice of survey research reflected my perception of the possibilities and limitations of carrying out

research within a local authority context. I perceived a need to consult as widely as possible from within a transparent research process in order to achieve clearly identifiable results that could be communicated to a non-specialist audience. Whilst undertaking this assignment the complexity of carrying out insider research was highlighted. This was in relation to considering the potential constraints of reporting negative 'client' feedback, and the effect this would have on service credibility. On the basis of this I designed a collaborative client review questionnaire for use in trading account schools within the borough.

I identified potential limitations in research of this kind for me, in that it seemed difficult to elicit parents/carers views in depth. I also became aware of how the perceptions of different individuals are influenced by their own personal context as well as the research context. As a result I began to develop an interest in exploring methodologies that reflected this complexity including the role of the researcher in the research process. This assignment also signalled my interest in listening to the views of parents and carers in relation to the educational process.

The third assignment was an interview based small-scale study of the views of primary aged dyslexic learners. I wanted to hear what students thought about the label of dyslexia, and what they found most difficult in school in terms of accessing the curriculum. This was prior to dyslexia becoming a recognised disability and at a time when the recognition of individual difficulties was sometimes perceived as being non-inclusive. In this assignment I became aware that I wanted to include student voices in the research that I was undertaking.

During this assignment I began to develop the strategies that are necessary in order to conduct interviews that are sensitive to the needs of young students. I also encountered the difficulty of ensuring that young students are giving informed consent to participate in research. These have become considerations that have persevered throughout my research work. I also became interested in developing alternative ways of students expressing themselves within the interview situation, through drawing and story completion.

During the final assignment of the taught courses I addressed issues that had direct relevance to my professional practice. This assignment examined the 'inclusion' debate and the role of Accelerated Learning and Multiple Intelligence theories in developing a more inclusive pedagogy. This supported my professional knowledge as I worked with schools on developing more inclusive strategies to support learners with literacy difficulties. This in turn initiated an interest in the place of the curriculum in creating a particular kind of learning experience, which can include or exclude students.

The management of my professional work involved collaborating with individuals with responsibility for both Special Educational Needs provision and Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) provision within the borough. A focus for the Institution Focussed Study (IFS) emerged, that brought together these two aspects. The focus for the study was the identification of dyslexia as a barrier to learning amongst students for whom English is an Additional language (EAL). It became clear from a preliminary review of literature in the area of literacy/dyslexic difficulties in relation to EAL students that this area is under researched. The gulf between SEN and EAL discourses reflects the often differing pedagogies of those involved and also the longstanding and understandable suspicions of some minority ethnic parents/ carers with some forms of SEN provision.

Within the IFS I elicited the views and understandings of primary EMA teachers about the difficulties involved in recognising when an EAL student has literacy/dyslexic difficulties. The first stage of the research involved a postal questionnaire (where I consulted all the primary EMA teachers in the borough) and then a second stage where I undertook in-depth individual semi-structured interviews with a smaller group. I explored the contextual educational setting and relevant literature in order to develop possible categories for analysis prior to developing interview questions. The intention was to facilitate the process of making assertions about realities outside the interview setting, by placing the subjective experience of the interviewee more securely within knowledge and argument. This was intended to ensure greater validity and reliability in the research as a whole.

This research generated some interest within the borough and I began to experience the tensions generated by undertaking insider research. In order to have a 'product' for colleagues, I developed a format for informal first language assessments for EAL students in order to facilitate the identification of potential learning difficulties. Additionally I designed a protocol to be used in schools to help teachers decide if an EAL student has SEN learning needs or English language learning needs and this was piloted in four schools.

Methodologically, increasingly by the end of the IFS I was firmly positioning myself with a qualitative constructionist perspective. Also I wanted my research to be sensitive to the voices of those that are not usually heard within educational discourse, particularly students and parents/carers. These concerns along with a growing awareness of my own position as a bilingual researcher took me into the thesis. The choice of an ethnographic methodology finally committed me to an approach that prioritises rich descriptions and focuses on the local and specific rather than more general understandings. An ethnographic approach also legitimised my developing interest in narrative by validating the importance of the stories that are constructed by participants.

The thesis research, as in earlier pieces of work, prioritises the voices of parents/carers and students. This research aimed not only to be ethically sensitive to the needs of young students, but I also sought to extend this concern to the linguist minority parent/carers that were involved. This necessitated translating documents, and in some cases conducting interviews in the respondents first language, with the use of translators. This additional component added to my knowledge base in this area, and the resulting respondent accounts more than compensated for the additional complexity.

Additionally I wanted to 'give something back' to the students who participated in the research. In the event I did not add to their knowledge about the conduct of research as I had hoped. Instead, the opportunity for students to talk about being bilingual in relation to reading and being asked their opinion, proved cathartic in a

positive way. As a consequence, the teacher who had facilitated my undertaking the research in one school, is considering introducing something similar on a regular basis where students are offered time to talk about themselves in relation to their school experiences.

What have I learnt? I have developed a more critical, authoritative and informed professional voice as a result of engaging in both academic discussion and critical thinking. Also I have extended my repertoire in terms of writing styles. I am developing more acuity in relation to writing for different audiences. Recently I have been given the opportunity to present my work on a local radio programme. Trying to refigure aspects of my last piece of research for a radio audience, where I have to seek to interest and entertain seems to be taking the wheel full circle.

What will I take with me from the EdD process? Certainly I have developed a love of writing. Also I have acquired an ability to deconstruct the research of others with a greater understanding of the constraints and possibilities of different kinds of research. Additionally I have an ongoing and enduring commitment to and confidence in the ethos of research, which does not construct the respondent as 'other' but seeks to negotiate a respectful and equitable research process.

Finally, I have realised that as Clough (2002) maintains we do not come innocent to a task or situation of events, and that my own bilingualism, as well as other aspects of my personal and social history, have fuelled my research interests. Consequently living in two languages has become a more articulated aspect of my cultural identity, which now finds itself at home with the bilingual and multilingual fellow travellers who have accompanied me latterly on my research journey.



## **Abstract**

This small-scale qualitative study is set in three primary schools in one Inner London borough. In this study I have investigated the motivations and interests of a group of primary aged bilingual students with regard to reading. I have also sought the perceptions of parents and carers about the purposes and significance of reading, as well as the support they offer for reading at home. I have also elicited the class teachers' perceptions of students' reading motivation and parental/ carer support.

Rich descriptions are evoked through the use of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, field notes and a research journal. I investigate the inner layer of the micro processes of the reading experiences of the bilingual students and the reading life histories of their parents/carers, through the lens of a sociocultural perspective on reading. I look to social theory at the macro level for insight into the institutional layer of discourses within the school as well as the outer layer of discourses in the wider society.

The findings suggest that this group of students were largely motivated and successful readers, who effectively integrate different cultural purposes within their reading. Equally, their parents drew on their own understandings of their literary and educational journeys to offer support in a variety of ways. However, their teachers who provided a stimulating literacy-rich environment in their classrooms often failed to acknowledge the funds of knowledge that these bilingual students and their families were able to bring to the classroom. These findings will inform the educational dialogue around the inclusion of linguistic minority parents/carers and their children within the school reading curriculum.

## **Chapter 1: The Beginning**

This is the beginning of the research story and the title of this piece is Reading Cultures: A study of the reading experiences of bilingual students and their parents/carers. It is being written at the thesis stage of the Doctorate in Education Programme (EdD).

I currently work within the Inner London borough of X where, not unlike many inner London boroughs, 44.6% of the primary school population are bilingual and are learning in English as an additional language (EAL) at school. Unlike some Inner London boroughs there is no one significant language group amongst students and families. There are over 150 languages spoken in the borough primary schools alone. Within the now Children's Services (previously education) department of the borough I manage a literacy special needs service. The service operates as a trading account and consists of myself as manager and a number of specialist peripatetic literacy teachers. The focus of this work is supporting schools (which include teachers, teaching assistants, students and their parents/carers) in attempting to reduce the impact of literacy difficulties as a barrier to accessing the curriculum. Within this work there is a particular focus on supporting students of all ages with severe literacy difficulties, including dyslexia.

Previous pieces of work as part of the EdD programme have developed other areas of work related to professionalism, parent/ carer service evaluation, and pupil voice in relation to dyslexia, the development of an inclusive pedagogy and most recently the identification of literacy difficulties amongst primary students learning in EAL. Most relevant to this current research study is the research conducted as part of the Institution Focussed Study. This considered the capacity of ethnic minority achievement (EMA) teachers within the borough of X to identify and assess literacy difficulties including dyslexia. This is also of interest nationally because there is an under-identification of bilingual students who may be on the dyslexic continuum. The borough of X is no exception. One difficulty, and this has certainly fuelled this current piece of work, is that in my research the

EMA teachers who participated rarely attributed lack of progress in reading to a literacy or dyslexic difficulty. The reasons for lack of progress were attributed to poor student motivation, low teacher expectation, an inappropriate curriculum and lack of parental support. The teachers in the study considered that EAL students were disadvantaged by having parents who did not speak English at home, who had inadequate knowledge of the English school system, or who had failed to offer reading help at home in authorised ways. Echoing this, on a national level there are still some ethnic groups who make less progress at primary school than White British pupils, even once prior attainment, deprivation and other factors are taken into account (DES, 2006). In terms of linguistic minority groups this report highlights the underachievement of Pakistani students. Interestingly, the borough of X does not conform to this picture in relation to Pakistani students at primary school, but there are concerns about underachievement in relation to Somali students.

Investigating some of these reasons for underachievement became part of the puzzle that I sought to solve in this research study. This study is also concerned with improving access to the reading curriculum for bilingual students by extending knowledge about students' reading motivation and interests. This will also promote a better understanding of the process of reading acquisition for this particular cohort of students. The final piece of the jigsaw, because as Clough (2002) writes we do not come innocent to any research endeavour, is my own interest in this area. This stems from my own experiences as a bilingual individual, albeit in a European language which is often perceived as being of a higher status than a language from a developing country. However, my home language is German and my mother arrived in England immediately after the conclusion of the Second World War. As my mother experienced life in England as unfamiliar and unwelcoming we often travelled back to Germany staying there for long periods of time. Consequently I am familiar with the feeling of being 'other' (although superficially it may not appear so) and living in a tiny village in Lincolnshire as a child became aware almost unconsciously of the word xenophobia whilst still at primary school.

Within this study I am concerned with the personal and emotional aspects of learning to read for students who are learning to read in a language which is not their home or community language. I have chosen to describe these students as bilingual as opposed to speakers of EAL as this is the term used most in the literature both nationally and internationally. However, I have chosen to use the term 'linguistic minority' when referring to the parents/carers and families of bilingual students. Additionally in this study, I focus on the perceptions of parents/carers about their own experiences of learning to read when growing up in their country of origin. I elicit their accounts of their current reading interests and the support that they offer for reading at home. Finally, I consult the teachers about their perceptions of the importance of motivation in reading, as well as the support offered by parents/carers. I look to social theory for insights into the construction of the institutional layer of discourses within the school and how students, parents/ carers and teachers may be positioned in relation to these discourses. Equally, I consider the outer layer of discourses within society which may marginalise bilingualism and privilege monolingualism.

Research has shown motivation to be a major factor in the acquisition of reading (Eccles, and Wigfield, 2002). Some primary-aged students find the process of becoming effective and enthusiastic readers both difficult and unfulfilling. The reasons for this lack of motivation continue to be of great interest to educational researchers. There has been a considerable body of work carried out in relation to the relationship between a student's reading experiences in school and the development of self-concept, but this has mostly been carried out with monolingual readers (Chapman and Tunmer, 1997; Wigfield, 1997).

However, reading does not just take place in school settings. In March 2007 the National Literacy Trust (NLT) published "Every Parent Matters", which sets out their view of the role parents play in improving their child's life chances and educational achievement. The Family Reading Campaign was launched in 2007, to promote reading for pleasure in the home and beyond and to help 'build a nation of readers'. The aim of the National Year of Reading in 2008 was to build on this. Equally, the literature consistently highlights the importance of a child's

home environment in literacy development (Tizard and Hughes, 1984). Parental support at home has been shown to be a key indicator in a child's achievement in literacy in school. Although such studies indicate the importance of parental beliefs, these studies have usually not been completed with parents/carers whose first language is not English and who may not have personally experienced the English school system. Equally Cummins (2000) suggests that linguistic minority families may often be designated as hard to reach by language majority schools. He suggests that there may be an assumption that because in some instances parents'/carers' spoken English may be quite limited, these families cannot contribute to their children's literacy.

At a policy level the Children's Act 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools' (ECM), (DfES, 2004) has highlighted the importance within education authorities of developing a cohesive approach to the well being of all children. There is recognition within the ECM agenda that support for parents/carers should be made available in ways with which they feel comfortable. Schools, in turn, should seek to engage parents/carers in their child's education, by helping parents/carers to understand what they can do at home to collaborate with the school. Aspects of race equality legislation, which impact on education, through documents such as 'Race equality in education: Good practice in schools and local education authorities' (OFSTED, 2005), also have relevance to this study. This document highlights the 'duties' placed on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity in schools. In relation to this study, equality of opportunity is addressed in a variety of ways. Some bilingual students may be underachieving in reading consequently they may have developed negative attitudes towards reading. Cummins, (2000) has argued that bilingual learners are children for whom there are likely to be cultural differences between home and school. He suggests that for bilingual students, learning to read and developing as readers, is likely to be challenging as they will have to negotiate their in-school identities through a language over which they will often have a limited command. This study, therefore,

could contribute to understanding the affective factors of bilingual student achievement in reading.

The 'National Service Framework for Children, Service providers, Young People and Maternity Services' (DH, DES, 2004) requires that educational services for parents/carers are sensitive to their particular cultural, social and language differences. Reports from social exclusion units suggest that there is a need to improve services for minority ethnic groups that face language and cultural barriers to accessing and using public services such as education. One aspect of this is that in some instances linguistic minority families may have little contact with school. There is a suggestion that the parents/carers of these bilingual students may engage in very different reading practices at home from those promulgated by their children's school and therefore may not offer support for reading in school authorised ways. The reading difficulties of some bilingual students have been attributed to such cultural differences (Gregory, 2001). Contributing to the knowledge base of how different cultural groups understand and make sense of reading may promote more sensitive understanding between different cultural groups. This may facilitate understanding between teachers, teaching assistants and parents/carers, for example, when they belong to different cultural groups. Schools might use this knowledge to promote and adapt their liaison strategies with linguistic minority parents/carers and subsequently work more effectively with bilingual students and their families within the classroom.

Additionally this study draws on work carried out around developing the 'voice' of the child. At both a pedagogic and policy level there is an increasing focus on the importance of listening to children and enabling them to have opportunities to express their views. As part of the Every Child Matters (DfES, 2004) agenda a Children's Commissioner became operational in 2005. The purpose of the Children's Commissioner is to promote awareness of the views and interests of children and to encourage individuals working with children in both the public and the private sector to take account of these views and interests (Cheminais,

2006). This establishes a policy context where the rights of the child are prioritised within the educational context. This extends to establishing the ethos of listening to children and encouraging pupil participation at school level.

Currently, almost half of the primary aged students in the Inner London borough where this study takes place are bilingual. They are learning to read and to develop as readers in school through the medium of English when this is not their first or home language. This is within a predominantly monolingual education system. Crozier and Davies (2008) and Cummins (2000) suggest that while there is government rhetoric of inclusion, the reality of practices in schools suggests a surface treatment of cultural diversity and an absence of deep engagement with the perspectives of minority ethnic communities. If socio-cultural difference is to be seen as a resource rather than a liability in urban classrooms then effective literacy learning and teaching involves utilising the full social, cultural and linguistic resources of all participants (Green and Kostogriz, 2002). In the context of this study this involves asking what it is that linguistic minority parents/carers and students value in relation to reading and equally how do parents/carers view their support for reading at home. Additionally, the perspective of teachers about reading motivation among bilingual students and parental/carers support for reading at home is significant. This study hopes to add to the breadth of cultural understandings about reading in the contemporary multilingual and multicultural educational context.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, there is a critical review of literature relevant to the research study. I have attempted to synthesise relevant work by drawing on conceptual and professional aspects, in order to provide a coherent theoretical story exemplified with relevant research studies. The first section is concerned with describing the socio-cultural theoretical framework that informs this work. The next section is concerned with a discussion of the relevance and importance of motivation and enjoyment in reading and I give some examples of large-scale research undertaken in this area. In the following section I have considered the various discourses around the importance of parents/carers in terms of the reading support they offer at home. Within this section, I begin to develop the notion that historically, linguistic minority parents/carers, may have been subject to negative assumptions in relation to the support they are able to offer. Equally, I demonstrate that there is a growing recognition of the need for research that takes into account cultural differences. The following section, considers aspects of inclusion and the development of deficit theories and notions of 'the other' in relation to linguistic minorities. Equally in this section I explore Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 1986) notion of cultural capital as a way of understanding the relationship between power relations within wider society and the impact on the area of home-school interactions for linguistic minority families. In the penultimate section, I consider alternative accounts (Street, 1995) which constitute detailed qualitative research in the area of literacy with bilingual students and their families. This research complements my own research study and therefore provides a useful way into a presentation of my own research work. In the final section I outline the aims of the present study.



## **2.1: A Theoretical Perspective on Reading**

The theoretical perspective for this study draws on sociocultural theory which, in turn, draws on the work of Vygotsky (1978). For Vygotsky, learning and thinking are inherently concerned with problem solving. He emphasised the agentic nature of thinking, in that individuals explore, solve problems and remember rather than acquire memories and skills. This problem solving is also envisaged as being undertaken with others and involves emotions and feelings. In terms of children's learning, Vygotsky argued that it occurs first at an intermental (between individuals in social or cultural contexts) level and then at the instrumental (an individual) level. Therefore students learning in social contexts learn through their interactions with more knowledgeable others such as adults or older or more experienced students. In collaboration with others, students are able to achieve much more than they would working on a task alone. Vygotsky described the gap between what a student can achieve while working on their own and what is possible with a more experienced other as the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD enables the student and the more skilled individual to accomplish a task together which then becomes part of that student's individual learning and can later be practised independently and generalised to other situations (Kelly, 2010).

Rogoff (1990) though working within Vygotskian concepts emphasised the active nature of a student's active role when working with others, as well as the impact of the tacit (implied or understood but not actually expressed) arrangements of the environment which facilitate learning in a non instructional way. Rogoff also developed the notion of guided participation within collaborative learning situations which involves students and more experienced others in a joint process of building bridges from existing understandings and skills, to reach new understandings and skills. Equally Rogoff argues that rather than students just internalising the view of the more experienced partner, there is a co-construction of meaning. In this way she perceived of students as becoming 'apprentices in thinking'. This apprenticeship involves active learners observing and participating in organised cultural activity with the support and challenge of other more experienced individuals (Rogoff, 1990).

Gregory (2008) argues that work by individuals such as Rogoff (1990; 2003) Bateson (1979), Cole (1985; 1996), and Wertsch (1985), amongst others has begun to question traditional psychology that separated mind and the individual from the wider context in which they functioned. These individuals developed a separate branch of psychology referred to by Cole (1996) as cultural psychology. Cole argues that cultural psychology places 'culture in the middle' envisaging mind as interiorised culture and culture as exteriorized mind. Learning, and by extension, learning to read, is perceived, therefore, as an integral part of cultural and historical processes. Consequently, I have chosen to use the term reading cultures within this study when considering bilingual students learning to read and developing as readers within different contexts. Culture can be defined in different ways. Rattansi (1992) suggests that culture cannot usefully be understood as expressing the identity of a community but refers to the processes, categories and knowledge through which communities become differentiated. In this way it is perceived as a word that describes a dynamic and changing process rather than a final product (Street, 1993). Nieto (1999) cited in Conteh (2003) defines culture in terms of its significance for children's learning as being dynamic, multifaceted, embedded in contexts, influenced by social, economic and political factors, socially constructed, learned and dialectical (negotiated through discussion). Within sociocultural theory, therefore, learning to read is viewed as socially constructed and embedded in social relations and students are seen as active agents in their own learning, learning activities are understood in context and learning takes place through the active participation of both students and adults (Wells and Claxton, 2002).

However, the 'reading debate', which has ensued and has become increasingly politicised during the last two decades, is based around the issue of which theories of reading development, and thereafter which methods of teaching are the most likely to improve reading standards. The two models are colloquially known as the 'top down model (focus on meaning as being key in terms of both comprehension and also word recognition) and the 'bottom up' model (reading

develops from perception of letters, words and sentences) (Wyse and Jones, 2007). In the 'bottom up' model, learning to read proceeds from the individual sound or phoneme to the understanding of the meaning of texts, as well as the structure of language Gregory (2008). Gregory suggests that neither the bottom up nor the top down models alone will suffice in explaining the reading task for bilingual learners as both of those approaches assume that these young learners will have a knowledge of the language that they are learning to read in as well as the culture to which it belongs. However a more integrated approach to the teaching of reading has been proposed (Stanovitch, 2000 Adams, 1990, Riley 1996) which is described as 'interactive'. Within an interactive model (Gregory, 2008, Stanovich 2000) reading is viewed as an interaction between reader and text and there is a focus on what is on the written page, as well as what the reader brings to it, using both top-down and bottom-up skills. In this model the reader relies on multiple sources of information including letter recognition, letter sound relationships, vocabulary, and knowledge of syntax and meaning (Stanovitch, 2000, Gregory 2008). These are all used by the fluent reader in a continuous and integrated process (Riley 2006).

However an ongoing concern about standards in reading continues to fan the flames of the 'reading debate'. In 1998 in an attempt to improve standards in reading (only 65% of children achieved level 4 at the end of key stage 2 in their National Curriculum (NC) reading tests) the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) expanded on the content of the NC (published in 1988) and prescribed a daily literacy hour (Washtell, 2008). However, by 2005, although there had been an improvement in standards, there were still concerns that 15% of children did not achieve the level for their age at the end of key stage 1 and 16 per cent did not achieve the expected level at key stage 2 (Kelly, 2008). Consequently, the Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading (DfES, 2006, The Rose Report) was commissioned to review the teaching of reading. The Rose report has been controversial (Wyse and Styles 2007) in that it endorses the 'simple' view of reading where the emphasis is on word recognition over and above other cue systems (Kelly, 2008). Equally, a particular type of phonics teaching (synthetic phonics, which starts with single letters and the sounds that they represent is advocated within the report as the first and primary method of

teaching early reading, along with a recommendation that children should only be allowed access to simple decodable books. In contrast Kirby and Savage (2008) suggest that there is insufficient research evidence to warrant such prescriptive approaches to the teaching of early reading. However, what has been neglected within the report has been a focus on the importance of speaking and listening in the early stages of learning to read and although systematic phonics teaching is advocated, the suggestion is that this is embedded within a broad and language rich curriculum.

However, Cox (1991) when formulating the principles that underpin the National Curriculum argued that reading is much more than decoding the black marks on the page and suggested that primarily it is a quest for meaning and involves the active participation of the reader. He suggests that students should be encouraged to respond to all forms of literature in ways which they find pleasurable and hence which are likely to promote understanding. In this way there is an emphasis on pleasurable active engagement with texts where comprehension is an interactive meaning making process. This involves making connections with existing knowledge, reflecting upon responses, engaging with the text, monitoring understanding and making decisions about which strategies will help clarify understanding. If reading is perceived as a quest for meaning then this quest is necessarily shaped by the social and cultural identities of readers. As Gregory (2008) suggests, when bilingual students are learning to read in a new language they are not just learning a language and literacy they are learning a new world to which they belong.

In terms of more experienced readers, Kelly and Safford (2008) write of a 'journey into reading'. She argues that this journey is culturally specific and she cites the work of Gregory and Williams (2000), Mins (1990) and Heath (1983) to show that literacy practices vary in different cultures and communities. In order to illustrate this, she cites the example of Malik, a primary aged student in Year 6 whom she describes as a fluent and articulate reader. Malik is able to read in Hebrew and Arabic as well as English. She argues that a reader such as Malik can engage in a range of reading, experience pleasure in reading, understand the purpose for which he is reading and have language and culture specific

experiences in relation to reading. An experienced reader such as this, she suggests, is able to use a range of reading strategies in tandem in order to support his reading, feel confident in his reading choices and is able to reflect on his reading in critical and discerning ways. She cites the reading scale (see appendix 29) produced as part of the Primary Language Record (Barrs *et al.*, 1988) as a useful way of understanding a student's reading experience over a period of time.

## **2.2: Motivation and Enjoyment.**

Reading skills are important as a foundation stone for learning across all subjects. By learning to read, children show that they can learn in the way that counts in school. Not only is it a form of recreation, but it also engenders personal growth, and it equips students with the facility to participate in their own communities and society as a whole (Clark & Akerman, 2006). Some primary-aged students find the process of becoming effective and enthusiastic readers both difficult and unfulfilling (Gough and Tunmer, 1986). Motivation is considered to be a major factor in the acquisition of reading (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). Motivation as a term is often both over-used and unclear. However, undoubtedly, the emotional and personal involvement of the reader in the text is a significant factor in the development of resilient, purposeful and agentic readers who persevere because the activity is intrinsically rewarding (Wyse and Jones, 2008). Guthrie and Wigfield (1997), argue that intrinsic motivation to read results from a coherent curriculum which creates a physical and social environment for reading, as well as specific support in developing reading strategies and comprehension and additionally allows for student choice in all areas of reading.

Motivation to read is also thought to mediate the so-called "Matthew effect" (Stanovich, 2000), which refers to the circular relationship between practice and achievement where better readers tend to read more because they are motivated to read, which leads to improved vocabulary and better skills. Conversely, studies show that when struggling readers are not motivated to read, their

opportunities to learn decrease dramatically (Baker, Dreher and Guthrie, 2000). Also, Blackledge (2000) suggests that cultural differences in relation to motivation are central variables when considering school achievement. This reinforces the importance of considering motivation in relation to the reading development of bilingual students.

Reading for pleasure has been shown to benefit young people in numerous ways (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). The amount children read for enjoyment has a major impact on their reading achievement (Cox and Guthrie, 2001). Similarly, it increases children's vocabulary and general knowledge. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is a comparative study of the reading achievement of ten-year-olds. The study is an investigation of children's' reading literacy and the factors associated with its acquisition in 35 countries around the world. The first assessment took place in 2001 and 140,000 students in 35 countries participated. This study showed that reading enjoyment is more important for children's success than their family's socio-economic status. However, the PIRLS study reported that despite their overall skill in reading, English primary students tended to be less keen to read and less confident about their ability to read than children in many other countries. The PIRLS (2007) report showed that attitudes to reading of 10-year-olds in England are still poor compared to children in many other countries. This latest report revealed a link between reading for pleasure and educational attainment.

Clark, Torsi and Strong (2005) conducted a questionnaire-based exploratory study into students' attitudes towards reading, their reading habits and their views on activities that promote reading. 1500 students from three primary, one middle and two secondary schools in England participated in this study on reading habits, reading motivation and role models. The main findings of the study were that:

- The majority of students (61.2%) enjoyed reading quite a lot or very much. In line with previous studies, girls were significantly more likely to enjoy reading than boys were

- Students generally thought positively about reading. Most students agreed that reading is fun and important. However, there was a minority of students who believed that reading is boring and that they cannot find books that interest them. Boys were more likely to believe that reading is boring, that they find it hard to find interesting books and that they only read at school. Overall, students with positive attitudes towards reading tended to report greater reading enjoyment.
- Almost half the students enjoyed reading fiction. Adventure, comedy and horror/ghost stories came out as their favourite types of fiction. Girls were more likely than boys to read romance books, animal-related stories and poetry. Conversely, boys were more likely than girls to read science fiction, comedy and crime/detective stories. While computing/games, music and materials about their hobbies were the preferred genres of non-fiction. Students indicated enjoying a wide range of reading materials, with magazines, text messages and websites being the most preferred ones. There were also significant gender differences in preferred reading materials. For example, girls were more likely than boys to read magazines, fiction, text messages and emails, while boys were more likely than girls to read websites, newspapers, graphic novels and comics.

However, in this survey, findings were not analysed by ethnicity and data on ethnic background was not collected. The reported reasons for this were that children's self-reporting of their ethnic group is often unreliable, and it would have been difficult to have sufficient numbers of students who were representative of particular ethnic groups. Therefore, the study did not consider differences related to the ethnicity of different student groups.

Clark, Osborne and Akerman (2008) studied students' self-perceptions as readers. This was a survey of students from 29 primary and secondary schools in England involving 1,600 Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 3 (KS3) students. The study considered self-perception in relation to reading, but also addressed the issue of what motivates students and what makes them proactive readers. In this study the relevant findings were that:

- Most students associated reading with positive feelings, such as feeling calm and happy. A third of students said that reading makes them feel bored,

while only a small percentage saw reading as a stressful activity that makes them nervous. More girls than boys said that reading makes them feel calm and happy.

- Most students believed that being a good reader means being able to read long books, to read frequently and to read different materials. Nearly half of them also believed that it means being able to read long words and to be good at reading aloud. Students had similar views of what it means to be a reader irrespective of gender.
- Students who defined themselves as readers not only read significantly more often and more widely than non-readers but they also associated reading with more positive feelings and viewed readers more favourably.
- Peers are very influential in determining reading choices. Readers also mix with other people who are readers. There is an overlap between students' own reading choices and the materials they believe their friends are reading.

This study has highlighted the importance of young people's perceptions of what it means to be a reader and how these perceptions appear to shape their reading habits. Most self defined readers regard reading as being pleasurable, read more often, and talk about their reading with others. This study cites the work of Gambrell (1996) who suggests that not only do social interactions with others about books and stories foster wide frequent reading, but also that sharing and talking with others about books is an important factor in developing engaged and motivated readers. However, again in this study, findings were not analysed by ethnicity and data on ethnic background was not collected. The reported reasons for this were the same as the ones for the study described previously. Consequently, this dimension remained unexplored.

These studies build a picture of the importance of motivation and enjoyment in reading as well as the attitudes and interests of students. Equally as bilingual students have not figured in these studies this highlights the need to address this issue in relation to bilingual readers.



### **2.3: The role of parents**

The benefits of parents being involved in the reading lives of their children by creating a supportive reading environment at home is promoted at policy level (Desforges & Abouchar, 2003) as well as within research agendas. When parents offer guidance for their children's reading, and act as role models themselves, then their children are more likely to be successful readers. The impact is the same, regardless of ethnic background, family income, maternal level of education, or the child's gender (Dearing et al., 2006). Story reading at home enhances children's language comprehension and expressive language skills (Crain-Thoreson and Dale, 1992). Generally, in terms of learning, the most accurate predictor of a student's future success is less likely to be parental social status or income but the extent to which parents are able to create a home environment that encourages learning (Sanders and Epstein, 1998).

The literature consistently highlights the importance of a child's own home environment in literacy development (Tizard and Hughes, 1984). Parents' attitudes and support towards their children's learning influence performance on literacy tests irrespective of socio-economic status (Tizard et al., 1988; Wells, 1987). Guthrie and Cox (1998) argue that beliefs held by children's parents/carers about the purposes of reading and how children should learn to read influence children's literacy development as much as practical reading support at home. Although such studies indicate the importance of parental beliefs, these studies have often not been completed with linguistic minority parents/carers. In the Plowden Report (1967) the poor school performance of children was linked to inadequate language support in the home. During the 1970s there was a shift towards making parents more responsible for the educational success of their children. The Bullock Report (1975) registered a concern over low reading standards and recommended that parents have one to one sessions with their child reading stories in prescribed ways. Children were considered to be both linguistically deprived as well as disadvantaged if they did not have this narrative experience. During the 1980s the discussion about what constitutes good and bad parental support for reading continued. The Cox report

(1988) argued that children need to be familiar with written stories in order to foster their linguistic and cognitive development.

This trend has continued with Wragg, Haynes and Chamberlin (1998), suggesting that if parents did not communicate 'reading for pleasure' then children may not develop lasting positive reading habits. Parents' reading to their children before they attend school is regarded as an important predictor of literacy achievement (Weinberger, 1996). This parental involvement is associated with benefits for children such as language growth, reading achievement and writing. The assumption here is that children will have had certain experiences in certain prescribed ways and if this is not the case then they will be disadvantaged (Driessen, Smita and Slegers, 2004).

In terms of reading, this would certainly constitute a view that certain homes and communities are capable of providing particular forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and others are not. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is explored in more depth in the next section. Bourdieu (1986) argues that schools reproduce the dominant power relations within society. Consequently the reading support offered by certain parents/carers (offering support in school authorised ways) is validated. Dyson and Robson (1999) argued that many parental involvement projects operate as a form of cultural imperialism, devaluing the practices and values of families who may already be marginalised. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) drew a similar conclusion in a review conducted on behalf of the DfES.

The focus in policy documents such as the DCFS Children's Plan (2007) is on the advantages for young children of family involvement in their literacy development. Current models of parental involvement in reading may be based on the assumptions that the same home reading programmes are suitable for monolingual or bilingual students (Gregory, 2008). This model assumes that parents should be capable of helping their children regardless of whether they are able to read English or not. Equality of opportunity may sometimes, therefore, be interpreted as the same provision for all children regardless of their linguistic

and cultural backgrounds. In practice, this means that minority families may be viewed in terms of linguistic, cognitive or cultural deficit. This ignores the multiple pathways to literacy shown by both adults and children from minority groups (Baynham, 1995).

A review of the literature on parental involvement prepared by the National Literacy Trust (2001) suggests a different way forward. Literacy is not merely regarded as a school agenda in this review. The Trust has argued that literacy within the home and community has equal value in ensuring sustainable literacy habits and learning outcomes. In addition, schools need to engage in a meaningful dialogue with parents about their involvement. The trust emphasised that parents/carers have distinct cultural, linguistic and economic backgrounds with distinct requirements and that there cannot be any single homogeneous approach to parental involvement.

Baker and Scher (2002) undertook an investigation that investigated young students' motivation for reading in relation to parental beliefs and home reading experiences. Sixty-five students from different sociocultural backgrounds completed a 'Motivations for Reading Scale' that assessed reading motivation, including enjoyment and interest in reading, as well as perceived competence in and value of reading. Parents/carers were interviewed regarding their own personal beliefs about reasons for reading, as well as their beliefs about what motivated their children. The findings in this study were analysed in relation to ethnicity. The findings revealed that the beginning readers had generally positive views about reading and that no differences in motivation were associated with income level, ethnicity, or gender. In this study, Baker and Scher (2002) highlight the importance of positive parental attitudes towards reading as opposed to 'quantitative indices' of home literacy experiences. They argued that parents who believe that reading is pleasurable convey that perspective to their children, either through what they say or through the nature of the home literacy experiences that they provide. Increasingly ethnicity is an aspect of contemporary research on parental involvement.

Crozier and Davies (2006) undertook a two-year project focusing on Bangladeshi and Pakistani families in the North East of England. This research was initiated because of the underachievement of the school-aged children of these two particular ethnic groups. One of the aims of this project was to discern the role that these linguistic minority parents had in relation to their children's education. The research was concerned mainly with parents of secondary school age but also included a small cohort of Year 6 primary children. Convenience sampling was utilised in order to generate respondents with some typical case sampling with respect to social class, in order to ensure that a range of families were interviewed. A total of 591 parents and young people were interviewed using semi structured interview protocols and, in addition, participants kept journals and recorded photographic narratives. One of the findings of this piece of research is that there are important differences between the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities, in that the Pakistani community displayed more diversity in its educational knowledge and behaviour in relation to education. Crozier and Davies state that this is problematic and notions of encapsulation are unhelpful, by which they are suggesting that it is unhelpful to regard minority ethnic groups as homogeneous or acting in a uniform way in relation to the support that they are able to offer their children (Bhatti, 1999).

## **2.4: Inclusion**

Clark and Akerman (2006) produced a paper for the National Literacy Trust that highlighted the importance of literacy in terms of improving social inclusion and reducing social exclusion. This document recognises the importance of achievement in literacy and that underachievement needs to be addressed for reasons of social justice as well as community cohesion. Children from linguistic minority families are regarded as being 'at risk' in terms of underachievement. Equally linguistic minority families are regarded as being 'at risk' in terms of social exclusion. However, as Brooker (2002) suggests, when literacy is viewed as sociocultural practice, which has been shaped by experiences within the home as well as by ideological and political forces, the class and cultural base of such practices are established. It is important therefore to consider how 'cultural

knowledge' can be developed between child and parent (or sibling) in the home, rather than viewing knowledge as preconstituted by cultural or social class background.

Nationally, in the 1950s and 1960s, the languages and cultures of people who migrated to the UK were largely ignored. There was an assumption that bilingual students would 'pick up' English in schools and parents were encouraged not to speak languages other than English to their children at home. These approaches were based on the principles of assimilation rather than inclusion (Mullard, 1982, cited in Gillborn, 1995). In the 1970s and 1980s, protests from parents and some educationalists, resulted in changes in government policy. The Commission for Racial Equality was established in 1975 and the Race Relations Act (1976) came into place. Alongside these developments the Bullock Report (1975) established the principle that a student should not be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he or she entered the English school system. In the spirit of the times, the Mother Tongue and English Teaching project (MOTET) and the Linguistic Minorities Project were set up. These projects contributed to our understanding of multilingualism and its contribution to learning.

However, within a context of increasing social unrest, the Swann Report (DES, 1985) stated that maintaining home languages was beyond the remit of mainstream education. This contributed to a general monolingualising ideology which still reverberates today (Conteh, 2006). Sometimes the first languages of bilingual students were perceived as difficult for the school to accommodate and children were often described as arriving in school with 'no language' (Parke et al., 2002). Bilingual students may increasingly be subject to discriminating discourses where they are constructed as 'other'. Simons (1995) argues that the concept of 'otherness' can be used to understand the processes by which societies and groups exclude 'others' who are perceived as not 'fitting in' to society. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning but are linked to power relations within society (Simons, 1995). Simons cites Foucault (1980) in arguing that categorising, naming, and defining groups of people is aimed at control and this can be achieved through discourse. Some discourses can be very powerful and can influence our actions and practices as

teachers. Other discourses, however, may be viewed as less important and these are likely to be the discourses of minority ethnic or linguistic minority groups (Cummins, 2000). This can result in linguistic minority families becoming marginalised and not fully included within the education system. Equally these same parents/carers may be perceived as being unable to provide appropriate reading support for their children.

Blackledge (2000) carried out a four-year research project which investigated home and school literacies of Bangladeshi children and their families in Birmingham, U.K. Blackledge initiated the research because he felt concerned that Bangladeshi parents were often the least visible in school and Bangladeshi children were not attaining as highly as other groups in the primary school. The study focussed on a single school in an inner city area in central England. 18 primary aged (year 2) children and their parents/carers and their teachers were involved. The children were recorded reading at home with either parents/carers or siblings. Then later they were recorded reading to their teachers in the classroom. Subsequently the children's mothers were interviewed about their children's literacy learning. A bilingual research assistant (who was already known to the parents/ carers) was used to provide interpretation and translation skills in Sylheti. The children's teachers were interviewed about how they supported parents in helping their children with reading.

The findings from this research study suggest that the mothers who were interviewed were highly committed to their children's success and to supporting them with reading at home. However, Blackledge concluded that these mothers lacked the linguistic skills in English that they needed to support their children. In spite of this, they offered a range of different support including allocating time, resources and encouragement for reading at home. The teachers who were interviewed acknowledged this. However, the mothers who had participated felt that the school had not supported them in helping their children with reading. Also, the books that were sent home for family reading were often of poorer

quality than those used at school and at an inappropriate (too difficult for the children to read independently) level.

Blackledge argues that it is important to place his research within a context of the wider power interactions between home and school. He drew on the work of Bourdieu in order to provide a framework for this analysis. The home-school literacy process became an intersection where the reproduction of power between dominant and minority groups became visible. He suggests that the Bangladeshi women were marginalised by a structure which dictated that those with cultural and linguistic capital which was different from that of the majority-culture school were unable to gain access to information about, or support with their children's schooling (Blackledge, 2000).

Bourdieu's (1997) ideas can also provide a theoretical model with which to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from different social classes. Schools utilise particular language patterns and organise the curriculum in particular ways (authorised approaches to the teaching of reading and parental support) and children from more middle class situations may enter school already familiar with these arrangements (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Therefore there is likely to be a greater congruence between particular groups of parents and teachers in schools. Bourdieu maintains that cultural experiences accrued in the home facilitate transition into school and future academic achievement and, in the process, cultural resources are transformed into cultural capital. All groups within society possess cultural capital but schools do not necessarily recognise and value the contributions of different groups equally. Consequently, the invisibility of linguistic minority parents/carers in the school setting may be due to a lack of appreciation on the part of the school of the cultural capital that they do possess. Blackledge (2000) suggests that, although Bourdieu's ideas were developed in a majority language context, they can provide a useful model with which to understand the home school interaction of linguistic minority families.

Brooker (2002) undertook ethnographic research into the home and school learning of sixteen four – year- old children. The children were from English and

Bangladeshi families in a working class neighbourhood in an English provincial town. Although the study was largely ethnographic, Brooker used a range of methods including interviews, field notes parent/carer diaries (of children's activities at home), systematic observation, questionnaires, as well as an analysis of the children's entry and end of year assessment data. Brooker not only drew on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital but also on his concept of habitus. She focuses on the habitus and capital of individual families and the pedagogic discourse of the classroom in order to explore the children's transition to school, their attainments on entry and progress and attainments during their reception year. Her findings were that the hidden differences in children's cultural learning at home became visible differences in their ability to access the curriculum and succeed in school. Although the teachers were well intentioned (if unaware of a cultural mismatch between home and school), the cultural capital that the children brought from home was not recognised by the school and did not equip them to adapt to the pedagogy on offer within their reception class. Therefore cultural and structural factors limited the children's options and dictated their lower educational outcomes.

Conteh (2003) undertook a small scale ethnographic study of five eight year old bilingual primary students and their parents/ carers in a school in Bradford with a high proportion of bilingual students. Conteh wanted to track a small group of 'successful' children through their different learning experiences at Key Stage 2. These students were identified as 'successful learners by their teachers as they had well developed reading and writing skills, were confident language users and coped well with classroom work. Conteh observed the children's conversation in class and organised informal lunch time discussion groups. She concluded that in the families of the successful students there was a commitment to maintain heritage languages, culture and religion alongside recognition of the need to succeed in school. The findings in relation to the teacher interviews were that the teachers often did not share the cultural and religious language background of the children that they teach and knew little about these aspects of their students' experience. The teachers' judgments of their students' potential achievement was based, in some instances, on external factors such as the clothes that the students wore. Conteh felt that this attitude was a reflection of the lack of value



attributed to the cultural capital of the linguistic minority communities themselves by the majority culture within wider society.

Social and educational inclusion demands a process of change for the whole school community. Trueba (1988) in Kim (2003) argues that the conditions for effective learning are created only when the role of culture is recognised. Therefore in terms of the development of reading within the multilingual classroom reading practices need to operate within a dimension that acknowledges the significance of cultural and linguistic diversity (Green and Kostogriz, 2002).

## **2.5: Alternative accounts of bilingual learners**

According to Street (1995) literacy (and by extension reading) cannot be regarded as 'autonomous'. An autonomous view would suggest that literacy consists of skills and attributes that are transparent, universal and assessable. Equally there is an assumption that this discrete set of skills can be taught in similar ways across varying contexts, despite the very different needs and experiences of the learner (Kelly 2008). Instead, Street proposes an 'ideological' model which acknowledges that literacy is shaped by social and cultural dimensions and cannot be separated from the beliefs and values of the culture within which it is situated. For Street, the challenge is that in order to understand the nature and role of literacy practices in real social contexts, we need to challenge what has been assumed to be 'common sense' about literacy and, more importantly, to make explicit an alternative account. An alternative account would seek to privilege the voices of those not usually included in research accounts such as students or members of linguistic minorities. Although in previous sections I have described how the contributions of bilingual students and their parents/ carers can be viewed through the lens of deficit, and with a gaze which does not recognize cultural differences (Au and Jordan, 1981 cited in Cummins, 2000), research which seeks to offer an alternative account is increasingly being carried out.

Street (1995) suggests that an ideological model of literacy, that is sensitive to local variation in literacy practices, is more able to comprehend people's own uses and meanings of reading and necessarily writing. Consequently, it is important to acknowledge the 'funds of knowledge' (Moll and Greenberg, 1990; Moll. et al, 1992; Gonzalez and Moll, 2002; Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti, 2005) that students bring with them to school. These 'funds of knowledge' are the social linguistic and cultural assets that students bring from their homes and communities. Gregory and Williams (2000) carried out a longitudinal study over seven years on home, school and community reading practices among past and present generations of teachers and students in schools in Spitalfields, east London. The authors investigated how young children in Spitalfields, many of whom are of linguistic minority backgrounds, set about learning to read in their homes, communities and classrooms. Separate phases of the research have addressed different issues. Phase 2 of the study examined the literacy practices of a group of Bangladeshi British and Anglo British schoolchildren both at home and in school. Eight families were invited to take part from each school. Ethnographic observational data was collected within the children's homes of the children's out-of-school literacy practices. Additional data was collected through individual and group interviews with both older and younger siblings. In addition, the children's parents, class teachers and the two head teachers were interviewed. The children's community class teachers were interviewed and the community Bengali classes were visited. The researchers maintained that the ethnographic methods enabled them to give a detailed account of the literacy practices that took place in homes, communities and classrooms, as well as examine patterns of difference and similarity between groups. Gregory and Williams maintain that one of the innovative findings of this study is that there is reciprocity between the school culture and that of the communities being served. Equally, the role that the siblings of the Bangladeshi British children played at home in terms of transmitting school discourses, values and practices, and building that reciprocity, was very important.

A study by Kelly, Gregory and Williams (2001) considered parents'/carers' involvement in their children's literacy in school. The aim of their research was to question the assumption that linguistic minority parents/carers have to conform to

an idealised version of parental/ carer support for reading at home. The paper drew on Phases 2 and 4 of the research study described in the paragraph above and an important aspect of the methodological approach adopted was to show how the child and adult (or older sibling) created 'cultural knowledge' in the home or classroom together, rather than viewing knowledge as preconstituted by cultural or social class background. For them, this work demonstrates how children who come to school with experiences of literacy that do not conform to the official view, can learn to integrate the literacy of the classroom with their previous experience in a way that enables them to be effective literacy learners. These learners combine reading practices from different domains resulting in a form of reinterpretation which is described as '*syncretic*'. Equally this research illustrates the wealth of learning that is going on in homes that do not subscribe to mainstream practices. This includes the support offered for reading by siblings and other family members. Subsequently, Kelly, Gregory and Williams (2001) maintain that it is important to question the notion of a 'one size fits all' model of parental support suitable for families of all cultural backgrounds.

Increasingly there are studies which aim to demonstrate the ways children can draw upon cultural and language resources from the home to support learning in school. Drury (2000) undertook an ethnographic research study, illustrating how young students can live in more than one culture successfully navigating between home and school. The study was undertaken with three Pahari speaking girls in three different multi-ethnic nursery classes in Watford, near London, over the period of one school year. Audio-recordings were made of the three children in the home and nursery contexts. The tapes were transcribed by working with a Pahari first language informant. Observations were carried out to record the children's behaviour and conversations in the nursery. Interviews were conducted with the nursery teacher and the children's parents. Findings from this study that are of relevance to my own work are that bilingual children, who integrate aspects of the home culture with their school experience, are more likely to be successful in terms of their learning and the development of identity.

Kenner (2004) undertook similar work, closely observing bilingual students in their home and school settings. This study aimed to investigate how young

children learn more than one writing system at the same time. Detailed case studies of children aged six, who were each learning another writing system in addition to English, were developed. Data was collected over a one-year period, and observations of children's literacy were undertaken at home, at community language school and at primary school. Observations were recorded using either field notes or digital video. Four home visits took place over a period of one year, with each visit lasting from two to four hours. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents about children's everyday literacy experiences, and about how different family members helped them with reading and writing in both languages. Kenner writes that an important understanding based on this research is that young children who are growing up in a bilingual environment may experience their linguistic and cultural worlds, not as separate, but as 'simultaneous'. She also argues that her research provides more evidence to challenge the stereotype of linguistic minority families who have 'no literacy'. She argues that the families in this particular piece of research were literate in their home language/s and were often developing literacy in English in order to manage the demands of the society they had entered. She found that bilingual families are determined that their children should succeed, and that older siblings who have experience of the educational system often take on a teaching or mentoring role. Her research suggests that although support was not offered in authorised ways, families operated as 'literacy eco-systems', where the skills of different family members were used to complement each other to promote their children's learning.

Clearly, these studies highlight the importance of acknowledging the cultural, linguistic and literacy resources that bilingual students bring with them to school. Research of this kind is no longer focusing on deficits but recognises the successful fusion of cultural experiences and the syncretising of knowledge. Equally, these studies present a more nuanced, and, I would argue, complete understanding of the complexity of the literacy experiences of bilingual students and their parents/carers in some instances. However, Parke et al. (2002) suggest that there is more work needed in order to understand how literacy is perceived within a whole range of minority communities. I would argue that my research aims in a small way to contribute to this understanding.

## **2.6: The Present Study**

Currently, almost half of the primary aged students in the Inner London borough where this study takes place are bilingual. They are learning to read and to develop as readers in school through the medium of English when this is not their first or home language. This is within a predominantly monolingual education system. Crozier and Davies (2008) and Cummins (2000) suggest that while there is government rhetoric of inclusion, the reality of practices in schools suggests a surface treatment of cultural diversity and an absence of deep engagement with the perspectives of minority ethnic communities.

Consequently, this study aims to look more closely at the experiences of bilingual students in relation to reading, particularly in relation to the affective aspects of reading. In this study I elicit the perceptions of a group of primary- aged bilingual students about learning to read in English, as well as their current reading interests and levels of motivation. Equally, I explore the perceptions of the parents/carers of these students about their own experiences of reading and the support they offer for reading at home. I complete the triad by discussing class teachers' perceptions of the students' reading motivation at school, and parent/carer support for reading at home.

This study is the story of the reading experiences of eighteen bilingual year 5 students, their parents/carers and their teachers set within the inner London Borough of X. In this study I investigate the micro processes of the reading experiences of the bilingual students and their parents/ carers through the lens of a sociocultural perspective on reading whilst looking to social theory at the macro level for explanations which give shape to these experiences. I draw particularly on the work of Bourdieu, (1990) to consider how symbolic capital in terms of home literacy practices and parental attitudes and support can be transposed across boundaries from the 'field' of the home into the 'field of education' (Brooker, 2002). Equally, I look to Foucault's (1972) work in terms to consider

how powerful discourses within society may privilege particular groups of students and their parents/ carers in school and marginalise others.

Within this study I adopt qualitative data-gathering methods in the construction of the findings and case studies. I use qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups in order to build a rich, multi faceted picture of both the reading experiences and cultural background of the students themselves, as well as their parents/ carers. Gillborn and Gipps (1996) point out how qualitative approaches to research can reveal the factors, often not revealed by quantitative findings, which underpin success or failure (as demonstrated by test and exam results), in classroom situations. They also suggest that qualitative methods can also help, in a non-judgmental way, to understand attitudes and sensitivities, and are therefore appropriate for researching issues to do with the achievement of ethnic minority children in school.

The resulting research questions are:

- What are the perceptions of a group of primary aged bilingual students about the significance and purpose of reading?
- What are the perceptions of the parents/carers of this particular group of bilingual students about the purposes and significance of reading, and how do these same parents/carers support their children with reading at home?
- What perceptions do the teachers hold about the importance of motivation in reading for this group of students, and how do they regard the support offered by their parents?

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

In the first section of this chapter I consider the choice of a research methodology to support my particular study. In the second section I discuss the methods that I have used in this work.

### **3.1: In Search of a Research Methodology**

Competing discourses exist on what is the nature of the reality that we are researching. Is reality static, quantifiable and subject to particular rules and conventions, and is it knowable in a very definite sense by the researcher? Or is reality more fluid and less open to quantification? These ontological considerations are at the heart of educational research and they inform the choice of a research paradigm. A paradigm can act as a prism and provide a way of looking at and talking about the complexity of the world. Consequently paradigmatic orientation places the researcher within a social context and also informs what is important and legitimate within that context (Patton, 1980). The epistemological, ontological and methodological orientation of a paradigm helps constitute what are legitimate problems, solutions, and criteria of 'proof' (Firestone, 1987) within the research study.

Giddens' (1976) first major methodological paradigm (positivistic) is described by Patton (1980) as being characterised by an extremely positive evaluation of science and scientific method. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) argue that the positive (in the sense of posited) sciences might be seen as the crowning glory of western civilisation in such an evaluation. This particular scientific approach emerged at the time of the reformation as a new way of comprehending reality, free from the shackles of superstition and contemporary religious understandings. This 'approach' heralded a new highly desirable rational endeavour to achieve a value-free and objective science. Dussel (1998) suggests that the values of universality and standardisation were prioritised in the name of

predictability and efficiency. Therefore from this perspective, variability and difference were perceived as problematic.

However, Coffey, Holbrook and Atkinson (1996) challenge this dualistic notion, arguing that the boundaries between the reality of the scientific world and narrative accounts of the social world are often blurred. Hammersley (1992) argues that questions concerned with 'truth' that derive from attempts to understand and interpret cultural processes are different from questions related to other phenomena (Geertz, 1983). He argues that such 'truths' are more contingent as in related to local contexts and subject to criteria of utility as in contributing to social change.

I have chosen to situate this study within a broadly qualitative and interpretive approach. I have used qualitative data-gathering methods in the construction of the findings as well as case studies. A qualitative methodology is based on the epistemological view that knowledge and reality are socially constructed (Crotty, 1998). Such an approach views reality as something to be interpreted rather than discovered, and sees meanings as multiple and situated, rather than singular and fixed. Stake (1998) argues that case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of object to be studied. The intention is not only to understand and describe a social and cultural scene from the emic or insider's perspective but also to emphasise the etic perspective; the external constraints (Fetterman, 1989). Therefore the 'local meanings' of research subjects are situated within the socio-historical, and political, aspects of the field.

Through the use of semi structured interviews I encourage informants to tell their own stories in their own way. The individual stories coalescing into the bigger story, place the individual human experiences within a social, cultural and theoretical story. The aim is to study social behaviour within a discrete setting, which generates detailed, descriptive data. This description is interpretive rather than observational since within this methodology the understanding of behaviour is not merely concerned with physical description. I aimed to produce qualitative data which is characterised by 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). Thick description is theoretical description which makes the conceptual world inhabited



by its subjects understandable by revealing the 'webs of signification'. Thick description in Geertz's terms explains, interprets as well as theorises the culture it is presenting. The intention is not to generalize across cases but to generalize within them. Brooker (2002) suggests that it is important that 'thick description' not be confused with highly-coloured prose. She argues that descriptive writing makes intelligible the reasons for the beliefs and attitudes, actions and outcomes, recorded by the researcher.

The fieldwork for the study was conducted through the use of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, field notes and the compilation of a research journal. Within this qualitative study there is a focus on the embedded case studies of the students and their parents/ carers and their teachers. Brooker (2002) argues that in-depth case studies, particularly those showing the relevance of the whole home-and-community environment to the literacy learning of the child necessarily describe a small number of cases, and make no claims that these cases 'represent', or can be generalized to, an imagined total population. Their effectiveness, she argues, lies in what Lincoln and Guba (1984) call their 'trustworthiness', rather than on the claims to reliability and validity associated with larger samples. Such trustworthiness derives, however, not exclusively from carefully observed detail, but rather from well-evidenced argument:

However the intention of this research endeavour is to engage purposively with the setting and the participants in order to generate local knowledge (Geertz, 1983). This knowledge is context bound, community specific, and non systematic. Local knowledge acts as a counterweight and allows the voices of those that are systematically excluded to be heard. The inclusion of local knowledge will always have a questioning effect on established paradigms because of the messy features of its existential (dealing with existence and based on experience) practice (Geertz, 1983).

## **3.2: Research Methods**

In this section I outline the research methods that were used. I wrote field notes and a research journal from the beginning of the research process and I continued to write the research journal whilst writing up the research in order to facilitate self-reflexivity at all stages of the research process. I have used individual semi-structured interviews with the students, their parents/carers and their teachers in order to elicit their individual stories. I felt that an element of structure within the interviews helped the respondents to make the best use of the time. Equally, I have used focus group discussion with the students, in order to facilitate group-engendered discussion around particular issues at the end of the data collection phase of the research.

### **3.2.1: Immersion in the field**

Roberts (2001) recommends 'immersion' to gain empathy and understanding of a research context, thereby enabling the researcher to acquire knowledge of the processes, histories, events, language and biographies of the situation. This, in turn, permits a more meaningful dialogue to be established between the researcher and respondents. Having lived and worked in inner London as a teacher since the 1970's I have had the privilege of living alongside and working with minority ethnic children and families. This is the nature of life in London with its rich mixtures and diversities. I had worked on a multi ethnic school development project early in my career. This project was set up as a response to the underachievement of black and minority ethnic students in the late 70's. More recently I have also developed links with Kakatiya University in Andhra Pradesh where I was a visiting lecturer in Education for a short time. I am also involved in a charitable educational development project in 10 schools in conjunction with the state government in Utarkand. This has given me some educational and cultural experience in working with minority ethnic students in English and non English settings.

I do not wish to claim that my experiences meant that I was able to expunge the difference between my self as a white researcher and the linguistic minority parents that I interviewed. The power imbalances that existed because of my professional position (I was known as a teacher) and the fact that I was from the majority culture undoubtedly were there; the elephant in the room. However on my side I am bilingual (and I mentioned this at the start of the interview to explain my interest in the research subject) albeit in an elite language and also a woman which may seem less threatening for some people both men and women. Crozier (2003) cites Ladner (1987) who asserts, that the relationship between the researcher and the researched can be likened to that of the oppressor and the oppressed; in a white dominated society this relationship is clearly problematic. However, it would be simplistic to suggest that even where the researcher and the researched share ethnicity and culture the optimum interviewing conditions would be created. Crozier (2003) suggests that perhaps what is of greater importance is to establish, and she cites Vincent and Warren (2001) here, shared understandings, taken-for-granted assumptions and key reference points.

I felt a commitment to the work and valued the importance of not speaking on behalf of the respondents but trying to allow the respondents' own voice to be heard. However, as Drury (2007) reminds us, as a white researcher, there is a need to be aware of the fine line between giving a voice to the research participants and betraying them. This certainly impacted on the analysis stage where I felt that analysing each interview individually and not attempting to code across interviews helped maintain a more coherent account. Individual voices could still be heard and there was no sense of a disembodied respondent group speaking decontextualised words. In this way I hoped to maintain the integrity of the individual interview situation. I wanted to hear what the respondents were saying and allow their voices to reverberate within the research. Again, I am not ignoring the power and responsibility of my position to choose what to foreground and what to foreshadow in the data in making a coherent argument that addresses the research questions and makes an academic contribution to the field.

I had some knowledge and understanding of the schools within which the research took place. I had worked in school A for a year before I undertook the research study. I only attended the school once a week for half a day on an advisory as well as teaching basis in relation to particular children. I became familiar with the school but did not know the teachers well, apart from the SENCO and the head teacher and some class teachers, none of whom participated in the research. Because I was employed by the local authority and not the school I was regarded by the parents/ carers as not being part of the school staff. Consequently, I was asked by the school to undertake some parents' workshops on aspects related to literacy because of this in between position that I seem to have been awarded. I also undertook some workshops with the Somali parents in the school jointly with Fathia (she later acted as an interpreter for me in parent and student interviews in school C.) who had responsibility for the Somali home school liaison in the borough. Fathia and I had also collaborated on first language assessments for Somali students and she was also involved with local Somali community organisations. Through our work together my knowledge of the Somali families with whom she was involved developed, in terms of the challenges they faced on coming to England and with accessing the education system. This served to sensitise me to the situation of some of the Somali families and to develop my awareness.

School B. was the least well known to me. I had visited the school to monitor the work of my own staff within the school. However, I knew the head teacher because she had a key organisational role in the annual borough conference that the Ethnic Minority Achievement service organised for parents from ethnic and linguistic minorities. I had given a workshop for parents/ carers at the conference for the last 3 years and through that work I had had the opportunity to get to know her. Equally participating in this annual conference and talking to parents/carers helped to sensitise me to the situations of some of the linguistic minority parents/carers living in the borough.

I had visited School C again to monitor the work of members of the team that I managed within the borough. I had also known the Senco and EMA teacher in School C because they had participated in a previous piece of research. I had

visited their school in the course of this research interviewed them both individually and they had participated in a focus group that I had organised. However, they did not participate in the research but certainly facilitated my initial discussions with the head teacher of the school and this undoubtedly made gaining entry easier.

I did not knowingly have any connection with any of the students, teachers or families in schools A. B. and C who participated in the research. Ms. AB. may have attended one of the workshops for Somali parents in School A (mentioned earlier in this section) but I was not sure about this. I was familiar with the schools and the area and because of my experiences had developed some knowledge of the 'processes, histories, events, language and biographies' of the situation (as mentioned at the beginning of the section). However, I had no sustained contact or prior meetings with any of the students, parents/ carers or teachers who participated in the research.

### **3.2.2: Charting the field**

When does data collection start? In my case the taking of field notes started early and before direct contact with respondents commenced. Silverman (2000) argues that careful attention needs to be paid to the form in which field notes are taken initially, as they involve intuitive focussed observations of the setting. He also suggests expanding field notes beyond immediate observations in order to include information that may only become relevant later. Spradley (1979) suggests a format for keeping expanded field notes. He suggests keeping short notes at the time, expanding the notes as soon as a fieldwork journal is written up in order to record problems that arise, and to keep a provisional running record of analysis and interpretation. The fieldwork journal and the running record were, for me, subsumed into the research journal. I also adopted the suggestion of Miles and Huberman (1984) of extended contact sheets after each contact with respondents.

At this early stage, I also started contributing to a research journal. This served several purposes, one of which was to develop greater self-reflexivity within the research work. It also served the purpose of providing a space to explore difficulties and setbacks, thereby acting as an emotional support. Equally, the research journal enabled me to make links between the theoretical reading already undertaken and ongoing, and to begin to consider thematic considerations that were emerging from my writing about the research setting.

### **3.2.3: The introductory groups and focus groups.**

As part of ensuring that the students were giving informed consent to be part of the research I organised introductory groups. The introductory group met in each school with all the students coming just once at the beginning of the study. I showed a short power point presentation presenting a basic child friendly introduction to the research process (see Appendix 4.) so that they understood something of the context for the interviews that they were going to be involved in. I tried to explain some of the principles of a research study so that this might add to their skills and knowledge about carrying out research. I also explained about the individual interview that they would participate in if they agreed to be involved in the research. I tried to generate a relaxed atmosphere and asked for questions. I then explained that having heard more about what they would be involved in they did not have to participate and at any future stage they could decide to withdraw. Equally I explained that they were not required to answer any question that made them feel uncomfortable. I tried to explain about confidentiality and how their names and the name of their school would not be revealed to anyone, and that this was something I had to guarantee to do to protect their interests. However, the only aspect of this that I think they really understood was one of thinking up pseudonyms for themselves. This generated a great deal of interest. In School C the students had had a little experience of conducting interviews with their fellow classmates as part of their class work. Also most students were generally familiar with some aspects of certain kinds of interviewing from watching television in which well-known personalities are interviewed.

I conducted focus groups (schedule of areas for discussion as a starting point Appendix 10) with all the students in each individual school at the end of the research study. The purpose of this was to generate group discussion amongst the students about:

- their experience of being interviewed
- their reasons for agreeing to be interviewed
- what they had learnt about the research process
- learning to read and reading if you are bilingual

Also the focus groups provided an opportunity for each student to hear the perspectives of their fellow students. Equally, I encouraged students to be confident in their discussion because there were no right or wrong answers and no one was being judged. The focus groups were taped and the tapes later transcribed.

The focus group is a discussion-based interview that involves multiple respondents and is 'focused' on an external stimulus introduced by a facilitator (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990)). Primary-aged students may have ways of operating within a group based on their experiences within the classroom. As all the three focus groups contained students from more than one class, these dynamics could not be replicated completely. I established focus group discussion 'rules' in order to enable orderly turn taking so that everyone's voice was heard and everyone had an opportunity to speak. This worked well in all the schools but in School C there was certainly an element of 'losing control' at the end of their session where after about 35 minutes of discussion the students forgot about taking turns and allowing others to finish what they were saying, and breakaway groups began to develop. It was all very good humoured but I became aware of my status as teacher as well as researcher and was concerned about how my management of the group would be perceived by others. Certainly being within the students' school building imposed constraints.

The focus groups allowed the students the opportunity to discuss together their experiences of being interviewed. It allowed me to explore a little more about the aspect of reading being a different process for bilingual individuals. However, as I had discovered after the first focus group (the best laid plans), it was quite difficult to ensure that particular topics would be covered. The discussion was wide ranging. What was particularly striking was how the students talked at length about how much they had enjoyed being interviewed and what they had got out of it. At the end the students expressed their thanks. They had been very positive from the beginning, and I really had not expected that they would find the process of being interviewed and being asked their opinion such a positive experience. They spoke of the fun they had in being part of the study, how much it had helped them and how they felt more confident about having another language. One student said that she had been shy about admitting to having another language, and that this had made her more confident about talking about her other language. Another student said it had made her feel special and that it did not matter that she was the only person she knew of in the school who spoke Portuguese.

As the final focus group that I had facilitated in School C left the room there was a chorus of thanks. The students had become a bit rowdy towards the end of the focus group and the thanks were loud and repeated, with the students all talking over each other. They felt pleased to have been involved in the work and I felt it had been a privilege to work with them. The degree of honesty and openness I found with these young students is both surprising and heartening. It is the honesty and authenticity of their voices that reverberates through this research.

#### **3.2.4: Interviewing**

The use of the individual interview as the main research method gives prominence to a particular view of the individual subject. This is only possible within a situation where there is a shared understanding that any individual has the potential to be a respondent and that 'the self is a proper subject of narration'



(Silverman, 2000, 2001). Gubrium and Holstein (1997) suggest that making the individual subject visible is as important as getting the interview procedure correct, or collecting 'rich' data. The understanding that develops is of the individual self as understood within the individual interview. Gubrium and Holstein (1997) also maintain that the interview material is not neutral and uninfluenced by the situation but is a product of that same situation and needs to be understood in relation to the interview process itself. The self-narratives that emerge can therefore be understood in relation to a wider population according to Bertaux (1981). One to one interviews provide a source of these self-narratives and can then be analysed in order to discern themes (Silverman, 1993). These narratives are the social narratives recounted by individuals. In order to understand why people behave in a particular way it is important to understand the personal myths they live by (Bertaux, 1981).

### **3.2.5: Student participants and Interviews**

In all 18 students participated in the research. These students were in year 5 (between 9 and 10 years of age) in three different primary schools with similar catchment areas (see Table 3.5 for more information about participating schools) within the Inner London Borough of X. Table 3.1., 3.2 and 3.3 below provides details of students and their parents. All the year 5 students in the three schools who were identified as 'EAL' by their teachers were invited to take part along with their parents/carers. As such, this group could not be described as being representative of bilingual students within the borough as a whole. Rather than aiming at a representative sample that could be generalised to a broader population, I was interested in exploring the meanings and experiences that reading had within individuals' lives. The group, perhaps not surprisingly, however, represented the main minority language groups in the borough primary schools.

Each participant was interviewed individually using a semi-structured interview schedule (see attached interview schedules in Appendices 5, 6 and 7). The interview questions were related to the research question and geared to eliciting the students' perceptions of learning to read, current reading interests and

choices both in school and outside of school in the context of their individual biographies. The interviews were recorded using a small digital recorder which was relatively unobtrusive and unthreatening and possessed a fairly sensitive built-in microphone. Each interview lasted between 30 and 50 minutes, and sometimes there was untranscribed talk before and after, of which written notes were made. All the interviews, apart from 2 were conducted in English. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

The methods used in the students' interviews were chosen to privilege the role of the students as participants in the research. Therefore the choice of an 'informant' style (Powney and Watts, 1986) seemed to be most appropriate. Interviews conducted in this way emphasise the sharing between interviewer and interviewee of the topics under discussion in the interview session. The interviewer is an active interested listening partner who seeks to empathise with the interviewee in order to create a relaxed and positive atmosphere within the interview. This approach is particularly important when interviewing young students. It emphasises reflexivity and responsiveness which allow students to contribute their own understandings to some extent (Mauther, 1997). I was aware that I needed to take into account the perspective and position of the students in order to address the issues of unequal power relationships and to reflect the rights that the young person has in the situation.

As the interviews are with young students in year 5 in primary school, the interview format is particularly important. There is a particular need to be sensitive to the form of questions asked so as to give sufficient structure and also to allow enough openness without leading the student. Many of the questions were part of an existing well-developed piece of work, the 'Motivation to Read Profile' (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling & Mazzoni, 1996). The whole interview schedule was piloted with 3 students to ensure that the questions were understandable. Donaldson (1978) suggests, understandably, that children's performance improves in situations that they can understand.

Conducting research with primary aged students raises particular methodological issues because of the unequal power relationship between the adult researcher and the children who are involved in the research. Mauthner (1997) suggests that in order to counteract this inequality, children should be involved as fully as possible in the research so that they are not objectified in the process. Therefore I invited the students to an introductory group discussion in each of their schools where I used a PowerPoint presentation as a starting point for explanation and discussion (see Appendix 4 for PowerPoint presentation). I wanted the students to be aware that they would be involved in individual interviews and focus group interviews and what these would consist of so that they could make an informed decision about whether they wanted to be involved in the research. I also wanted them to be aware of their rights in terms of not participating at the outset if they so chose, even though their parents had agreed that they could participate. I also wanted them to understand that they could withdraw at any time from the research. By involving the students in this way I tried to ameliorate the unequal power relationship between my self as adult white researcher and authority figure and my young respondents. Arguably, this is very difficult. How much choice students in primary school have in terms of non-participation is debatable, particularly when their parents have been consulted first, as they had in this instance. However, I worked hard to redress the balance.

Also by extending their understanding of some aspects of the research process through the introductory presentation and discussion, I hoped to ensure that the students 'got something' out of the process. Nutbrown (1996) suggests that the involvement of children as research participants rather than research subjects should be afforded them as a matter of right. When students are encouraged to be active participants in the research process according to Dockrell, Lewis and Lindsay, (2000) they are more able to make sense of the demands that are placed upon them.

The focus groups that were undertaken at the end of the research study were an opportunity for students to reflect on their experiences with their peers. Many students talked about the experience of talking one to one in the individual

interview. One student found the process somewhat daunting to begin with. They said:

*It was kind of new for me because I hadn't really been interviewed before and I wasn't really sure about it, and I was kind of scared. I wasn't really sure about it, but then after it happened I wasn't scared at all and thought it was kind of like good.*

Another student found they were able to share their thoughts and feelings:

*I liked the interview because I like sharing my feelings and my thoughts with other people but not all the time,*

Several students talked about how their confidence had developed:

*I found it really helpful ... it made me more confident ...*

This confidence was related to being bilingual:

*After I had my interview it made me feel like I wasn't the only one to speak another language and like just feel confident of my language.*

Also confidence was related developing as a reader:

*The interview gave me confidence because like I don't often talk to people about reading ... with many people ... This helped me a bit and I started reading even bigger books.*

As part of the student interview I asked the students to undertake a drawing. As Greene and Hogan (2005) conclude, children's drawings on their own are too complexly determined and inherently ambiguous to be reliable as sole indicators of the emotional experiences of the children who drew them. The drawings of the young students in this work represented an alternative to writing and provided a different medium from talk. This activity provided interest and allowed the student to attempt in a representational and creative way to express their thoughts. Greig et al. (2007) suggest that young children may find it difficult to convey feelings verbally. Asking students what their pictures were about increased my understanding of the meanings of their drawings. However, the drawings were part of a much longer interview and were not to be used in any way exclusively.

As mentioned earlier, the students interviewed were in year 5 of primary school. Increasingly children's perspectives are being seen as an important focus of

educational research (Christensen and James, 2000; Greig and Taylor, 1999; Lewis and Lindsay, 1999). Working with bilingual students required particular adjustments when students were at an early stage of fluency in English. Aamina's family originated in Pakistan but they had arrived most recently from Germany, and Aamina later indicated, via her interpreter, that she spoke fluent German. However, the school signalled that the family language was Urdu and so the interview with Aamina and her parents was conducted with Majidah the Urdu interpreter. Certainly working with an interpreter changes the dynamic in the interview. There is another person in the room to accommodate and it is not possible to establish empathy in the same way with the respondent. I specialised in smiling and nodding. However, there was often a sense of frustration when the interpreter seemed to be finding it hard to make the participant understand. This was also the case with Aaleyah who spoke Somali and had difficulty with inferential questions. I asked Majidah to translate what was said on the digital recording of the interview she attended. However, she tidied up what was said and certainly seemed to have asked some slightly different questions from what was intended. In summary, I felt that the 2 interviews that were conducted with students and an interpreter were different in terms of the nature of the communication and the data from the interviews conducted without an interpreter. However, without the use of interpreters, some students would not have been able to contribute their voices which would have been unacceptable given the nature of the research. Aamina had been very quiet during her individual interview. Perhaps this reluctance had been due to having only recently arrived in the school. This contrasted hugely with when I went back to undertake the focus group in her school in English after the summer holidays. Her English fluency had developed considerably and she was a major contributor to the group discussion.

Table 3.1 : Information about students , parents and teachers participating in the study in school A									
Teacher and Student	Gender	home language/s order is not relevant	reading in language/s other than English	country of birth	Parent name	Relationship to student	parent Country of birth	Other countries lived in	Language of parent interview
Ms. X. Sumairaa	girl	Somali English	Arabic	England	Ms. AB.	mother	Somalia	none	English
Ms. X. Zaakirah	girl	Urdu Punjabi English English	Arabic Urdu	England	Ms. AR.	mother	Kenya came to England as a child	none	English
Ms. X. Nihal	boy	Arabic English	Arabic	England	Mr. A. Ms .A.	father  mother	Algeria  England	none	English
Mr. V. Bisher	boy	Urdu English	Arabic	England	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ms. X. Sidrah	girl	Arabic French English	Arabic	England	Ms. H.	mother	Morocco	none	English

Table 3.2 : Information about students , parents and teachers participating in the study in school B									
Teacher and Student	Gender	home language	reading in language/s other than English	country of birth	Parent name	Relationship to student	parent Country of birth	Other countries lived in	Language of parent interview
Ms. T. Azhar	boy	Urdu Kutchi English	Arabic	England	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ms R. Muhammed	boy	Somali English	Arabic	Somalia in current school 2 years	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ms. R. Adra	girl	German Urdu English	non reported	Germany in current school 2 years	Ms. S.	mother	Pakistan	Germany	Urdu with Adra's sister acting as an interpreter from
Ms. T. Aamina	girl	German Urdu	German	Germany in current school less than a year	Mr. AH Ms. AH.	Urdu	Pakistan Pakistan	Germany Germany	Urdu with Majidah as an interpreter

Table 3.3: Information about students , parents and teachers participating in the study in school C									
Teacher and Student	Gender	home language/s	reading in language/s other than English	country of birth	Parent name	Relationship to student	Parent Country of birth	Other countries lived in	Language of parent interview
Ms. W. Umar	boy	Urdu Pashtu English	Arabic	England	Mr. G.	father	Pakistan	none	English
Ms. W. Sharfaa	girl	Urdu English	Arabic	England	Ms. AS.	mother	Pakistan	none	English
Ms. W. Zaki	boy	Urdu Punjabi English	Arabic	England	Ms. Z.	mother	Pakistan	none	English
Ms. W. Jarek	boy	Polish English	Polish	England	Ms. P.	mother	Poland	none	English
Ms. W. Aaleyah	girl	Somali English	none reported	Somalia in current school 3 years	Ms. AL.	mother	Somalia	Finland	Somali with an interpreter
Ms. W. Aadil	boy	Somali English	none reported	Somalia in current school less than a year	Ms. AA.	mother	Somalia	none	Somali with an interpreter
Ms. W. Izabel	girl	Portuguese English	none reported	Portugal in current school since Year 1	parent not interviewed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ms. W. Abraar	boy	Urdu English	Arabic	England	parent not interviewed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ms. W. Saabiq	boy	Urdu	Arabic	England	parent not interviewed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A



### **3.2.7: Parent Participants and Interviews**

The parents/ carers were approached first in terms of inviting them to participate in the research. If they were a parent/ carer of a student in Year 5 designated by schools A., B. or C. as EAL they were sent an invitation letter. In school A. the students took the letters home to their parents. Knowing how sometimes letters can disappear in school bags, perhaps not all parents received their invitation letters. The head teacher in School B. discussed the research project very generally with all the year 5 children to explain why some students were receiving letters and others were not. Then the students took the letters home to their parents in the same way as School A. In School C. teachers (class teachers and the ethnic minority achievement grant funded teacher) gave out letters to individual parents as they meet with them regularly in the playground. Those parents whom teachers did not manage to meet were sent invitations via their children.

For the purposes of this study, having decided on the group to be approached, I used, 'opportunity' sampling (Bell, 1987) to recruit participants. Bell notes that in 'opportunity' sampling issues of convenience and accessibility are involved since researchers are dependent on the good will and availability of participants, and she suggests that it is likely to be difficult for an individual researcher to achieve a true random sample. Browner and Mable Preloran (2006) argue that there are specific difficulties in the recruitment of research participants from ethnic minority backgrounds. They cite the work of Blumenthal et al (1995) Arrom et al 1997; Naranjo and Dirksen, 1998 when they argue that sample bias is less of a problem than actually finding participants in the first place and that introducing additional measures to attract particular participants could potentially skew the research in that it might attract some and not others. Browner and Mable Preloran felt that in their research, the number of participants remained small and seemed to be limited to those participants who felt more confident and articulate in English. However, I was encouraged by the number of parents who were not fluent in speaking English but who did eventually participate. Of the thirteen parents that I interviewed, six were not completely fluent in speaking English and

three asked for interpreters during their interviews. One interview with Mr. G. was conducted over the phone.

One of the main considerations having recruited parents was the need to develop questions (see interview schedule in Appendix 9) and an interview approach that would encourage optimum communication with individuals whose first language is not English. I worked hard to develop a shared understanding. This involved mentioning my own bilingualism and being very friendly and gentle in my approach. Empathizing was important I felt in the winning of trust. There also had to be flexibility on my part in terms of rephrasing questions and drawing out participants. This had to be done with sensitivity and without being patronising. Fine (1994) argues that when researchers stand aloof from the researched context, then they are responsible for contributing to 'othering'. In spite of my attempts to establish empathy and trust, the potential for unequal research relationships between myself as a white middle class teacher researcher and some of the linguistic minority parents whose spoken English lacked fluency, in some instances, was strong. However many of the parents that I interviewed were articulate and expressive in their conversation with me and obviously undaunted by the situation. One important factor that I feel influenced all of the interviews was that there was a common bond which was a concern and interest in the young students that were the focus of the research. Obviously the interest and concern of the parents far out weighs my own but it did establish a certain link. Many of the parents said that they wanted to participate in order 'to make things better'.

### **3.2.8: Teacher participants and Interviews'**

In all, six teachers were interviewed across the three schools. These are designated as schools A B C. Schools A, B and C were also the sites for student and parent/carers interviews. Five out of the six teachers interviewed were women. Only one of these teachers was herself bilingual. All teachers were relatively young being in their 30's. Table 3.4 below presents the schools and the teacher's pseudonyms.

**Table 3.4: Teachers' Schools and Pseudonyms.**

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Pseudonyms.</b>
School A	Mr. V. Ms. X.
School B	Ms. R. Ms. T.
School C	Ms. Y. Ms. W.

The interviews with teachers were undertaken in their individual schools, sometimes during the day but usually before or after the school day. One teacher left the school part way through the study and she replied to the questions by email. In School A., teachers had more release time and therefore I was able to undertake the interviews during the school day. Certainly, the teachers in School A had more time to answer the questions in depth and gave their own personal opinion. One of the teachers, Ms. X., who is bilingual herself and has parents who speak a minority community language was very open and insightful about her own experiences of learning to read and the support that her parents had offered to her.

In School B the teachers seemed to be very business-like. Time seemed limited and the teachers answered the questions very precisely. One of the teachers seemed very uneasy and perhaps she had not really wanted to be part of the study. Most of my negotiations had been with the head of the school whom I already knew. Presumably it is difficult for teachers to refuse to participate in something that the head teacher of their school has put in place. Although I had felt a commitment to ensuring that the students did not feel pressurised to participate, I had not considered whether the teachers might feel similarly. I was very appreciative of the teachers giving up their time, therefore I fitted in with their schedules. In School B, I interviewed one teacher at 8:15 in the morning

when she took time out from preparing for the day, and I saw the other teacher at the end of the day when she may well have been tired.

In School C the head teacher and the SENCO had arranged for me to talk to the year 5 teachers who were going to be involved. One teacher wanted reassurance that as teachers they were not going to be compared with the teachers in the other two schools that were participating. I was able to explain that the focus lay elsewhere. However, it is difficult for comparisons between schools not to emerge when the data is presented, if only inadvertently, because attitudes towards reading on the part of the students and the parents/carers are linked to what the school provides in terms of the reading curriculum and how home school relations are managed.

### **3.2.9: Ethnographic interviews**

I conducted 3 what I have called ethnographic interviews with respondents who had particular insights into the cultural backgrounds of the research participants. One interview was conducted with a special educational needs coordinator from another school in the borough who had considerable experience of working with EAL students, particularly Somali students. Another interview was conducted with an Urdu speaking colleague who managed both Special Needs and EAL in her own school. She was particularly knowledgeable about Pakistani culture and literature. A third interview was undertaken with the mother of a colleague, who had arrived in England from Pakistan in the 1960's, and had personal knowledge of managing the education system for her children, as a member of a linguistic minority.

These interviews added to the depth and quality of the information about the culture and lived experiences of the other respondents that I interviewed. I could ask for 'cultural background' when issues arose in interviews with which I was not familiar. The concept of 'haram' (meaning non Islamic) which students mentioned in the course of the interviews was an example. These interviews served the purpose of providing me with information that helped me to understand and

develop a greater sensitivity in relation to the individuals whom I interviewed. Sometimes this proved challenging in that I had to resist my own impulse to perceive cultural background information as 'exotic' and to view it in the contexts of the lived experience of my respondents.

### **3.2.9: Analysis of the Data**

The analysis of data was not a distinct phase but, started in the pre-field work stage during the development of research interests. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) cite the work of Malinowski (1922) when he writes about foreshadowed problems as a way of describing initial research problems or issues. Malinowski (1922) argues that these foreshadowed problems are linked to theoretical literature and are the heart of the analytic thinking. At this early stage, the production of the research design and the reading of related literature started the process of developing understandings that informed not only the initial research questions but also the questions that were asked in the individual interviews.

The interviews and discussion groups and focus groups were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. However, Kvale (1996) cautions against considering interviews as transcripts. He argues that the face to face encounter of the interview is reduced to fragmented quotes and becomes closed. Consequently I undertook repeated listening to the original interview and scrutiny of the notes taken immediately after the interview in order keep the event in consciousness. I took what Wengraf (2001) describes as memos on the first listening to the interview in order to retain that initial reaction. When reading the interview transcript, I entered into a mental dialogue with the text, asking questions about the theme of the text and seeking to develop and expand what is expressed in the text of the transcript (Kvale, 1996). I was also aware that the interview was a co-authored event and wanted to remain aware of the joint social construction of the outcome (Holliday, 2002)). It was important for me to retain the integrity of the individual interview in order to maintain the individual voices and the stories that were being told.

Consequently, the next stage of data analysis proved both challenging and time consuming as I had consider how to move from data to written study. This is what Holliday (2002) calls the dark night of the soul. However, repeated engagement with both interview recording, and transcript and the use of what Kvale (1996) calls ad hoc meaning generation eased the path. This involves making deeper interpretations of specific statements, seeing parts of the interview as narrative and working out metaphors to describe the material in order to bring about connections significant for the research study. The intention is to see patterns and emerging themes in the material in relation to the context of the study. The themes, therefore, were partly emergent and partly influenced by the questions and issues engendered by the research study. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, the way the researcher sees the data is influenced by his/her own background and the theoretical background of the study and the construction that emerges is only one version of reality.

Consequently, interviews may be criticised as being based on subjective impressions and therefore not producing valid findings. This may be addressed in terms of both method and methodology. Validity can be established through a method where the process of the study becomes an investigative thrust with continual questioning and this is then encapsulated within the research study, and evaluated in terms of the theoretical integrity of the work as a whole. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also suggest that where knowledge is not seen as corresponding to an objective reality but a social construction of this reality, then a research interview based on dialogue and interaction remains methodologically valid.

### **3.2.10: The Research Setting**

Bilingual students now make up 44.6 % of the primary school population in the London Borough of X. Like many other London boroughs, X has been part of the transnational migration that has taken place within London as a whole since the 1950s. The '50s and '60s represented the movement of low-skilled labour from regions of labour surplus to areas of labour need. This was particularly the case

with the arrival in Britain of immigrants from the Caribbean to work in the service industries, and the Hong Kong Chinese working predominantly in the catering industry (Rassool, 1998). 'Asian' population groups from Kenya and Uganda followed during the 1960s. The 1970s brought migration of political exiles fleeing oppressive regimes in various countries including Chile, and South Africa. The '80s and '90s brought individuals escaping internal conflict from countries such as Somalia and Sri Lanka. The most recent arrivals in the London Borough of X are economic migrants from Poland.

In Table 3.5 below, I have indicated the total number of students, the number of languages used and the percentage of EAL students in the three research schools.

**Table 3.5: Information about research study schools.**

School	Student numbers	% of students	Number language spoken	main language spoken
School A	411	99%	23	Arabic Urdu Somali
School B	422	45%	27	English Urdu Bengali
School C	422	45%	27	English Urdu Bengali

### **3.2.11: Ethical Consideration**

The Institute of Education recommends that research students are aware of the ethical issues involved in carrying out research and to address ethical issues as an aspect of the research. The suggestion is that ethical issues are particularly relevant to gaining access, confidentiality, dissemination, accountability, and

protection of participants and conflict of values. There are a number of published guidelines such as the Social Research Association Ethical guidelines (2003) and those produced by the British Education Research Association (BERA).

Ethical considerations impact from the beginning of a research project and RESPECT, a new European code for socio-economic research, suggests that ethical issues should be approached as a path to be followed rather than a hurdle to be jumped. Consequently there are essential principles that guide research work. One is mutual respect, which involves understanding the aims and interests of others, and, in turn, not damaging their self-esteem. Secondly there is a concern not to coerce or manipulate others by force or encourage them to cooperate when it is not in their best interests. Thirdly research should attempt to support democratic values and this involves a commitment to equality (House, 1990 cited in Miles and Huberman, 1994).

However, if general principles are mediated by the local and the specific (Simmons and Usher, 2000), then there are sometimes unintended consequences of one's actions. As part of seeking ethical approval for my work from the Institute of Education, it was brought to my attention that I had wanted to invite students to be part of the research process without first consulting their parents. In an attempt to allow students to make an informed choice I had wanted them to make an independent decision at the outset as to whether they wanted to be involved in the research. So in attempting to be ethical in relation to one group I might have been unethical in relation to another. The parents/ carers however, were consulted first about whether they wished their children to be involved in the research. At the point of inviting parents/carers to be part of the study I gave guarantees informing individuals that participants' names would not be linked with any information that they might disclose.

Equally, at the introductory group with students, I sought to explain what confidentiality might mean and that it was an important concept that protected their privacy. I think the young students found this a hard concept to grasp. The particular ethical considerations of this study centred largely on being sensitive to the needs of the young bilingual students. I wanted to ensure that students gave informed consent and that they were at no time uncomfortable or disadvantaged



through missing out on particular lessons or activities they wanted to participate in. Interviewing protocols were developed that included questions that were clear and student-friendly in accessible language. The students were interviewed in familiar surroundings and data remained anonymous by allocating pseudonyms. The final focus group allowed students to contribute their own understandings. Equally, although I had some familiarity with the cultural backgrounds of the students, when specific issues arose (for example when a student mentioned that reading a particular book may be considered 'haram' meaning non Islamic) I consulted my ethnographic informants.

Undertaking research with members of a minority ethnic group requires an ethical sensitivity to the positioning that these groups of individuals are sometimes accorded by the majority culture. Equally, it is important to recognise that racial inequality and disadvantage are an aspect of contemporary society and therefore impact on every aspect of research (Maniam et al, 2004). Although it was difficult for me as a white researcher to redress the power imbalance, I attempted to ensure that I established relationships with all respondents based on sensitivity and respect. This was particularly relevant during the interviews in terms of both verbal and non-verbal communication. Body language, dress (modest and covered) and non-patronising questioning were all important. I also needed to be sensitive to respondents' levels of spoken English ensuring that interpreters were available if needed. However, I did not manage to get this quite right, certainly on two occasions and possibly interesting material was lost and the respondents were certainly disadvantaged.

### **3.2.12: The Research study and research participants**

The research study is set within an inner London borough and the data collection took place between September 2007 and October 2008. I approached several schools with a high number of EAL students within the borough. Eventually three schools (see Table 3.4 for more information) agreed to take part. I discussed the project with the head teachers and sent them an outline of the intended research. A letter was sent out to the parents/carers of the EAL students in year 5. This

invited parents/carers and their children to be part of the research (see Appendix 1 for invitation letter). Parents were asked if they were happy for their children to be part of the research study and if they were willing to be involved themselves. The invitation letter was translated into Somali and Portuguese (see Appendix 2 and 3) as schools indicated that these were the languages that were needed. The students (see Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 for more information about the students) who had agreed to participate were invited to attend introductory groups. The individual student interviews (see Appendices 5, 6 and 7 for interview schedules) that followed were in three parts. The parents/carers (see Table 3.2 for more information about parents/ carers) interviews took place either at their child's school or in the parent's/carer's home.

The teachers (see Table 3.4 for more details of teachers participating) were also approached and interviews (see Appendix 8 for interview schedule) set up at their convenience, and these took place at school. The ethnographic interviews took place during the research as the need for clarification around particular issues arose. The focus group interviews (see Appendix 10) for focus group schedule) took place at the end of the research study in each of the three schools.

In Figure 3.1 below, I have presented an overview of the numbers and types of research exchanges that took place, as well as the number of schools that were involved in the study. Figure 3.2 shows a time line of research activity.

**Figure 3. 1: Research exchanges and schools involved in the study.**

Primary schools involved	3
Introductory groups with students	3
Individual student interviews	18
Individual parent interviews	parents of 11 students
Individual teacher interviews	6
Focus groups with students	3
Additional ethnographic interviews	3

**Figure 3.2: Timeline of informant contacts in the research study.**

<b>September – November 2007</b> Introductory groups with students in Schools A, B and C
<b>November - December 2007</b> Pilot interviews with 3 students 1 parent and 1 teacher
<b>December – July 2008</b> Individual interviews with students in Schools A, B and C Individual interviews with teachers Individual interviews with parents in Schools A, B and C
<b>December to July 2008</b> Individual ethnographic interviews
<b>July – September 2008</b> Focus group interviews with students in Schools A B and C

## **Chapter 4: Presentation and analysis of the data**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I present the findings of the research study. The findings are derived from data from individual interviews with eighteen students, as well as 3 focus groups undertaken with those same students at the end of the study. I also consider the data from individual interviews with the parents of eleven of the students. In addition, I include data derived from individual interviews with the students' six teachers. I have also drawn on the three ethnographic interviews that were undertaken, my field notes and research journal, where appropriate. The findings are discussed in relation to themes that emerged from the analysis of the data. Section 4.1, is concerned with data gathered in relation to the students. This includes individual student interviews (see interview schedule in Appendices 5,6 and 7), focus group interviews (see focus group interview schedule starting in Appendix 10) as well as students' drawings (see Appendix 11 for a reduced version of all of their drawings). Equally, as a first level analysis I have tabulated data in relation to particular themes for all the students and this is presented in the Appendices:

#### 4.1: Table of tabulated student data in the Appendix

Title of Table	Number of Appendix
Learning to read in English	12
Learning to read in English when you speak another language at home	13
Reading and excitement	14
Information reading	15
Religious reading	16
Narrative reading	17
Personal reading	18
Out of school reading.	19

Section 4.2 is concerned with data gathered in relation to the parents in the study. This includes individual parent interviews (see interview schedule in Appendix 9) Equally as a first level analysis I have tabulated data in relation to particular themes for all the parents and this is presented in the Appendices:

#### **4.2: Table of tabulated parent data in the Appendix**

Title of Table	Number of Appendix
Early experiences of learning to read	20
Reading history as a young person	21
Current reading practices	22
Importance of reading	23
Support for reading at home	24

Section 4.3 is concerned with data gathered in relation to the teachers in the study. This includes individual teacher interviews (see interview schedule in Appendix 8) Equally, as a first level analysis I have tabulated data in relation to particular themes for all the teachers and this is presented in the appendices:

#### **4.3: Table of tabulated teacher data in the Appendix**

Title of Table	Number of Appendix
Reading and Motivation	25
Reading and Motivation and the student reading in EAL	26
Perceptions of parents' role in supporting their children with reading at home	27

#### **4.1: The students**

Kelly and Safford (2008) envisage students undertaking a reading journey which starts from their earliest experiences of language and literacy and extends as they develop and grow as readers. These reading journeys are individual but are accomplished with the encouragement and support of more experienced readers in the shape of teachers, parents and other family members as well as friends. Kelly and Safford citing the work of Gregory and Williams (2000), Mins (1990) and Heath (1983) suggest that the reading journey is both personal and culturally specific for bilingual students. In this study I have explored the students' perceptions of the significance and purpose of this reading journey. I discuss these perceptions thematically, in relation to learning to read when students first come to school, the different purposes for which students read, the reading choices students make and the significant others that figure on their reading journeys.

#### 4.1.1 Learning to read in English when you speak another language at home

All the students who were interviewed had at least one parent whose home language was not English and most had two. The students recounted that they, themselves, spoke this home language, although with varying degrees of fluency. A minority of the students felt that they had heard both English and their home language from an early age. Kenner (2004) writes of bilingual children living in 'simultaneous worlds' where they spend time in settings that are multilingual and multicultural and the language of the parent could be termed the mother tongue but these same children could be equally or more fluent in English. Zaki whose home language was Urdu illustrated this well when he said:

*It's is not different for me to learn to read in English because although I've got my mum and my dad and all my aunties that mostly speak in my language, I usually speak English to them and I speak English a lot to my mum and I speak English and my language to my dad and I only speak English to my brother. To my auntie I speak both, to my grandma I speak both as well. I think I am more used to English than my own language.*

However, for a number of the students (12) whom I interviewed this was not the case. These students had been exposed primarily to their home language before they came to school. These students heard their home language at this early stage from their main carer because, as many students explained, their mothers did not speak English. Certainly these students gave the impression that they did not develop their spoken English to any great degree until they came into school. All the students will have been exposed to this incidental learning and possibly in a variety of languages. Kenner's (2000) research in a multilingual nursery class in South London demonstrated that three and four year olds have experience of written and spoken languages at home. During my conversations with the students, we talked about their early experiences of learning to read. Some of the students recalled experiences with reading lessons before they came to school. Sumairaa mentioned:

*My mum taught me how to read... Yeah, we had a book and she reads one word and I repeat after her.*



This has elements of the apprenticeship approach (Rogoff, 1990) where the older more experienced reader scaffolds the learning experience for the younger less experienced reader. Zaakirah explained about her early experiences of learning to read at home. Her mother seemed to be using a combination of alphabetic approaches followed by an introduction to whole texts. Zaakirah explained:

*I can remember I was small and then my mum got me a book and she was saying the alphabet and I was reading after her.... then my mum started getting me books*

A minority of students recall learning to read in languages other than English at home. Nihal remembers learning with his father what he calls 'the ABC' in both Arabic and English at an early age, which he found difficult to recall exactly but his recollections ranged between 1 and 4 years of age. Jarek also recalls learning to read in Polish and English. Jarek recalled:

*My mum used to teach me reading in Polish and also in English.*

For most students their first experiences of learning to read were in school. A minority of students reported that they found it easy or enjoyable. Zaakirah remembers an enjoyable early experience of learning to read:

*Yeah when you're reading they are reading it to you and they can make plays and something like that....that was more fun and it wasn't that hard as well.... There were some alphabet books. In the alphabet books they used to do A for Apple like that and pictures.*

However, a substantial number of students (10) reported that they found learning to read in English 'hard' when they first came to school. Drury (2007) writes of how this adjustment from using the mother tongue at home to using English at school is critical for bilingual students. As Gregory (2008) suggests, bilingual students are not only learning to read in a new language, they are learning a new world to which they belong. These students gave different explanations about what they found difficult in the process of learning to read. Jarek seems to be suggesting that it was hard because the process of learning to read was unfamiliar. He said:

*Well, it was just hard because it was just new and that's why I found it hard. At first I read these little books for little boys then I started reading these bigger books, then I read even bigger kind of books*

Bisher also seems to be suggesting that the difficulty was with the process of learning to read. He said:

*Yeah a little bit hard because when I used to learn to read, I couldn't read I used to say everything wrong...if it said once upon a time I used to spell it out, all the letters.*

Abraar and Sharfaa had both started learning to read in English in Pakistan. Abraar has also learnt to read in Urdu. In their current school they explained that they found the differences in pronunciation of English words in English and Pakistani settings difficult to adjust to. Sharfaa explained:

*No it was in Pakistan (I learnt to read in English), I was six when I came to England. Difficult because the English accent was different from what I used to learn in Pakistan... so I found it difficult.*

For half of the students who reported that they found their first experiences of learning to read difficult, the difficulty seemed to lie with understanding the English language and then understanding the language when it was written down.

Saabiq who had been in his current school since reception said:

*(It was) ...quite difficult because I was little that time I couldn't even understand English.*

Muhammed who had arrived from Somalia 2 years previously explained:

*It was a bit hard because I didn't know the language and I had to read as well.*

Umar articulated the difficulty that some students had with the 'words'. He said:

*Well it was a bit hard because some words, like when I was small some words were a bit hard for me and Well some of them were really really long and I didn't know how to pronounce them or read them*

However, as Umar said:

*....as I grew up it became easier and easier.*

As the students talked to me about their current interests and choices in reading, these early difficulties seemed to have been left behind. All of the students who had been in their current school for over two years (apart from Saabiq and

Izabel) and were not designated by their schools as having special educational needs, were able to read at or above age-appropriate levels according to National Curriculum (NC) categorisation. The exception to this was Saabiq and Izabel who were both underachieving in year 5 (described by their teachers as reading at NC reading level 2c) in spite of being placed at English fluency stage (EFS) 4 (see Appendix 28 for a table of the English fluency stages) by their teachers. Izabel as well as Saabiq with their high level inferential skills and status as experienced readers but weakness in decoding may have an unrecognised specific difficulty placing them on the dyslexic continuum.

Adra, however, had been in her school for over 2 years when I interviewed her. Her early experiences of learning to read had been in Germany. Her class teacher reported that Adra was at an early fluency stage EFS 2 and was struggling with developing age-appropriate levels in reading (NC level 2b) and in a variety of other curriculum areas. Equally, the school Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) reported that she was at School Action Plus of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (COP) (2001).

Aaleyah had been in her current school for about three years. She was at an early fluency stage (EFS 2) and was struggling with developing age-appropriate levels in reading (NC level 1b). She had left Somalia with her family and had then moved to Finland where it seems she may have already had difficulties learning to read. She was also at School Action plus but the school SENCo was unsure of what the barriers to learning might be for Aaleyah. During her interview along with the Somali interpreter Fathia, Aaleyah had difficulties in answering inferential questions in Somali about her current experiences in reading. This prompted further investigation on the part of the SENCo with the help of Fathia and Aaleyah's parents. It transpired that Aaleyah may have speech and language difficulties which have impacted on her language development in both Somali and English.

Aadil and Aamina have both been assessed by their class teachers as being at the early stages of English fluency (EFS 2). Aadil is at NC level 1c in reading and Aamina is at NC level 2b. However both Aadil and Aamina had been in the

school system for less than a year when I interviewed them and therefore their fluency stage and NC level is considered to be appropriate by the school. However, Aadil found answering some of the more inferential questions challenging because his spoken English was at an early stage of fluency. Ideally, Aadil's interview should have been conducted with the Somali translator but there was miscommunication and this did not happen. Equally Aamina, although her parents are from Pakistan, had been in the education system in Germany since the equivalent of nursery age. It would have been more informative to have carried out Aamina's interview in German as opposed to in Urdu, Aamina's home language. However, this only became clear during the interview with the Urdu interpreter Majidah as the school seemed to be unaware of Aamina's preferred language use. In the interview, Aamina identified that her strongest language was German. However, Aamina is already literate in German and when I interviewed her class teacher Ms. T. later in the school year, she reported that Aamina was developing effective language and literacy skills in English. She spoke about Aamina being a motivated student always putting her hand up in class and engaging with reading because of her determination to succeed. The speed with which Aamina has accomplished this demonstrates, amongst other things, the importance of bilingualism in giving bilingual students linguistic advantages (Drury, 2007) Equally this highlights the advantages of biliteracy outlined by Kenner (2004) where students can combine their learning from different sources.

#### **4.1.2 Reading for different purposes**

##### **Reading for pleasure and enjoyment,**

Pleasure and enjoyment seemed an important aspect of reading for students of both genders. For most of the students what was pleasurable and enjoyable about reading books was reading fiction and the anticipation of wanting to know what happens next. As Sumairaa said:

*When something exciting is gonna happen and if I had to, for example, go to sleep and I wanted to know what was gonna happen next.*

Umar explained that what was exciting for him, specifically, was the anticipation of the plot unfolding. He said:

*Well, mostly like it gets interesting when someone's gonna die or someone needs to save someone else or something like that.*

Other students found the content of texts enjoyable. Sidrah defied the gender stereotype and said what she found enjoyable was reading 'football books'. Equally Saabiq found reading about 'football' and gaining 'knowledge' pleasurable. Aamina was exceptional in what she found enjoyable, which she communicated via Majidah the interpreter, perhaps reflecting her desire to improve her linguistic skills in English, was that she wanted to 'get better at English'. Almost half the students reported that they read comics outside school. Unlike magazines which seemed to be read for information, comics seemed to be read for enjoyment. Umar explained that he read the 'Beano' comics He said:

*Coz like it doesn't really have much to read, all you have to read is the speech bubble, what they're saying. Well it's just like easy coz it's just really short even though it might be long and have lots of pages.... it's just short coz they just say short things*

Feelings of pleasure in reading were also associated with reading in comfortable places. Azhar drew a picture (see Appendix 11) about what he thought was enjoyable and important about reading he associated the feeling of enjoyment with lying comfortably on the sofa. The environment seemed important to a number of other students. Sharfaa mentioned the enjoyment of reading in bed and Umar mentioned how he needed quiet and lack of distraction in order to really enjoy reading.

Reading for pleasure has been shown to benefit young people in numerous ways (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). Equally, reading for pleasure and enjoyment increases children's vocabulary and general knowledge and improves reading levels (Cox and Guthrie, 2001). However, Nihal expressed the delight that students can experience in reading when he said about his drawing (see Appendix?):-

*That's me that drawing, that's what makes me happy....like if it's got nice phrases and makes me want to read it more, if it's exciting and makes me happy and makes me smile*

## Reading for information

What was perceived by the majority of the students as important in terms of reading for information was finding information that could help them in school with curriculum subjects that they were interested in. Zaakirah mentioned a text from which she had learnt something, which she found in the school library. She wanted to use this text in order to support her with her homework project. She said it was about:

*Arts and crafts during the time of the Greek.*

She said that what she had learnt was that:

*Married women were not allowed to go to the Olympic Games because the men used to be naked.*

Several students mentioned how they had added to their knowledge about school curriculum areas such as science, history and religious studies. Sumairaa spoke about what she had learnt in science:

*Something about when an experiment is completed. If their prediction was right or wrong.*

Zaakirah's comment was striking both in terms of what she had learnt from the identified non-fiction text, as well as the importance she attributed to what she had read:

*That Muslims respect Christians as they respect themselves and that a Christian prays in a church similar to when we pray in a mosque as Islam and Christianity have things in common. Because Muslims have to learn religious information before they die.*

Abraar linked his interest in information texts to acquiring knowledge which was useful. Perhaps this reflected that he was at a slightly earlier stage of fluency (EFS 3) than many of his peers. He said he had learnt:

*How to pronounce the words properly.*

Nihal, Saabiq and Aadil were more unusual in that their interest in reading for information was dictated by their personal interest in football and they had found out about these texts at home. Nihal said he had chosen this particular information text:

*Because I am a Man U football supporter.*

Azhar was the exception in that what was significant for him in terms of reading information texts was the importance of real life situations where reading was needed. He mentioned:

*If you're going to like Manchester or Birmingham there's like signs on the motorway and dad has to concentrate on the road so you have to tell your dad.....and then reading information on packages things when you are... If you want to like buy things and you want to see how much sugar there is in it.*

Both Izabel and Sharfaa thought that magazines had useful information in them.

Izabel particularly mentioned a magazine that gave:

*Advice for young girls growing up...about spots and stuff ...and about how to be attractive.*

Sharfaa mentioned that magazines could:

*Tell you how to get on with people if you fall out with your friends; it can tell you what to do. You can write in and get help.*

Saabiq was representative of some of the boys, who read magazines associated with football. These were either about developing skills in football or magazines associated with particular teams that they supported.

### **Religious reading**

Sixteen out of the eighteen students whom I interviewed were Muslim and as we talked about reading, some students (11) talked about the religious reading that they engaged in. This consisted of reading the Qur'an, religious books in English and other religious texts such as duas (prayers). Sidrah explained:

*Yeah, there's books but not in Arabic they are in English, so there's some books you read about the prophets and how they were created and stories about them. There's some stuff and they are called duas (prayers) that's means when you want to make something happen so you read, like if someone's in the hospital you make duas that they get out and they will be safe and stuff.*

Reading the Quran was an important part of the Muslim students' culturally specific reading journey. Abraar said:

*I am a Muslim man. I do read the Qur'an in Mosque. I go five times a week for two hours but I don't understand it (the Qur'an).*

A Department for Education (DfE) (2006) report highlighted the fact that religion plays an important part in the lives of many young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost all Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils interviewed said they were Muslim (99%) and the vast majority (over 85%) of pupils within these two groups said religion was very important to them. Although some students mentioned reading the Qur'an in the context of out of school reading in the way that Saabiq spoke about it, led me to believe that reading the Qur'an had a significance and impact on his life that was substantially different from the other kinds of out of school reading that he engaged in. Saabiq expressed this very well when he said:

*It's different because it not like something to do with some fun or something. It's really important to me, but if you read it - it makes me feel happy inside and makes my day at school go well.*

Saabiq explained that he read the Qur'an at home six times a week. He explained that he used to read the Qur'an at the mosque twice a week. He said it was not important to understand what he had read. Rosowsky (2001) undertook a study of bilingual secondary aged students and their Qur'anic reading. Rosowsky argues that there is a significance to reading the Qur'an as recitation without understanding the words. He suggests that as a social and cultural practice it links the reader with their religious community at both a local and global level.

#### **4.1.3 Significant others in reading**

Most students talked about engaging with other people in relation to their reading. Gambrell (1996) maintains that talking with others about books is an important factor in developing engaged and motivated readers. Several students mentioned that friends play an important role in their reading lives. They explained how they talked about reading to their friends. Abraar said, in connection with what was important to him about reading:-



*These are my two friends who I talk to about reading...they like reading. (I talk about books) - but only for about 10 minutes.*

Equally friends helped with making choices about books. Sidrah said:

*My friend's reading it right now and I just read the back of the thingy and it sounded like a very nice book.*

She explained how she talked to friends in 'chill out time' in class about books.

She said:

*Yeah they say I'll finish it then I'll give you it but they tell me about it and I say oh can I read it after you.*

Certainly the use of literature circles which was mentioned in School C. aims to promote social networking (Ellis and Pearson, 2005) around books which is considered to be less prevalent amongst boys. Certainly in School C. more boys than girls agreed to participate in the project and boys seemed to talk to friends about books as much as girls. However friends were mentioned in all the schools by both boys and girls as being important in terms of generating interest in and discussion around books.

Family members such as parents, siblings or cousins helped to make reading exciting. Siblings, particularly big sisters, often played a major role in encouraging reading. Brookover and Gottlieb (1964) suggest that interactions with significant others can influence how students perceive themselves in relation to reading. Azhar described his sister as encouraging him to read by acting as a role model, suggesting books he should read and generally supporting his view of himself as a reader. Azhar when imagining what was important to him about reading said:

*I am in the TV room in the evening and normally I would be watching TV but the TV is off I can lie down on the sofa I am reading a funny book ....My sister has come into the room and she has bought a book to give to me its Harry Potter maybe.*

Kenner (2004) writes of families operating as 'literacy eco-systems', where the skills of different family members are used to complement each other to promote their children's learning. Azhar illustrated this point very well when he said:

*I read on my own and if I get stuck I ask my sister or if my sister's busy I tell my mum, if my mum's busy I tell my dad, if my dad's busy I tell my other sister, if my other sister is busy I have to tell, I have to wait for someone to finish.*

#### **4.1.4 Reading choices**

Most of the students had definite personal tastes in relation to book choice and they spoke enthusiastically about the plot of their chosen story. They were able to recall in considerable detail in some instances what had happened in the story. The majority of students who had a favourite story and favourite authors had found out about them in school. There was a consensus in terms of favourite stories and favourite authors, particularly in Schools A. and C. Zaakirah in School A. had been introduced to her favourite story 'Hacker' by Malorie Blackman when the teacher had read it to the class. Zaakirah said:

*(It's a) Gripping story that you find out what happens in it.*

Equally her favourite authors were 'Anthony Horowitz and Malorie Blackman.' When Zaakirah was asked which person makes books exciting for her and she said:

*My teacher by reading good books to the class.*

The borough Learning Resources Service produced a pamphlet of suggested texts for use in schools. In the fluent readers section (texts are roughly levelled at NC level 4) several of the favourite stories choices mentioned by students (see Appendix 32 for a list of story titles that are mentioned by students and are also in the guided reading pamphlet) were noted certainly in school A and C. These recommended texts are also available in the borough Learning Resources library for schools to borrow and therefore are likely to be available in schools. Ms. X. in School A seemed to be using these texts in class whether for class read aloud sessions or as general class reading for students.

Equally Izabel, in School C., mentioned 'The other Side of Truth' by Beverley Naidoo as one of her favourite story choices. She explained that she had read this book as part of the Power of Reading Project (O' Sullivan and McGonigle,

2009) in school. Several students in school C talked about the Power of Reading Project in relation to their choice of favourite texts and authors. The project aims to enhance teachers' and children's pleasure in reading and also to extend teachers' knowledge of literature and how to use it in the classroom. Additionally, Zaki and Jarek, also in School C., both mentioned choosing texts because they had been introduced to them as part of literature circle work in school. 'Literature Circles' (Ellis and Pearson, 2005) is a reading intervention often used slightly differently in different schools. Ellis and Pearson in their evaluation of literature circle work in schools in Scotland describe it as consisting of small groups of children who meet on a regular basis in class to discuss a book that they are all reading. Often, the groups are mixed ability and formed on the basis of book choice rather than reading attainment. The aim is to promote reading for enjoyment as an active and social activity. The teacher encourages expressive talk and these contribute to students developing a richer understanding both of the text they are reading and of themselves as readers.

Adra, in School B, unusually, consistently mentioned texts not associated with school. She seemed to identify very little with school and chose a text associated with home that her sister had introduced to her. This was 'The Wedding Peach' a manga (Japanese style visual text) text available in German as well as English. It was unclear whether she had read it in English or German. This choice of text reflects Adra disengagement from school which was also evident in what she chose to talk about in her interview.

Within sociocultural reading theory, students are seen as active agents in their own learning, learning activities are understood in context and learning takes place through the active participation of both students and adults (Wells and Claxton, 2002). Certainly in Schools A. and C. (possibly also School B but the students did not mention particular texts in the same way) in terms of the reading choices made by individual students it is possible to see the active participation and involvement of the students. Equally, it is possible to see the active involvement of teachers in providing a literacy rich environment as recommended in the Rose Report (2006). Teachers have done this through the provision of thought provoking, amusing and engaging texts in the classroom. This may have

been achieved by using the Learning Resources library in the borough and the list of recommended texts in order to extend the range of texts available in school. Some teachers seem to have generated interest through reading these stories aloud. Equally, through projects such as the Power of Reading and initiatives such as literature circles there have been opportunities for students to engage in extended talk about texts. These opportunities for active participation supports students on their reading journeys into becoming 'experienced' readers (see Appendix 29 for the CLPE reading scale). The majority of the students who were interviewed can be described in relation to fiction as experienced readers who are self-motivated, confident readers who are capable of tackling some demanding texts and who can also cope well with the reading of the curriculum. They also read thoughtfully and appreciate shades of meaning. This experienced reader level on the CLPE scale is also equivalent to NC level 4 where the teachers have placed the majority of the students.

## 4.2: The parents

Each parent that I interviewed had their own story to tell based on their personal reading history. While two of the parents had learnt to read as small children within the English school system, all the parents, apart from one, were born outside of England. Ms. A., however, was born in England and was English and monolingual. Although the majority of parents belonged to a linguistic minority group their stories were individual, and common language groups did not necessarily have similar stories. Some parents spoke about their educational experiences and language histories during their interviews. Ms. H. explained about the languages that she learnt in primary and secondary school in Morocco. She said:

*I remember my mum used to she take me to nursery. Nursery at 5 years. Then we start school normally at 7 nursery 2 years. We start with Arabic for 3 years. In year 3 we start French. Then when we get into second grade then we start English... because we had the choice of English or Spanish. But I choose English at that time I remember and then straight after I start learning English I straight away get married and then I came here.*

Ms. AA. had a different story to tell. Fathia the Somali interpreter translated what Ms. AA. said about her early educational experiences and experience of learning English in Somalia. Fathia said:

*When she (Ms AA) started the school system the first 2 years were in English language then they start nationalisation after 1972 it was very hard the move into using Somali...they changed everything the curriculum it was very difficult. She feels stuck with learning English because they changed it all.*

Consequently the linguistic skills of the parents in spoken English were different depending upon their earlier experiences. The majority of the parents that agreed to be interviewed spoke English fluently. Some parents such as Ms. AA. and Mr. and Ms. AH. had lived in England for less than a year and their interview was undertaken with interpreters. Ms. AL., Ms AB. and Ms. AS. had lived in England for longer periods of time but lacked the linguistic skills in English to contribute to the interview dialogue freely. Ms. AL.'s interview was undertaken with a Somali interpreter. Ms. AB. and Ms. AS. would have benefited from having interpreters present but possibly because of a lack of clear communication between the school (and possibly myself) and the parent this did not take place. However, all

the parents were literate in their home languages and most were literate in another language or languages including English.

#### 4.2.1: Significance of reading

What was important about reading was different for different parents and reflected the social and cultural diversity of their lives. However, there was also a consensus about some areas. For all of the parents that were interviewed reading was considered to be a significant activity but for different reasons. Ms. AH. explained:

*Reading is important because education is important and reading is the first thing that children learn.*

Ms. P. however, looked more towards achievement in education. She said:

*It's important (reading) for school because you have to read everything If you want to have good grade, you know.*

Mr. G. felt that his own father's inability to support him with his reading resulted in him being unable to develop his reading in school and, consequently, his education was negatively affected.

For other parents what was significant about reading was gaining knowledge. Ms. S. explained that what was important in reading was gaining knowledge of the world and current events. Ms. H. also talked about gaining knowledge from reading in terms of general knowledge but also curriculum knowledge. She said:

*Reading is important oh yes...it's good for them knowledge...spelling - when you read about something you know about it. One day just coincidence you talk about something and you think I read about that. Reading is the best thing they can do.*

Additionally some parents mentioned the cognitive value of reading. Two parents mentioned the impact that they felt reading had on the brain. Fathia the Somali interpreter said on behalf of Ms. AA:-

*The brain opens up (during reading)... (It is) so difficult. The children were born during the war in Somalia .... They had no education. Nothing.*

Ms. AA. became visibly distressed as she talked about this subject. Perhaps because she was reflecting on the impact that reading has on developing thinking and she was concerned that her children had not had this educational

opportunity. Equally Mr. A. felt strongly that discussion and questioning in relation to reading helps develop thinking. He said:

*The brain develops more.*

Only one parent mentioned the importance of reading in relation to becoming economically successful. Mr. G. intimated that reading was important because competition for desirable work positions was fierce, suggesting that as a member of a linguistic minority one had to be particularly well qualified. Mr. and Ms. AH. succinctly brought several elements together showing the considerable significance that they attribute to the reading process. Majidah offered this as Mr. and Ms. AH.'s joint answer:

*They feel that reading should be done both for pleasure and for learning as it enlightens people, gives more knowledge, and expands the thought process.*

#### **4.2.2: Reading for different purposes**

When parents spoke about what they considered significant or important in relation to reading it was possible for them to talk more generally. However, when parents spoke about their own reading histories, their enthusiasms and current choices, it was possible to develop a more individual personalised picture of the purposes for which individuals read. The parents as a group spoke about reading for a range of purposes. These included reading for information, reading in order to achieve educational qualifications, reading for religious reasons and reading for enjoyment and entertainment.

The majority of parents spoke about reading magazines and newspapers for both enjoyment and information.

Ms. AR.

*Yes I read magazines, Woman's Own, Best, everyday I get a Metro*

Ms AR. also had very definite tastes in novels.

*I like true stories, 'David Pelzer's. Yes it was hard hitting but it wakes you up... Even there was one about a royal, the 'Princess Diary'. I like something like the true stories.*

However, there was a small group of parents (Ms. AB., Ms. AL. and Ms. AA.) who mentioned that currently they only read magazines and in some cases newspapers. These parents all considered reading to be important in an abstract sense. Ms. AL. and Ms. AA. had also mentioned how much they enjoyed reading poetry in school in Somalia when they were younger. However, in terms of the purpose that reading currently had in the lives of Ms. AB., Ms. AL. and Ms. AA it centred on shorter texts that could be read quickly and were entertaining. These materials were related to current events and as Ms. AB. said:

*Fashion and gossip and things ladies are interested in.*

Other parents mentioned that they read different kinds of texts for enjoyment. Ms. AS. was only able to say a limited amount in her interview because she lacked linguistic skills in spoken English but when the talk centered on her own reading in her home language of Urdu, she became very enthusiastic. She talked about her interest in Urdu literature which included a poet laureate of her native Pakistan, a Lenin peace prize winner, a contemporary woman's writer and a feminist poet/performance artist. Both Ms. H. and Ms. Z talked at length about the considerable pleasure they derived from reading and the texts that they read. Ms H. read texts in Arabic and Ms. Z. read texts in English. Ms. Z. explained:

*Yeah, Yeah I get novels and you know I've read quite a few of those Virginia Andrews, Catherine Clarkson ones, who else, I've read a few of the authors. Another one Hoffman, something Hoffman I've read hers as well .... Yeah, yeah and I get the magazines Hello and the other magazines, Break and you know all those. (I read) before going to sleep... it's like a sleeping medicine ... in the train and then at work, lunchtime. I get books from the library. Well it gives me some kind of pleasure as well because it's like time for myself because I just get into my book and I want to read it.*

However, Ms. Z. explained how she stressed the importance of reading for information to her children but actually reading for pleasure was the most significant aspect for her personally.

*At the early age when I tell them (to read for) information... but for myself I just read it for pleasure*

Ms H. explained why reading for enjoyment was an important element of reading and why enjoyment leads to knowledge. She went on to explain:



*I would think okay enjoyment comes first knowledge second... if you don't enjoy something you don't learn nothing obviously I have to enjoy that book to know what's inside: yes you have to understand the subject you are reading about so you can know what is going on.*

Ms. P. read for a wide range of different purposes. Ms. P. read for information. She explained:

*Yes. There are lots of free Polish newspapers here so... You know like 5 at least.*

However she also reads novels as part of an English Literature course that she is attending:-

*Yeah well I read the books they introduce me to at my classes and I read 'Animal Farm' and some by 'Oscar Wilde'. Well they are quite difficult for me but not that difficult. I'm now on 'Lord of the Flies', which is quite difficult but I read it in Polish.*

She also engaged in personal reading in her first language. She explained:

*When I go to Poland I always bring about two books to read. I'm quite often in Poland so; I sometimes borrow from my friends. I love 'Lord of the Rings' but that is quite difficult so I read it in Polish.*

Sometimes the purposes for which parents read changed depending on the social circumstances those individuals found themselves in. Ms. H. had enjoyed reading widely as a young person for pleasure and enjoyment. She explained:

*I read books in Arabic ...sometimes poems I love poems... I used to read big books. I couldn't wait to finish it I couldn't wait to... I don't want to do nothing except reading and finish the story... maybe (because) the story take me you know the story I used to read (implying the story took her to an imaginary world). Now because of the pressures of looking after a family and young children she prioritises religious reading. She said:*

*I love to read .... so much so much. It's the time... it's not helping( too many demands) with the kids and other things.... yes now I don't have much time so I prefer to read (the Qur'an)(laughs) you know I don't want to (laughs)(not read the Qur'an even if time is limited).*

Mr. G. and Mr. A did not mention what they had read as young people or their current reading activities. They talked about early disappointing experiences in relation to learning to read and developing as readers. Both Mr. G. and Mr. A. had felt that their own parents had been unable to support them with their reading because of their own levels of literacy, in ways that they would have wanted. Both seemed to be suggesting that as their parents had been unable to

develop their reading in school authorised ways they had not been able to realise their educational and personal potential. Both men seemed, in terms of appearances, to be successful in their lives. However, this early experience seems to have been extremely important in terms of influencing both these men's view of what the purpose of reading is. They both felt that the purpose of reading is to develop thinking in order to realise, not just educative potential, but also personal potential when children are young.

#### 4.2.3: Parents' support for reading at home

Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) argue that there are considerable benefits in parents creating a supportive reading environment at home. All the parents that were interviewed recognised the importance of providing support for their children at home with reading. However, they did this in different ways and brought to the task their own individual personal, social and cultural resources. Gregory and Williams (2000) suggest that linguistic minority parents provide different opportunities for literacy learning from those officially recognised by the school. They suggest that in linguistic minority households, siblings may frequently offer support for reading when parents lack linguistic skills in speaking English. Ms. AB. had help from her older daughters in terms of supporting reading. She mentioned that she talked about the stories that Sumairaa was reading, although she could not read in English herself, and that Sumairaa's two older sisters helped with reading as well. Ms. AB. explained that her two daughters help each other and that they also help her son who is in the reception class. She said about Sumairaa:

*She is good with reading understand everything English from year 1 ...always loved reading ...understand (as well). I buy book (she) love read(ing) sometimes she asleep and (still) reading. I say stop now.*

Ms. AB. explained that she always encouraged her children to read because she felt her own spoken English was not 'very good'.

*I always push reading. I'm not very (good) in English*

Cummins (2000) suggests that linguistic minority parents/carers are often regarded by the school as unable to support their children, when they lack linguistic skills in spoken English. Ms. AS. was described by her child's class teacher Ms. W. as 'not speaking much English' (see Appendix 31 for research journal extract). However what emerged during her interview was that Ms. AS. had high expectations for her daughter, and also how enthusiastic she was about reading in her home language Urdu. Her reported interest in literature included a traditional poet laureate of her native Pakistan, a Lenin peace prize winner, a contemporary woman's writer and a feminist poet/performance artist. Sharfaa, her daughter, was an able motivated reader. Sharfaa explained that it was her mother who made reading exciting for her. She said about her mother:

*Cos she's read books and then she says, "Read this one; it might help you to think ..."*

Baker and Scher (2002) argue that parents who believe that reading is pleasurable can convey that perspective to their children through what they say and the positive atmosphere they engender. Ms. AS. had an enthusiasm and interest in literature and this is what she communicated to Sharfaa. Both Ms. AS. and Ms. AB. in spite of their lack of linguistic skills in spoken English provided what the NLT (2001) study considered to be effective parental/carer involvement. These included providing a language and literacy-rich environment in the home (providing books), opportunities for talking about books and high expectations for children's educational development.

However, many of the parents that were interviewed reported that they had supported their children in school authorised ways. Brooker (2002) writes of how certain 'middle class' practices have been associated with success in reading (not least because they create a reciprocity between home and school in terms of the value and importance of reading) and these include bedtime stories, books in the home and a parent who models literacy habits by their own reading. Ms. H spoke about how the bedtime story was a regular part of their life at home. She said:

*When they were little I used to read them a lot. I used to read them so much.. and dad as well... he used to read them stories every night in English.*

Ms Z. explained how she was inducted into these 'school authorised' ways of reading the bed time story and sharing books with her children:

*When they started their playgroup, private nursery. They used to say like oh it's a really nice thing when you put the child to bed and read them a story and . . . . . I don't know I was, from when they were born, when they were tiny I used to buy those little books*

Ms. AR. talked about the importance of being a role model by showing that reading was a worthwhile activity:

*Yeah, because if I didn't touch a book then they would say, 'Oh she doesn't read, so why does she tell us to read?' (They would think) I don't want to read, it's just a waste of time.'*

Ms Z. also encouraged her sons, by having books at home and allowing them to buy books and choose their own reading material. Ms. P. also spoke about how she helped her son to make his own book choices and how she discussed some of the books. She said:

*I helped him when he was starting but now he makes his own choices and he reads a lot. I didn't know much about the theories. I know he read Narnia and Harry Potter and some of the books I go through but some I don't.*

Mr. G. felt strongly that parental/carer support at home for reading should be offered in ways that were not only authorised by the school but also reflected school practice. He felt parents/carers needed to make determined efforts to find out how reading was taught in school. He felt it was particularly important that he was personally involved with supporting his son's reading because he explained that his wife did not speak English and therefore she could not be as involved as he would have liked. He talked about how he understood the school system particularly well because he worked in community education. He said:

*You have to know what is important (in terms of reading).*

The Clark, Torsi and Strong (2005) study into students' self-perceptions as readers concluded that students need to see out-of-school reading (such as comics and magazines) validated in order to encourage a broader view of what constitutes reading and in order to engage reluctant readers. Ms. AR. talked in depth about how she encouraged her daughter by allowing her to have a magazine to read. She explained:

*And if I'm out shopping and she's interested and wants to buy a girlie magazine... Yes, and I say to her yes, ok, you can buy it, and she'll sit and read through it.*

She also talked about the importance of spending time, and how she encouraged others in her family to do the same thing. She talked about the importance of the library. She added:

*You've got to sit with them and encourage them (to read). That's the way I think of it, encouraging them. You've got to encourage them. That's why I encourage anybody in our family, you know, to spend time with the children, take them to the library.*

Several parents spoke about time. Ms. AS. insisted that the most important thing that she could do for her children in terms of supporting their reading, was to spend time with them. Time also featured in terms of structured time organised at home to carry out reading activities. Mr. A. talked (Ms. A. listened at this point) about the routines of school reading and Qur'anic reading that were in place at home as well as support for leisure reading of football books.

A minority of parents stated that they found it difficult to help their children. Ms. AL. and Ms. AA. explained that they found it hard to help with reading at home because they didn't understand the school system and because they lacked the linguistic skills in English. Ms. AA. was the most explicit talking through the Somali interpreter Fathia about how she wanted to help her son but found it hard. Ms. AA. explained that she currently feels 'very blocked' in speaking in English because of her early educational experiences in Somalia. When we spoke about helping her son she reiterated that he had not been to school before coming to his current school in year 5 and that she had taught him at home.

Several other parents also explained how their support for their children was fuelled by their own experiences. Mr. G. explained how he felt that his father did not understand the school system and was consequently unable to offer him support with reading in ways that were useful to him in school. Mr. A. had similar experiences in that he felt his parents had been unable to develop his thinking as much as he would have liked. This story is explored in the 'Nihal' case study at the end of this chapter. Equally, Ms Z. felt that a negative experience with her secondary school in England (along with her own passion and enthusiasm for

reading) had encouraged her desire to provide particular kinds of reading experiences for her own children. This story is also explored in more detail in the 'Zaki' case study at the end of the chapter.

### 4.3: The Teachers

In all, six teachers were interviewed. Five of them were women and the one man, Mr. V., was a newly qualified teacher and in his first year of teaching. Five of the teachers were English and monolingual. Ms. X had been born in England but her parents came originally From Pakistan. She went to primary school for a short time in Pakistan before returning to England. She is literate in English, Urdu and Arabic. The teachers who were interviewed used the term English as an additional language (EAL) when referring to the students and so this term has been used in some instances in this section instead of bilingual.

#### 4.3.1: Reading and Motivation

All the teachers, when talking about motivation in relation to reading in EAL, and bilingual learners considered unequivocally that motivation is a key issue in relation to reading. They all used very powerful language using terms such as '*massively important*', '*crucial*', '*absolutely*' to describe the importance they attached to this aspect of motivation.

Ms. R. said:

*Oh, it's massively important really, because if they're not interested and motivated then what's gonna get them to pick up the book (this word was unclear).*

Motivation is perceived by this group of teachers to be a key element in contributing to the development of readers. Motivated readers read autonomously according to several of the teachers. Motivated readers can be found reading in the classroom, even when they are not required to. They read at home of their own accord. Motivated readers read fast, almost greedily, and they go out to other places such as the library either within or outside school to find more books to feed their appetites. They read prolifically. Furthermore, the enjoyment of reading on the part of students is perceived as encouraging students to develop a range of positive reading behaviours. Active engagement with the reading process is perceived as an important aspect of motivation. Some

teachers felt that readers need to enjoy reading in order to develop the necessary attributes of the successful reader. Indeed, the literature supports this view and Cox and Guthrie (2001) suggest that reading for pleasure benefits students in numerous ways, including increasing their vocabulary and general knowledge and it also has a major impact on their reading achievement.

Ms. Y. said of several of her students:

*So for them, they are always heads in a book, you know, they read a lot.*

Motivated reading, as seen through the eyes of these teachers, is a personal experience that involves almost being taken over by the book. It singles out that autonomous desire on the part of the student to be at one with the narrative of the book. Motivated readers will seek out opportunities, for example, when they have finished other work, to read a book. Students, who are motivated readers, actively seek out opportunities to read and in this way develop fluency, confidence and additionally expand their vocabulary. This confirms the high status afforded to experiences with narrative text. The Cox report (1988) argued that children need to be familiar with written stories in order to foster their linguistic and cognitive development. The teachers had a particular view of what constitutes the motivated reader. Independent, autonomous immersion ('head in a book') in the reading process is a measure of the motivated reader for many teachers.

For one of the teachers, Ms. Y., motivation in reading is perceived as being potentially attainable for the English-proficient bilingual reader reading in EAL as for the monolingual reader. Ms. Y., when asked about motivation, gave the example of Zaki, Umar and Jarek, three students in her class whom she described as 'able' readers. Ms. Y considered these three students to be similar to their monolingual peers in terms of motivation:

*You've obviously got Zaki, Umar and you're gonna meet Jarek who are three very able boys anyway. So for them they are always heads in a book; you know, they read a lot. And from all accounts that's something they do on their own ... it's not something that's been enforced by anyone; they just enjoy reading - which is similar to other able children in the class who are not EAL.*



Two other students in her class Ms. Y. described differently. She suggested that Aadil and Aaleyah were less motivated than their monolingual peers because their parents' spoken English was less proficient and, consequently, the parents did not facilitate additional reading outside of school. She said:

*I suppose the difference I find particularly with Aadil and Aaleyah is because their parents are not so confident in English, they are not so confident about going to the library and borrowing books or asking me to borrow books.*

So the model here is effectively of the monolingual reader who not only speaks English fluently, but is also supported in school-authorised ways by their parents. However, Ms. Y. perceived that the experience of living in more than one language is inherently a difficulty and will impact on learning. She imagined making the transition from speaking one language at home to speaking another at school to be potentially confusing. She also imagined having to access the curriculum in an additional language as potentially problematic. This is based on her own difficulties in learning a modern foreign language when at school. Equally, she thought cultural differences between home and school would impact on a bilingual student's facility to access the reading curriculum. Here she recognised that, as Bourdieu (1997) suggests, schools utilise particular language patterns and organise the curriculum in particular ways, therefore there is likely to be a greater congruence between particular groups of parents and teachers in schools.

*Our curriculum (is) geared more towards perhaps the white middle class English child*

Ms. T considered that bilingualism makes life harder for students and that living in more than one language inevitably causes problems. Ms. T. said:

*Also, we have had a group of children who are Urdu speaking who come from Pakistan and then have gone to Germany and then have to get used to speaking German: a different alphabet, similar sounds, and then they have a problem (when they come to England) with understanding In English.*

However, Aamina in her class she regarded differently. Even though Aamina's home language was Urdu and she had also been in school in Germany since nursery and arrived, as Ms T. said, 'with no English', Ms. T. said:

*Then her (Aamina) character is so switched on and she takes in a lot more...she is more with it. Aamina has come on leaps and bounds. She just absorbs everything like a sponge .....asks what things mean.*

Ms. T. compared Aamina to Azhar also in her class.

*(Azhar is) not as motivated to get going. His parents, if I'm honest they are not ... they are nice but not as keen as Aamina's family are keen for her to do well. There are doctors in the family you know obviously they place an importance on education. Whereas Azhar, I send lots of sheets (implication being they are not completed) home and mum and dad just don't place any importance on helping him.*

Here there is an assumption that because Azhar has not returned a particular homework task that his parents do not value education. Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital is relevant here. For Bourdieu, cultural experiences accrued in the home facilitate transition into school and future academic achievement and, in the process, cultural resources are transformed into cultural capital. Ms. T. places more value on the cultural capital that Aamina brings from her home than the cultural resources that Azhar brings from his. In this way, only certain homes are regarded as capable of providing appropriate reading support for their children. Bourdieu (1986) argues that schools reproduce the dominant power relations within society. Consequently, there is likely to be a greater congruence between particular groups of parents and teachers in schools. In this instance, a more middle class set of parents are attributed with holding views that are more supportive of school and of offering more support for reading at home

Ms. R., Ms T. and Ms. W. all thought that being bilingual necessarily presented students with particular problems in relation to their reading and came with inherent problems. Ms W. thought that all the bilingual students in her class might always be at risk of not being able to engage fully with a text and therefore necessarily cannot be completely motivated because of a lack of complete mastery of English vocabulary. Ms. T. said of the children in her class:

*It takes more (for the bilingual student) to be motivated because it must be harder. The reading is more difficult for them and often the sounds and everything is more difficult; you only have to look at the reading groups and the top group is all children who don't have English as a second language and the*

*bottom groups, the vast majority are English as a second language. Even children who have been here a long time seem to find it hard.*

Parke et al. (2002) argue that sometimes the first languages of bilingual students are perceived as difficult for the school to accommodate and children are described as arriving in school with 'no language'. Consequently, bilingual students may increasingly be subject to discriminating discourses where they are constructed as 'other'. Woodward (1997) argues that the concept of 'otherness' can be used to understand the processes by which societies and groups exclude 'others' who are perceived as not 'fitting in' to society. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning but are linked to power relations within society (Foucault, 1980)

Ms. X. and Mr. V. did not speak about individuals in their classes. Also Mr. V. and Ms. X. did not really comment on how motivation might develop differently in students who were reading in EAL. They both spoke about how they inspired their students to be motivated readers, describing their role as motivators. Four out of the five students who had agreed to be interviewed in school A were in Ms. X.'s class. She talked with great enthusiasm about the work she had done with her class:

*I develop positive attitudes towards books by actively promoting authors and encouraging children through discussion. Some of them are interested and they love books. They get motivated when I read a book and say, 'Can I take it home?'*

Mr. V. who was a newly qualified teacher (NQT) and the only man amongst the teachers interviewed, talked a lot about his own personal reading interests and choices. He spoke about the heated discussions he had with other NQTs when they had their NQT INSET sessions about reading, how he had what he described as stereotypical male reading habits. He explained that he sympathised with boys in the current reading classroom because he, too, preferred reading non-fiction and rarely read novels. He read to find out about things, he concluded. He talked about how he encouraged his students to be motivated, as Ms. X. had done. He described how he encouraged students to be involved and motivated by reading by explaining to them 'what they can get out of it'.

He said:

*I make children understand that reading is an important research tool. I say it can help you to learn.*

It seems as if Mr. V and Ms. X. did not recognise that the bilingual students in their classes were in any way different from the monolingual students. Not seeing bilingual children as different and not recognising the diversity of the classroom reflects approaches that are based on the principles of assimilation rather than inclusion (Mullard, 1982, cited in Gillborn, 1995). For the teachers in the study, motivation is considered a key ingredient in developing successful agentic readers. However, bilingual readers with early stages of English language proficiency are perceived as being unable to access texts at a sufficiently sophisticated level and therefore by definition cannot be motivated readers. However this is perceived through the lens of what Bourne (2007) has called a monolingualising ideology. Within this model, bilingual students, when compared to the monolingual students are perceived as deficient and their school experiences are often mediated by powerful discourses within society that privilege monolingualism and marginalise bilingualism (Datta, 2000).

In relation to pedagogy, equality of opportunity may therefore be interpreted by the same provision for all children, regardless of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In practice, this means that bilingual students may be viewed in terms of linguistic, cognitive or cultural deficit because they do not conform to the normative descriptions applied by the teachers who work with them. Crozier and Davies (2008) and Cummins (2000) suggest that within a predominantly monolingual education system, while there is government rhetoric of inclusion, the reality of practices in schools suggests a surface treatment of cultural diversity and that within schools in relation to pedagogy a 'one size fits all attitude' predominates.

#### 4.3.2: Teachers' perceptions of parents' role in supporting their children with reading at home

All the teachers interviewed thought that linguistic minority parents had an important part to play in helping their children become motivated readers in school. Equally, parents/carers are seen as having a key role in supporting students' motivation and involvement with reading. This is seen in terms of practical support for reading at home. Some teachers felt that because of cultural difference between home and school, parents would be unable to support their children at home. Ms. X. spoke about how some of the Muslim parents might not consider reading to be important and therefore would not actively support their children with reading. She said that this was because they were very 'religious': *Sometimes parents may be very religious and don't think it's [reading] important.*

By this she meant that possibly they would prioritise a religious way of life, where the reading of some fiction may not be considered desirable. She felt that parents may not understand the literary traditions represented in the canon of literature that the school propounds because they have been educated elsewhere and make no attempt to understand the school expectations. Ms. X. said:

*They (the parents) do not always see the place for it (reading). Often parents haven't been educated here; they don't understand what is important; they are not aware of the system.*

This supports Bourdieu's (1997) view that, although all groups within society possess cultural capital, schools do not necessarily recognise and value the contributions of different groups equally. In this instance, the invisibility of the contribution of the linguistic minority parents/carers in the school setting may be due to a lack of appreciation on the part of the teachers of the cultural capital that they do possess.

Several teachers mentioned that parents may lack linguistic skills in English and this inevitably makes it more difficult, if not impossible, to offer support at home. In School A., Mr. V. and Mrs X. seemed to consider that all linguistic minority parents as lacking linguistic skills in English. Mr. V. talked about the mother of another student in his class (not the student I had interviewed). He said:

*She didn't speak English, and couldn't help with reading.*

However in School B and C. teachers referred to particular parents who lacked linguistic skills in English. Ms. W said:

*I don't think (they) are able to help with reading as they have very limited English and don't speak English at home.*

Consequently parents who lacked linguistic skills in English were perceived as being unable to offer practical support at home in helping students in becoming more effective readers. Ms. R. felt that parents would not be able to support their children in developing English language discussion skills at home. Ms. R. explained:

*(The parents) can't sit and go through newspaper articles and sort of have discussions in English the way that obviously other children might do.*

Equally, teachers perceived parents as not sharing reading books with their children at home. Ms. R. said:

*They (speaking of Ms. S. and other parents with similar linguistic skills in English) can't sit necessarily and hear children read in English.*

All the teachers mentioned that they found it difficult to communicate with parents who lacked linguistic skills in English. Ms. T. talked about how informal contact with parents became almost impossible in this situation and how she felt that students 'missed out' in these situations. Ms. Y. felt that she could not easily talk to parents at the end of the school day and establish a relationship with them in order to help them to support their children so that they became more motivated. She said:

*I think it becomes problematic because you know ....I'll talk about what they've been up to (the students). Where with those parents who don't speak English I find myself not doing it because you come across as being very patronising because you don't know what their level of English (is)*

Several teachers also mentioned that they perceived siblings' acting as interpreters for parents was inappropriate. Ms Y felt that a student helping their

parents with home school communication was not appropriate and she felt that this might also impact on motivation. She said:

*It's just you don't want always the child to be the mediator because sometimes it's not appropriate. Aadil came in, for instance, last parents evening and he was having to help translate the conversation and yet his English isn't strong enough to do that and it was just - and so I think in terms of motivation I might not be as, you know, to help your child do xyz because I don't have the ability to have that conversation with them.*

Parents/carers are considered to be conduits between home and school. Ms Y was the most insightful and the most knowledgeable about individual parents of students in her class. However, she also spoke of the difficulty of having a relationship with parents when they did not speak English. She spoke of the difficulty of appearing patronising. Several teachers spoke about how they were unable to have informal contact with parents because of communication difficulties and therefore they could not engage with parents in order to help them to support reading more effectively at home. Several teachers spoke about how inappropriate they felt it was to have older siblings translating for parents and acting as intermediaries between home and school. There is an assumption that parents/carers, particularly mothers, because they usually have daily contact with school, are disadvantaging their children if they are unable to speak English, both in terms of offering support at home for reading and establishing a relationship with the teacher.

Gregory (2008) suggests that models of parental involvement in reading currently in operation in schools may be based on the assumptions that the same home reading programmes are suitable for monolingual or bilingual students. This assumes that parents should be capable of helping their children, regardless of whether they are able to read English or not. Equality of opportunity is perceived as the same provision for all children regardless of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In practice, this means that minority families are viewed in terms of linguistic, cognitive or cultural deficit. This ignores the multiple pathways to literacy shown by both adults and children from minority groups (Baynham, 1995).

## 4.4: Case studies

In this section I draw together the stories of individual students their parents/carers and teachers as I look in more detail at the reading cultures that are inhabited by these individuals. Equally each of these case studies draws together the micro and the macro aspects of the situation as it is important to understand the fine grained detail of the individual conversations as well as the social and educational contexts in which they take place (Conteh et al, 2007).

### 4.4.1: Nihal

Nihal is a student in School A. He was born in England and he speaks English fluently (he is described by the school as being at fluency stage 4). He is performing at age related expectations (English reading national curriculum level 3b). He reports that his home languages are Arabic and French. Nihal explained that he speaks some Arabic and he also reads classical Arabic in order to read the Qur'an.

However he is a motivated enthusiastic reader who is perceived at school as being a successful reader. When I met with Nihal he was a little diffident about his literacy achievement. He said he was not so good at writing but to counterbalance this, he identified that he had been extremely successful at learning Arabic.

*I used to go to Arabic school ..... and I was top of the whole school.*

The picture that he drew identifies him as a joyful reader. In the picture, reading makes him smile and makes him happy and he is enjoying the nice phrases and wants to know what happens. Nihal said.



*That's me that drawing, that's what makes me happy. It's a bubble. What makes me happy like if it's got nice phrases and makes me want to read it more, if it's exciting and makes me happy and makes me smile*

Nihal also talked about how he regularly undertakes religious reading. Nihal reads the Qur'an alongside contemporary children's fiction as well as his football magazines. He is integrating different aspects of school and community. There is evidence here of the agentic reader bringing together aspects of reading from the different cultures of the school, home and community. Gregory (2008) writes of how children syncretise new practices and forms by blending cultures and languages from what Kenner (2004) has called children's simultaneous worlds

His father Mr. A. is from Algeria and speaks English, French and Arabic. His mother Ms. A. is monolingual English speaking and was born in London in the borough where the research is taking place, as were her parents. However, she now reads classical Arabic in order to read the Qur'an. Nihal has a younger sister who is attending nursery. They live in a small but comfortable flat in a council block some distance from the school. The interview with Nihal took place at school but I interviewed Mr. and Ms. A. in their home. They were very welcoming when I came to their flat explaining that they had agreed to see me because they thought perhaps Nihal was not getting on very well with his reading. He didn't often bring books home, they said, but whereas some years ago they had been worried about him, they now thought he was getting on well with his reading.

Nihal's mother was educated in England, having attended a state primary school. She recalled school being a positive experience for her and her mother supported her with her reading. However she remembers that it had not been so for her brother who had had difficulties in learning to read. It had been straightforward for her, unlike her brother. Consequently she said that she was alert to Nihal's progress in reading.

Mr. A spoke of his own parents in Algeria who could not read or write and consequently could not expand his thinking in a way that parents, he suggested, who were literate would be able to do. I suggested that, as he was now literate in

several languages, perhaps these early experiences had not disadvantaged him in any particular way. However he was quite insistent that his thinking would have developed more if his parents had been literate.

Mr. A talked passionately about his own views on education. He felt that although his own parents were good people who 'taught him right from wrong', because they could not read they were unable to extend his knowledge. I asked him why he thought this when he had learnt to read in two languages, in spite of their inability to help him with reading. He mentioned that parent's/carer's early preschool support with reading that involves discussion and questioning necessarily expands thinking:

*The brain develops more.*

However, he felt that he 'missed out' on early opportunities to develop particular ways of thinking, and he gave this as a reason for wanting to spend time supporting his own child. He talked about how it took time. He said:

*You have to give them something to do. You can't say you can't go there and leave them with nothing to do. You have to spend time with them. Show that you value what they are doing. (with reading)*

Mr. A talked about the routines of school reading and Qur'anic reading that were in place at home and how these happened on a daily basis. Time was set aside for Qur'anic reading and school reading which included novels, and also leisure reading of football books and collecting stickers. He talked about his commitment to providing these activities.

Nihal also recalled learning with his father what he called 'the ABC' in both Arabic and English at an early age. Nihal talked of how his mother is helping his younger sister who is in nursery with reading fun stories and how he also joins in. He said:

*She has lots of books already and I look at them too.*

Brooker (2002) writes of how there can be a mismatch between parental/carer support for children that focuses on grapheme phoneme learning (more common in linguistic minority homes she maintains) and the whole language methods espoused by most early years settings (sharing stories and reading to your child). Nihal, however seems to have had the advantages of both 'bottom up' and 'top down' approaches to literacy in his early experiences. In this way, his parents were able to share aspects of their different educational experiences with him.

Ms. X., Nihal's teacher, was bilingual and from a minority ethnic group. Her parents were originally from Pakistan but had relocated to England. She had been born in England but had returned to Pakistan for some of her primary education. She was enthusiastic when she talked about how she motivated her students by introducing a wide range of texts into the classroom. She promoted these texts by facilitating discussions. She explained with passion how she read stories aloud to the class creating excitement. However, when Ms. X. came to talk about how the parents/ carers in her class supported their children she felt that they were unlikely to offer appropriate support. She said:

*They (the parents) do not always see the place for it (reading) often parents haven't been educated here; they don't understand what is important. They are not aware of the system.*

She explained that often 'other' parents had views about reading based on their own educational experiences and consequently did not understand what would be expected in her particular school. She felt that she had been supported in ways that the parents of the students in her class whom I had interviewed had not. She attributed this generally to parent/carer unwillingness to learn to speak English and perhaps an unwillingness to participate in supporting their children with officially recognised reading materials. She suggested that there may have been cultural reasons why parents/carers were unwilling to participate in these official literacies.

However, Nihal's parents did not conform to either of these dystopian scenarios. They were very comfortable within their own cultural and religious milieu which included positive attitudes towards the English school system and towards their own son's school and towards maintaining aspects of their minority and linguistic

culture, as well as the majority culture. Blackledge (2000) drawing on Vincent's (1996) study concluded that there is a mismatch between teachers' and parents'/carers' perception of minority parents' commitment to their children's education. Similarly, he concludes that teachers often have little understanding of the extent or nature of learning activities in minority culture homes.

However, Nihal's experience confirms what Gregory (2007) purports that, what enables some children to become successful, is the symbolic importance that literacy has in an individual's life. For Nihal and his family, literacy had religious significance through reading the Qur'an, academic significance in terms of school and also social significance in terms of enjoyment and interest. Yet what can happen is that schools and teachers adopting a majority view largely dismiss and devalue the knowledge that children bring from minority cultures communities and homes. However, as researchers point out often what students bring from home remains invisible in the eyes of their teachers (Gregory, 1997; Kenner, 2004 and Drury 2007).

#### **4.4.2: Adra**

Adra is a student in School B. Her parents came originally from Pakistan but she was born in Germany and has been in her current school for about 3 years. She is described by the school as being at fluency stage 2 and as having difficulty accessing all areas of the curriculum. Adra is on the special needs register at school (English reading national curriculum level 2b). Adra reports that her home languages are Urdu and German. What was most striking about Adra was that she had obviously wanted to be part of this research study but she also seemed detached in some ways from school. What was significant during her interview was how little she said on some subjects but how much she had to say about others. She seemed generally lacking in confidence but became much more animated when I mentioned that my other language was German. It transpired that she had been to school in Germany and spoke German. The school, unfortunately, had not given me this information. Had I known this I would have been able to engage Adra more in the interview.

During the interview we talked about her favourite story which was titled the 'The Wedding Peach'. She also explained that it was a German story. Apparently it had been her older sister who had told her about this story. This is a manga (a Japanese style comic book) story that is translated into different languages. In terms of what was exciting about reading, Adra, like many students, said that she wanted to know what is going to happen. She returned to the themes of weddings for her picture of what was important about reading. She drew an evocative picture of the wedding fairy, a theme that she chose to represent her feelings about reading. She explained in great detail what this story was about and it could well have been a narrative from a Bollywood movie. When asked why she had chosen this as a subject for her picture she repeated how her parents had told her that bad people do not prosper.

Adra talked mostly about things that were associated with home; her sister was obviously a significant influence on her reading, although she did say, rather resentfully, that now her sister was engaged with her exams. Unlike many of the other students that I interviewed, very little of the reading that she mentioned seemed connected in any way with school. Nor did she mention any contemporary well known children's stories. She mentioned school but only in relation to negative experiences such as not eating her lunch. Adra seemed quite dislocated in some ways but she must have wanted to be part of this research because she felt interested and motivated by reading.

I met with Adra's mother Ms. S. at the family home. It was a comfortable semi detached Edwardian house in one of the pleasant wider tree lined roads, typical of the area. Ms. S. had not asked for a translator and she did not want to have the interview taped. Adra's elder sister Fadilah was in the room and she was obviously going to act as translator. Ms. S. understood many of my questions and she answered some of them herself. Adra kept popping in and out of room bringing drinks and snacks and explaining to her mum that I was her friend and explained that:

*She speaks German you know.*

Adra spoke German when I arrived and she seemed to be speaking relatively fluently. I established that Ms. S. did not want to undertake the interview in German.

Through most of the interview with Ms. S., Fadilah acted as translator. When I asked Ms. S. how she felt Adra was getting on in school, she said fine. She also explained that Fadilah helps her with her homework. Adra's older sister Fadilah helped with reading and acted as translator for her mother at school. When I had asked about how Adra was getting on at school, although her mother had intimated that everything was fine (when, in fact, Adra is struggling with all aspects of the curriculum, according to her teacher) Fadilah took the opportunity to become quite outspoken about how the school had not supported her when she was at primary school. I felt very uncomfortable at this point, partly because the interview was with Adra's mother and not with Fadilah and I had always been concerned that parents might criticise the school. I felt this was not really the remit of the research, although I know that it is relevant. In the end I engaged in some conversation with her on the topic thereby eliciting that she had felt unsupported at primary school but had received help at secondary school and things were better now.

Ms. S. spoke sensitively herself, about the need to support children at home in ways that that are in tune with their natures. She said

*(Giving) time and following the child....helping them in a way that is in keeping with their nature.*

Ms. S. also explained through her daughter that reading was important because in that way we gain knowledge of the world and current events.

Ms. R., Adra's teacher, was English and monolingual. However, she explained that she had lived in Spain for a time and spoke Spanish quite fluently. She talked about Adra and her family. She found that Adra had become more motivated when the school had offered her more accessible reading material. However she stated that Adra's special needs meant she had difficulty accessing all aspects of the curriculum. She seemed unclear about what the special need

might have been. However she intimated that Adra was disadvantaged by her home situation. In talking about Adra she then explained generally that some parents/carers are unable to support their children saying:

*They [as in Adra's mother and other linguistic minority parents with similar fluency levels] can't sit necessarily and hear children read in English.*

She expanded on this explaining the kinds of support that were missing:

*Can't sit and go through newspaper articles and sort of have discussions in English the way that obviously other children might do.*

Ms. R. talked at length about the difficulties of communicating with parents like Ms. S. where she was unable to speak to the mother directly at the end of the school day, informally, as with other parents. Therefore she could not explain directly to parents how they can support their children. Equally, she found it difficult having to communicate through older siblings. She felt that this was inappropriate and an older sibling should not really take on this role in relation to the teacher because this was a parental/carer role.

Ms. R. perceived Adra's support from her older sister Fadilah as being problematic. Gregory (1998) has written extensively about the place of older siblings in offering reading support within linguistic minority families. She writes of the role older siblings may have in supporting both parents with school liaison and their younger siblings with school work and how this is often perceived negatively by majority culture teachers.

Within the school situation she is not seen as having useful cultural resources to draw on. She is perceived as being disadvantaged by her family and language background. Parke et al (2002) argue that if we only see that part of the child which is articulated in their additional language and do not acknowledge the funds of knowledge (Moll, et al, 1992) which they bring to school from their homes and communities we may underestimate their potential. Teachers working in multi lingual multi cultural contexts may only see their bilingual students in terms of what they cannot achieve.

#### 4.4.3: Zaki

Zaki is a student in School C. He was born in England and he speaks English fluently (he is described by the school as being at fluency stage 4). He is described by the school as an able student performing at above age related expectations (English reading national curriculum level 4 C). He reports that his home languages are Urdu and Punjabi. Zaki explained that he speaks Urdu and a little Punjabi. He also reads classical Arabic in order to read the Qur'an. What was striking about Zaki was his energy and enthusiasm for stories and learning. He had a range of favourite texts that reflected his interest both within school and outside of school. He shared his reading experiences with others and had very positive personal attitudes to learning. This included setting himself targets and feeling that confidence is a personal attribute that develops through personal effort.

He spoke very positively about his early experiences of learning to read. Zaki argued that he did not find learning to read in English difficult. He spoke about how he had access to both languages from an early stage. Learning to read for him 'was easier' he said because he heard 'both languages' (Urdu and English) at home before he came to school. Zaki is an agentic student, a confident and independent-minded boy who is able, as Meek and Dombey (1994) so encouragingly describe, to use reading to shape his own purposes. They argue that when children become involved in the literate practices of their culture they are able to question their world and move into new systems of communication, as well as valuing stories and literature from a variety of settings.

I met with Zaki's mother Ms. Z. at school. She spoke passionately about her determination to make a difference for her own children. This was fuelled by her own negative experiences when she had returned to England from Pakistan as a teenager and was not allowed to participate in exams. She said:

*When we came we couldn't get any proper admission in to you know, school to do GCSE or whatever*



She felt assumptions were made about her capability in speaking English, presumably because she had just arrived from Pakistan. However she explained:

*Of course I could speak English I had had done it since year 6 in Pakistan*

She was determined to support Zaki along with his brother from an early stage. She explained how she had learnt a lot about how to support early reading from the teachers in her own children's nursery. She said:

*....when they started their nursery. They used to say like oh it's a really nice thing when you put the child to bed and read them a story and . . . . . I don't know I was, from when they were born, when they were tiny I used to buy those little books From the beginning I used to read to them before sleeping when they were little, yeah. And then I think maybe when they were 4, 5 then I used to get them to read and I used to sit with them and they would read and that's how they started to do it on their own.*

Ms. Z. has an on going enthusiasm for reading for pleasure and enjoyment. She has consistently supported Zaki's development and growth as a reader. She has high expectations of her children but also offers them carefully structured support in school-authorised ways. Through her analysis of her own situation and her use of the school support starting when Zaki was in nursery she has been able to share the cultural capital of the school in order to ensure school success (Bourdieu 1991) for Zaki. Ms. Z. has not only been able to appropriate the procedures of the majority culture in order to support her sons in school-authorised ways but also to conform to teacher expectations of the 'good' parent. In school C. that is the parent who is able to speak fluent English and is available for informal meetings at the end of the school day.

However, Ms. Z. was determined that her sons would maintain their home language. She said:

*I say to them as soon as you're out of school it should be your own language because English you speak all day but you should keep up with your own language as well because when you go back home you have to communicate with people there. Yeah my husband's brother, his kids they don't know their own*

*language, Urdu. When they go back home they're just sitting on one side and they're not participating in anything because they can't understand or speak. Whereas a grandmother would come and sit with me but if they do sit what they are going to say to her. Whereas Zaki can go and hug her and you know say "we love you" in our language and they hug and kiss and they (Zaki and his brother) speak to their uncles but that's why I made sure that they learnt Urdu as well.*

Kenner (2004), from her research with young bilinguals, suggests that they can be understood as living in 'simultaneous worlds' (2004). Zaki's use of languages at home supports the view that bilingual children do not live in two determined worlds, transferring from one to the other. Kenner feels that for some children, it becomes difficult to define which is their first or second language. The language of grandparents could still be considered the mother tongue, however, the children themselves may be equally or more fluent in English (Kenner 2004).

In contrast Ms. Y., Zaki's teacher, was English and monolingual. She was enthusiastic about the teaching of reading and had worked hard to involve all the parents in the research study including those who lacked linguistic skills in English. She provided a sensitive and stimulating literacy environment as revealed by book choices and opportunities that Zaki and the other students had access to. Some students had talked about the power of reading project that they had engaged in, in her class. This work supports extended literacy talk around reading. Datta (2000) writes of the important ways that extended literacy talk enables bilingual students to engage imaginatively and intellectually with the worlds in texts and then, by extension, in their own worlds. According to Cummins (1996) the development of academic skills is dependent upon this prior personal engagement of readers with texts. Equally, Krashen (1993) argues that the ability of students learning in EAL to develop their use of academic language in their writing is dependent on the amount and variety of what they read. Ms. Y. worked hard to involve linguistic minority parents/carers in the classroom and she was interested in what these parents wanted for their children. Ms. Y. said that she wanted to know more about her bilingual students, and their parents'/carers' cultural backgrounds and experiences.

However, Ms. Y. felt that inevitably motivation and all aspects of learning to read for bilingual students were likely to be more difficult because she perceived that it must be very difficult to speak one language at home and then to have to speak another language at school. She explained:

*I am obviously aware that I have EAL children in my class but I have never experienced myself, how difficult it is to be EAL. I don't know what it's really like to be able to speak at home conversing in one language and then come to school and be taught in something else.*

At the same time she perceived that the curriculum that was on offer (in spite of her best efforts) was necessarily culturally inappropriate for the bilingual students that were in her class.

*.... I imagine it's very different and I imagine that the books we read are not necessarily the type of books that they would of read, which is like the whole kind of, is our curriculum geared more towards perhaps the white middle class English child as opposed to some of the other, because in our class there's so many different cultures, religions and all sorts; it's fantastic but then sometimes you think we give them the same books to read....*

Additionally her own experiences of learning a foreign language, led her to assume a concern that the bilingual students in her class would face considerable difficulties with learning to speak in English in school. She worried that they would find it harder than their monolingual peers. Therefore Ms. Y. was seeing the experience of the bilingual students in her class (albeit with the best of intentions) through a 'the monolingual lens'.

Although these understandings were rooted in a seemingly caring attitude to the bilingual students themselves, there was a mismatch, in that her view did not conform to the educational reality of the students themselves. Ms. Y. had subscribed to a particular discourse which led her to view the experience of bilingual students in a particular way. Consequently she was unable to 'see' the strengths of many of her bilingual students and perceived their bilingualism as a potential difficulty. Fulcher (1989) argues that discourses serve particular interests as opposed to having particular meanings. Foucault (1972) furthers the

argument by suggesting that although discourse may seem of little account, the reductive effects of negative discourses reveal links with power within society.

However, the experiences of Zaki and his family challenge these views. Their experiences provide an alternative account of successful integration of home and school cultures and transfer of cultural capital from a linguistic minority home to a majority dominated school. Their agency defies the reductive effects of powerful discourses within society that privilege monolingualism and marginalise bilingualism (Datta, 2000).

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **Different Ways of Looking**

In this research study I have elicited the accounts of a group of bilingual students about the significance and purpose that they attribute to learning to read and developing as readers in English at school. Equally, I have elicited the perceptions of the parents of these same students about the significance and purpose of reading in their own lives and I have also asked this group of parents how they support their children with reading at home. Finally, I have consulted the students' teachers about the relationship between motivation and reading for this group of students and how they perceive the support offered by the students' parents for reading at home. The individual voices of the students and parents in this study contribute to what Street (1995), has called 'an alternative account'. An alternative account would seek to privilege the voices of those not usually included in research accounts, such as students or members of linguistic minorities. Research accounts may prioritise the voices of the more powerful stakeholders within society. What is left out is the local knowledge that constitutes the perspectives and practices of the less powerful (Canagarajah, 2002).

Within this study, students' reading is seen in the context of their home and community learning as well as within the school situation. This perspective allows the social and cultural aspects of their situation to be seen as integral to their reading achievements (Drury, 2007). Drury also suggests that it is important to investigate practice from the perspective of the child, the family and community. She argues that, in this way, we can capture children's bilingual voices and shed light on how they participate in and contribute to multiple communities. A focus on individual cases foregrounds the generation of local knowledge. Local knowledge (Geertz, 1983) refers to knowledge that diverges from what is established or legitimized in the disciplines (Foucault, 1972). Local knowledge is context bound, community specific, and nonsystematic (Geertz, 1983) because it is generated through social practice in everyday life. In this way local knowledge will always have a questioning effect on established paradigms, deriving from the

non systematized, unorthodox, and simply messy features of its existential practice (Gee 2000).

Brooker (2002) argues that case study work develops theories based on small numbers of cases and there is no attempt to claim that these cases may generalise to a larger population. She suggests that to make our in-depth stories and thick descriptions meaningful there needs to be a concern with the theoretical explanations that have underpinned the research story and equally a focus on recommendations for practice. In this chapter I seek to draw together the strands of the research story making a link between students, teachers and parents and larger discursive agendas and theoretical frameworks. However, an important element of this research is to document the ways the students, their parents and their teachers view reading and to situate their experiences within the social and political world they inhabit. In so doing we might, as Kenner (2004), suggests develop different ways of looking.

This research study highlights the importance of not regarding bilingual students as a discrete homogenous group. Although they are designated within the school system as EAL learners this hides the complexity of their learner profiles which remain quite individual. As Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, (2000) suggest, it is not possible to infer or predict student learning behaviours purely on account of bilingual status. Many of the students who were part of the study had been born in England and attended school since nursery age, although some had arrived in the school system more recently. Some of the students recounted the complexity of learning to read in English in school at the same time as developing their fluency in spoken English. The initial stages of the reading journey proved challenging for some. However, when I met those students further along their reading journeys, the majority of them were reading at or above National Curriculum age related expectations. Although Cummins (1986) suggests that the situation is complex he cites numerous studies that have shown that the use of a minority language is not in itself detrimental to a student's academic progress.

All the students were motivated and enthusiastic about reading. Equally all the students who were able to access the curriculum using the English language effectively (i.e. not children who had only recently arrived in England or the minority of students with special educational needs) were experienced, confident and agentic readers, who were reading for their own purposes. Students were reading for a range of purposes which included reading a range of children's literature with pleasure and enjoyment. Unlike the Clark, Osborne and Akerman (2008) survey where peers played a large role in dictating book choice, the majority of the students ascribed their book choice to books they had been introduced to by their school. Reading aloud on the part of the teacher was mentioned as being one way that students were introduced to new books and were excited and enthused by them. Washtell (2008) argues that in reading aloud the more experienced adult scaffolds the experience and students are able to envisage their own futures as readers (Washtell, 2008) Equally the OFSTED report (2004) on reading for pleasure and purpose, reported that in one high achieving school where students read for pleasure, students were reported as responding very positively to regular reading of class novels.

In terms of book choice, some students mentioned the Power of Reading (POR) project (O'Sullivan and McGonigle, 2009). This also scaffolds the reading experience for students and inexperienced readers are supported in becoming more experienced readers through activities such as group reading. In an evaluation of this project, O'Sullivan and McGonigle (2009) found that students demonstrated greater confidence with books, took greater advantage of classroom contexts for reading, shared books with friends and other children more readily more often and also expressed greater enjoyment in reading. The authors also stress the role of what they have called transformational books. Case study summaries indicate that the books chosen for the POR project have played a transformational role in changing children's attitudes and achievement as readers as the books chosen help children experience the kinds of emotions and responses which can hook them into reading. This evaluation was undertaken with schools that have a significant proportion of bilingual students.

In this study, in terms of gender, more boys than girls participated over all and boys were as enthusiastic and motivated about reading as girls. Equally as many boys as girls seemed to be engaged in social networking around texts. In the Clark, Torsi and Strong (2005) and Clark, Osborne and Akerman (2008) surveys of students' attitudes towards reading and self-perceptions as readers, boys were more likely to believe that reading is boring, that they find it hard to find interesting books and that they only read at school. Girls, on the other hand, were more enthusiastic about reading and engaged in more positive reading behaviours. In one of the studies, school students identified that they had been supported in by initiatives such as literature circles in school. Allan, Ellis and Pearson (2005) in their evaluation of literature circle work in schools in Scotland found that the use of literature circles had a positive impact on several aspects of primary students' reading attitudes and behaviours. Both boys and girls showed significantly more positive feelings about reading in school. Boys reported that they were more frequently reading for pleasure at home, recommending books to friends and getting totally absorbed in a book. These gains meant that the boys effectively 'caught up' with the girls in these aspects. There was an improvement in the number of books that all pupils reported reading. Datta (2000) writes of the important ways that extended literacy talk enables bilingual students to chunk meanings together and to engage imaginatively and intellectually with the worlds in texts and then, by extension, in their own worlds. Datta further explains that this process enables bilinguals to think in depth and make connections with meanings in their heads about language and their own experience. Furthermore Krashen (1993) argues that the ability of students learning in English as an additional language to use academic language in their writing is dependent on the amount and variety of what they read.

Within these developments we see the importance of developing reading in schools based upon sociocultural theories of learning. Learning to read is viewed as socially constructed and embedded in social relations and students are seen as active agents in their own learning (Wells and Claxton, 2002). However students who were successfully engaging with the school reading curriculum and



identifying with the authorised texts offered in school also had important links with their home cultures and communities and were able to reflect with confidence on their cultural identity. They were syncretising (Gregory, 2000) their reading experiences between home and school and thus combining their reading for different cultural purposes. There was no contradiction between different aspects of their cultural reading lives. Nihal read a range of 'recognised' children's literature and was passionate about football and read football magazines. Reading the Qur'an in Arabic was also an important part of his life to which he gave value. These students' reading journeys were underpinned by the 'funds of knowledge', (Moll. et al, 1992) the cultural, linguistic and social assets that students bring with them from their homes and communities. Kenner (2004) writes about the simultaneous worlds that bilingual students inhabit. She argues that bicultural resources allow students to understand how different people experience and construct the world. In this model difference is not a source of difficulty but an opportunity for new ideas and developments.

Equally the parents who were interviewed could not be seen as a homogenous group. A minority of parents admitted having difficulty in supporting their children because of their early stage of fluency in spoken English. In these situations students had been supported at home by siblings as well as their parents. In the case of Sumairaa, a student in School A, she was also supporting her younger brother who was in nursery because, as her mother proudly described, she was a good reader and 'spoke good English'. However, these same parents all had positive aspirations in relation to reading and held positive attitudes to school and their children's education. Many had literature-rich experiences from their own countries of origin and were literate in their own languages. Many parents had supported their children through providing time for homework and structured reading activities and have also provided a positive and encouraging home environment. Often parents had supported their children's learning to read from the earliest stages. This is supported by the findings from the research study that Blackledge (2000) engaged in, where the linguistic minority mothers who were interviewed lacked the linguistic skills to enable them to support their children but who were still committed to their children's success. They offered a range of support, including allocating time, resources and encouragement for reading at

home. Although the parents may not have been offering support in school-  
authorised ways, as Gregory and Williams (2000) suggest, parents/carers  
provide different opportunities of literacy learning from those officially recognised.

Many of the parents, however, were completely fluent in spoken English and  
literate in their own languages. They drew on their own reading experiences in  
their countries of origin and their own personal enthusiasm for reading. Equally  
they drew on their own educational experiences to support their children. When  
these experiences had been negative as in the case of Ms. Z. she had resolved  
that she would create a different learning environment for her sons and provide  
different opportunities. She had learnt a lot from the teachers at her son's nursery  
school about supporting reading and she developed this knowledge as her sons  
progressed through school. Many parents like Ms. Z. understood the importance  
of supporting their children's reading in school-authorised ways. The National  
Literacy Trust (2001) identified what they considered to be the constituents for  
effective parental/carer involvement. These included a language and literacy-rich  
environment in the home (such as books and computers), listening and talking to  
children about books and literacy activities and high expectations of  
parents/carers for their children's educational development. Many of the parents  
interviewed reported that they supported their children in some of these ways.  
One parent Ms. H. had even acknowledged the importance of 'the bedtime story'.  
Another parent, Mr. G., understood how reading is important across the whole of  
the school curriculum and how parents need to be strongly aware of this so that  
they can offer appropriate support.

Enjoyment and interest were seen as important by parents in helping their  
children to become 'better' readers. Parents understood what they needed to do  
in order to help their children to succeed. They were able to build bridges  
between home and school. However in so doing they did not neglect their home  
languages and culture. Conteh (2003), in her research, concluded similarly that  
in the families of the successful students there was a commitment to maintain  
heritage languages, culture and religion alongside recognition of the need to  
succeed in school.

This particular group of students seemed to be in an environment where they were supported with reading by parents or siblings or grandparents. The positive ethos of parents would have been communicated to their children regardless of the levels of practical support that were offered for reading. I also felt that the parents had agreed to be part of the research because they had something they wanted to say about the importance of reading in their own lives and their views on the importance of parents/carers helping their children with reading at home. They had something of value to share and they wanted an opportunity for their voices to be heard.

The majority of teachers who were interviewed were providing a literature rich, culturally appropriate reading curriculum for the students whom I interviewed. It is important to recognise and value this achievement. However, the relationships between teacher and student are mediated in different ways and each needs to value and negotiate the cultural worlds of the other in order to co-construct positive and supportive cultures of teaching and learning (Bearne and Marsh, 2007). However, I am not attempting to generalise about the views of teachers within the research. Teachers equally do not benefit from homogenizing analyses whereby their personal voices become lost or distorted. There were different levels of knowledge in terms of the teachers' understanding of the bilingual students in their classes and their parents/carers. However, there was lack of knowledge about what it means to be bilingual and what this might mean in terms of students learning experiences. Ms. Y. said that she was aware that she didn't know enough about the bilingual students in her class. However, because of this lack of knowledge there was an underlying assumption that speaking languages other than English was potentially a source of difficulty and therefore operating in a second language was likely to be problematic. This was in spite of the fact, that there was evidence of good achievement for many students, of which the teachers were aware. The way meaning is built into text in school settings is more compatible with the way some children have learnt to make meaning and less compatible with the 'ways of knowing' of children from other backgrounds (Heath, 1983). Misinterpretations of what children are doing and misrecognition of what communicative resources they bring to school on the part of teachers tend to occur when models of cultural deficit are in operation. Gregory and

Kenner (2004), Drury (2007) and Kelly (2010) have illustrated how the worlds of school and home can remain invisible to one another and how misrecognition can be interpreted as absence (Freebody *et al.*, 1995). Kenner (2000) argues that multilingual literacy knowledge tends to be invisible in the world of school.

There was a blanket assumption that linguistic minority parents/carers who lacked linguistic skills in English are not able to support their children with reading. However, the parents in the study who lacked linguistic skills in English were offering support to their children. They were encouraging reading, allocating time to talk about books and acting as role models, in some instances reading literature in their home languages. However, the positive contributions of these parents remained invisible to the teachers. Blackledge (2000) concluded in his research that although the mothers in his research lacked linguistic skills in English they offered a range of different support including allocating time, resources and encouragement for reading at home. Kenner 2004 cites the work of Heath 1983 and Dorsey-Gaines to show that all families offered learning experiences to young children who differed depending on the community's contexts and values.

In these situations where parents lacked linguistic skills older siblings sometimes acted as intermediaries between home and school. Communication between home and school was perceived by the teachers as being very difficult to maintain in these circumstances. Consequently, students were perceived as being disadvantaged because the teachers were unable to offer support and guidance about reading to their parents. Gregory (1994, 1996) and Gregory *et al* (2004), has charted in her research the important role that siblings have to play in terms of offering support at home for reading and liaising with teachers at school. Blackledge (2000) also concluded from his research that linguistic minority parents/carers may be discriminated against when communication between home and school is not undertaken in a conventional (as in majority culture) way. The differences between a bilingual student's home and school worlds have been illustrated by the studies of Gregory, 1996, Kenner, 2004 and Drury, 2007.

Inclusion is about 'reducing the barriers to participation and learning'. In order to establish an inclusive reading pedagogy at the micro level, it involves those who work with students asking questions about how a school adapts to and works with the diversity of the student population, finding out about and working with what students bring with them to school, rather than viewing differences in terms of deficits. Conteh (2003) argues that teachers need more personal experiences of 'difference' in order to understand that it is valid to be different in different ways and that we are all different and outsiders in some sense. She writes about the work of Paley (1979) who, through a developing understanding of her own Jewish identity, realised that every child needed to be welcomed and valued for who they were and what they brought to the classroom. This is in contrast to the current situation in schools which Blackledge (1999) argues reflects a platitude of 'equal opportunity', which masks an ideology current in schools which is of a 'one size fits all' mentality which insists on assimilation to a prescribed norm.

Conceived in this way, inclusion requires an ongoing dialogue between teachers and learners. It requires teachers' active engagement, because inclusion and exclusion are processes that are acted out within the school day and within each lesson. Cummins (2009) argues that micro-interactions between educators, students and communities are never neutral and consequently they either reinforce coercive relations of power or promote collaborative relations of power. He argues that how students are positioned either expands or constricts their opportunities for identity investment and cognitive engagement in the school curriculum. The findings of this study contribute to what Street (1995) has called an alternative account. This is an account of bilingual students motivated by reading and reading for their own purposes both inside and outside of school. Their reading journeys are both personal and culturally specific. Equally their parents hold positive views toward reading and education and offer support in variety of different ways. This presents a view that challenges stereotypical assumptions that may be generated by restrictive discourses which privilege monolingualism and marginalise bilingualism.

I would argue that seeing the agency and achievements of many of the students that I interviewed in reading and the support and positive ethos provided by their

parents makes a perspective on linguistic minority families and their achievement and contribution in schools much more complex. Perhaps the contribution of my research study is to add to an already existing body of knowledge that seeks amongst other things to problematise the monolingual lens (Bourne, 2007) with which the contributions of bilingual students and their parents/carers may be viewed. Drury (2007) argues that when we take account of a student's cultural heritage and the 'funds of knowledge' (Moll. et al, 1992) that they bring from home then we are able to recognise the importance of bilingualism in ultimately giving bilingual learners cognitive, social, linguistic and cultural advantages. This is particularly important for those of us working in multilingual, multi cultural contexts at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

## **Chapter 6: Finally .....**

In Section 6.1 of this final chapter I have considered what might have been done differently in the research. Equally, in Section 6.2, I consider how some of the ideas from this research study might be disseminated. The following Section 6.3 addresses the implications for policy and practice. I consider the implications for my personal and professional development in Section 6.4. In Section 6.5 I consider research that might be undertaken in this area in the future. Finally there is a conclusion.

### **6.1: To Do Differently**

#### **Interviewing parents who lack linguistic skills in English and the use of interpreters**

There were complexities involved in interviewing parents who lacked linguistic skills in English that now, with hindsight, I could have been better prepared for. I think that it would have been important to establish what exactly the teacher had meant when she said that the parents did not speak very much English. By having a brief meeting prior to the interview it would have been possible to discuss with the interviewee if they would prefer to have a translator present during the interview. This would have enabled me to establish what the parents' preferred language was and to be better prepared in the interview.

In School A, I am unsure if there was any consideration on the part of the head teacher who organised for me to undertake the research study and the teachers who sent out the invitation letter, that some parents may need to use an interpreter to effectively undertake the interview. I had explained in the invitation letter that it would be possible to have an interpreter, if that was a parental preference, but perhaps parents need more explanation or encouragement from someone within the school. I should have discussed this with the school as a

possibility that parents may feel reluctant about asking for an interpreter. Ms. AB, who agreed to be interviewed spoke only a little English, and I felt that she could not explain herself as well as she would have liked. Equally, I felt unsure about going back and doing the interview again with an interpreter. However, I felt that the parent had not been given the opportunity to express what she wanted to say on the subject, and this was disappointing for both of us.

As the two interpreters that I was working with were known to me, I could have spent some time talking to them about the research process. I could have given them greater clarification about translating questions and participants' answers. Also, I might have explained my role as a researcher, so that the interpreters were clear that this was different from my professional role in the borough. One interpreter had worked with me before translating a presentation I gave for Somali parents. Many of the presentation techniques that we had used on that occasion she brought with her to the interview sessions. Perhaps if I had explained the interview process, this would have helped her to make her contribution more effective.

### **Parents' perception of school support for parents in the area of reading**

One area that might have merited more investigation was parents' perception of the school support for reading. Perhaps I could have discussed what parents felt the school could do to help them to support their children with literacy. Some parents mentioned these aspects, but as they were not part of the original research question, they remained aspects that were not developed. I think that perhaps I was over sensitive about creating a situation where parents made comments about the school that were negative. Subsequently, I did not include questions related to this area in the original research design. However, I had not felt so diffident about asking teachers what they thought about the support that parents/carers offered at home to their children.



## **The student sample**

The sample of students, across all the schools, who eventually participated, were for the most part, successful readers in terms of national curriculum levels. This was particularly so in School A. and School C. I had initially wanted to have more students with lower national curriculum levels and special needs, particularly in relation to literacy. Where informants are self selected this is difficult to achieve. Certainly I would not want to claim that the sample of students that eventually participated were representative of bilingual students in the borough as a whole. At the very least, these stories are of value in that they confound stereotypical views of linguistic minority families.

## **Developing a more ethnographic study**

In order to have made this study more truly ethnographic it would have been necessary to conduct the research a little differently. I would have liked to undertake some participant observation in school settings, perhaps of students in situations where they are choosing and/or discussing books. Furthermore, I would have liked to undertake a series of interviews with each student (perhaps three) in order to have an extended discussion and in order to develop a more in-depth picture of their experiences, perceptions and understandings of reading. For example, it would have been interesting to consider with the students, in more depth, the place and purpose of Qur'anic reading in their lives.

Equally, with parents, I would have liked to undertake a series of interviews (perhaps three) in order to extend the discussion after the first interview. I would also have liked to ask parents for their views on how the school assists them in offering support for reading to their children. Also I would have wanted to discuss whether the school makes clear how reading is taught in school and what the school expectations of parents are in relation to offering their children help at home.

Finally, in terms of the teacher interviews I would have liked to return to them with their interview transcripts in order to discuss what they had said and develop the dialogue further. However implementing these changes would have warranted a much longer and more time consuming research study and also having fewer research participants

## **6.2: Dissemination**

One aspect of dissemination, which would build on the element of student voice, which has been an intrinsic driver in terms of this study, would be to consult the students themselves. Students within each of the study schools might wish to share some aspects of their interview and focus group discussions with their fellow students. This could be organised within schools as a class or school activity. There would be the possibility of developing this into the writing of autobiographical histories in the borough schools. I am involved in a similar project in one of the other borough schools. This could be linked to black history month later in the year. Similar projects are undertaken nationally as part of the 'Everybody Writes project'.

Certainly the content of some of the student and parent interviews could be shared with other central teams such as the EMA service and the Primary Strategy Teaching and Learning consultants.

As part of the activities linked to the National Year of Reading (which actually finished in 2008 but I am involved in organising on going activities) it might be possible to produce a short report of students' book choices and interests. Perhaps it would also be possible to produce an additional report on the views of linguistic minority parents on reading and parental/carer support for reading.

There is also the possibility of producing a short radio programme to disseminate the findings on the 'Word' – which is a local authority digital radio station that also has national coverage. It is aimed at teachers as well as the local community. So

aspects of the research could be shared in this forum.

### **6.3: Implications for Policy and Practice**

I have considered the implications for policy and practice that have emerged as a result of carrying out this piece of research.

#### **6.3.1: Language-rich environment**

The Rose Review into the teaching of reading (2006) also advocated a language-rich framework for teaching, with the aim of fostering positive attitudes towards reading and a love of books. The protection that motivation and engagement can give to weaker readers became clear in this research. Therefore the existing emphasis on promoting motivation to read, and engaging readers with texts needs to be included within the curriculum as a matter of course. It could be useful to use the enthusiasm of the 'self-defined' readers to encourage other readers to widen their choice of reading materials. Auditing the reading choices that students make is a valuable activity, in that teachers then have a better idea of what fiction and non-fiction texts students enjoy reading. For many students whom I interviewed, their out of school reading included religious reading. Schools could usefully value this development, and it could be seen as contributing to PSHE and healthy schools, in terms of students' emotional wellbeing.

The very positive response of students to the individual interviews and the focus groups, suggests that these are useful ways of engaging students and developing self-esteem. Students could interview each other about reading choices and preferences, using existing schedules, but also, in time, developing their own questionnaires and interview schedules. Encouraging schools to find out more about students' perceptions of reading is useful in itself. This

information could inform curriculum planning. Information could be gathered at school level through pupil surveys and/or engagement in dialogue about the materials they want to read.

### **6.3.2: The importance of language histories**

The bilingual students participating in the research varied in their literacy achievement but equally could not be viewed universally as having English as an additional language needs and as potentially the objects of special policy and provision. However, in relation to students who were underachieving, some were designated as having special educational needs. Nonetheless this research has signalled the importance of collecting thorough student language histories. This is in order to establish previous experiences of schooling and previous language use. New arrivals will have had very different experiences. New arrivals of Somali heritage may well have had very little time in school and may well have been educated at home. Students with early stage fluency in English will have different strengths and needs dependent upon their previous educational experiences and their facility in speaking and or reading and writing in other languages. Therefore it is important for teachers to have accurate and complete information about the previous educational experiences and language histories of their bilingual students. In terms of meeting the learning needs of students and providing an inclusive curriculum it is important to have an understanding of the individual experiences of each individual student.

### **6.3.3: Parental involvement**

The Clark, Osborne and Akerman (2008) study suggests that more needs to be done to emphasise to parents of older children that involvement in their education, including encouragement to read materials that they enjoy, can still have a significant and positive impact. Many of the parents that I interviewed

were still involved in supporting their children's reading, even though their children were nearing the end of KS2. It would be important to share examples of successful practice and consider using parents, particularly fathers, as role models. Perhaps this could be accomplished using the extended schools structure. It is important to develop knowledge about living in two languages and demonstrate the funds of knowledge that parents/carers from linguistic minority families have.

Equally, in the Clark, Osborne and Akerman (2008) study NLT (2008) there is careful consideration of how best to secure parental involvement in their children's literacy. The suggestion is that this must have community support and must not place counter-productive demands on either adults or children. They argue that it is imperative that unrealistic expectations are not placed on parents/carers, which may cause guilt about their parenting skills. It would be difficult to make claims for a revisiting of statements such as this on the basis of a very small piece of research. However what is significant about the findings from my research study is that there are parents within linguistic minority community groups who are capable of living up to the highest of expectations. Gamarnikow and Green (1999) in their work with parents suggest that a model of families not valuing education and lacking the inclination to actively engage with the education system is unhelpful. They argue that deficit assumptions were not supported by their research findings, and their findings which are similar to my own, are that there is evidence of parents valuing education, and of engagement with the education system. Therefore, there is a need to consider how policy might be developed so that it reflects the concerns and interests of all linguistic minority parents/carers.

#### **6.3.4: Community cohesion/ Inclusion**

This research contributes to an alternative account (Street, 1991) that challenges both deficit views of bilingual students and their parents/carers. It is important to extend knowledge about bilingualism, particularly in relation to education and

schools. It is also important to obtain local and situated knowledge about the linguistic communities within the school and their language histories. This knowledge of bilingualism and linguistic minority experiences with the education system could usefully be shared with initial teacher training institutions. I support Moll et al, (1992) when they suggest that within training both at local authority level and at initial teacher education level there is a need to challenge notions of difference as deficit. Practitioners could be encouraged to rethink their own positions, and to reconsider the contributions of bilingual parents/carers and to recognise the 'funds of knowledge' that many parents/carers possess.

#### **6.4: Personal and professional knowledge**

As a practitioner working in an inner London borough supporting a school population with a high percentage of bilingual students on developing literacy, I have learnt a lot from the students and parents that have been participants in this research. I have learnt that normalising discourses are unhelpful and that close observation, listening and asking insightful questions is more helpful. The writing and research methods involved in this research project have helped me to think carefully about the language that I use both orally and in writing. More importantly they have helped me to become more reflective through talking, listening and through reading and writing. This has enabled me to bring about a more authentic educational professionalism that brings together the educational journey with both the personal and the professional self.

#### **6.5: Future research**

A research project focusing on bilingual students with literacy and language difficulties would be a potentially useful piece of work. This could be looked at from the perspectives of teachers as well as students and parents/carers. Identification and provision from the school and teacher perspective could be considered alongside student experiences of having literacy or language as a

barrier to learning. Another study similar to my own might be undertaken with secondary- aged bilingual students. This could focus on the range of experiences that culturally diverse students might have in accessing the reading curriculum. One aspect might be the challenges facing new arrivals to the country in accessing the secondary reading curriculum. Another aspect might be the experiences of bilingual students who are well established within the education system. Again, similar to my own work, there would be a focus on the voice of the student and on considering issues from the student's perspective.

## **Conclusion**

Within this final chapter I have been led to reflect on what is important about the work that I have done. What emerges is the importance of listening to students and their parents and carers and writing down what they have to say. It has been a privilege to step into the lives of my research participants if only for a short while and in a very limited way. Research is, in some ways, about the pursuit of truth and then comes the realisation that given the complexity and messiness of life it is only possible to present a version of the truth. However, within the research process there is the joy of discovery and the pleasure of writing about what you have found out alongside the sheer hard work. Dissemination brings a new challenge into the equation. This begs the question: Do I have a story that others will want to hear? These challenges lie in the future.

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## **Appendices**

## Appendix 1: Parent/carer invitation letter in English

Dear

Your child has expressed an interest in being part of a study about reading. I am writing to you to get your permission for your child to be involved and to see if you are also willing to be involved.

I am considering children's experiences of reading in English when it is not their home language and parents/carers experience of reading in English and or their home language.

I am interested in finding out more about learning to read and reading in a language that is not the home language and think that the views of children and parents are very important

I would like to interview your child in school as part of a group and individually about their views on reading.

Also I would like to interview you as parents/carers about your own attitudes to reading. This interview could be undertaken in another language other than English if this is likely to be easier. These interviews could take place at school or at your home if you would prefer.

I am undertaking this piece of work as a personal research study as part of a course at the Institute of Education at the University of London. Any information that is disclosed to me by you or your children will remain confidential to me. Any findings from the research and any reports that are written will not identify individual children or parents.

Please return the slip below to the school office. Thank you for your time.

**Yours sincerely**

-----  
Reading Research Project

Please tick ✓

Child's Name:

**Yes I am willing** for my child to be part of the study. ☐

**No I am not willing** for my child to be part of the study. ☐

**No I am not willing** to be interviewed as part of the study. ☐

**Yes I am willing** to be interviewed as part of the study. ☐

As a parent/carer I prefer to be interviewed at **home** ☐

**(Please give home or mobile number so I can contact you)**

As a parent/carer I prefer to be interviewed at **school** ☐

**(Please say what time of day is best for you)**

**(Please say which language you prefer to be interviewed in)**

Parent/carer name:

Signature:

## Appendix 2: Parent/carer invitation letter in Somali

Sharafle (Dear

Cunugaada waxuu soo bandhigay in uu danayn in uu ka qeyb galo waxbrasho ku saabsan akhris. Anigu waxaan kuu soo qori warqadan si aan u helo ogolaanshahaada ku saabsan in uu cunugaada ka qeyb galo akhriska iyo in aan ogaado haddii adigu sidoo kale aad rabto in aad ka qeyb gasho.

Waxaan tixgelin khibradaha ey ilmuhu ka helaaan akhriska af Ingriiska ah, gaar ahaan goorta uu af ingriisku ahayn ilmaha afkooda hooyo.

Waxaan danayn in aan wax dheeri ah ka ogaado ku brashada akhrinta iyo akhriska af aan ahayn afka hooyo ee ilmaha, waxeyna ila tahay in ey tahay mid muhin ah in la ogaado ra'yiga ilmaha iyo waalidiintaba.

Waxaan jeclaan laha in dugsiga kaga wareysto cunugaada, asago ka mid ah koox ilma ah iyo asagoo kaligii ah, waxa uu yahay ra'ygi ey ilmahu ka qabaan akhriska.

Sido klae waxaan jeclaan laha in aan kaa wareysto adiga oo ah waalid/daryeele argtiyaada dhanka akhriska. Wareysigan waxa lagu qaadi kara af aan ahayn af Ingriis, maadaam ey tan u muuqato in ey tahay mid aad u sahlan. Wareysadan waxey ka dhici karaan dugsiga ama gurigaada haddii aad adigu saas door bidi.

Anigu aya qaadi masu'uliyada qeybta shaqadan oo ka mid ah draasad baaritaan shakhsi ah (personal research study) oo qeyb ka ah koorsa lagu barto Institute of Education ee University of London. Macluumaad kasto oo aad ii sheegto adigu ama ilmahu, waxey ahaan mid qarsoodi ii ah. Natijka kasto oo ka soo baxdo draaasaddan iyo warbixin kasto oo qoraal ah midkoodna ma caddeyn doonaan shakhsiyada ilamaha iyo waalidiinta midna.

Fadlan dib ugu soo celi gobalka xaashida ah ee hoos xafiiska dugsiga. Waad ku mahad san tahay waqtigaada oo aad na siisa.

Yours sincerely,

-----  
Reading Research Project

Fadlan sax ☐

Magaca ilmaha:

**Haa, waan u ogolahay ilmaheyga** in uu ka qeyb galo draaasadda ☐

**Maya, uma ogoli ilmaheyga** in ey ka qeyb galaan draasdda ☐

**Maya, ma rabo** in la ila yeesho wareysi oo qeybka ah draasadda ☐

**Haa, waan raba** in la ila yeesho wareysi oo qeyb ka ah draaasadda ☐

Waalid/daryeele ahaan waxaan door bidi in wareysiku ka dhacdo guriga ☐

( **Fadlan na sii lambarka mobaylkaada**) ☐

Waalid/daryeele ahaan waxaan door bidi in wareysigu ka dhaco dugsiga ☐

(**Fadla sheeg waqtiga iyo maalinta kugu habboon**)Magaca waalidka/daryeelaha: ☐

Saxiix



### Appendix 3: Parent/carer invitation letter in Portuguese

Prezado(a)

O(a) seu(sua) filho(a) expressou interesse em participar num estudo sobre leitura. Escrevo-lhe para obter a sua autorização para o(a) seu(sua) filho(a) participar e para saber se você também está interessado(a) em participar.

Eu estou a considerar as experiências da leitura das crianças em inglês, quando não é a sua língua materna; e a experiência da leitura em inglês e/ou na língua materna dos pais/encarregados de educação.

Estou interessada em saber mais sobre a aprendizagem da leitura e sobre ler numa língua que não é a língua usada em casa e acho que as opiniões das crianças e dos pais são muito importantes.

Gostaria de entrevistar o(a) seu(sua) filho(a) na escola, num grupo e individualmente, sobre as opiniões dele(a) sobre a leitura.

Também gostaria de o(a) entrevistar a você como pai/mãe/encarregado de educação sobre as suas próprias atitudes para com a leitura. Esta entrevista pode ser realizada noutra língua que não o inglês, se isto for mais fácil; e pode ter lugar na escola ou em sua casa, se assim o preferir.

Eu estou a realizar este trabalho como um estudo pessoal como parte de um curso no Institute of Education na University of London. Qualquer informação que me seja divulgada por você ou pelo(a) seu(sua) filho(a) será mantida em sigilo. Quaisquer conclusões da investigação e quaisquer relatórios que sejam escritos não identificarão as crianças nem os pais.

Por favor devolva o destacável abaixo à secretaria da escola (school office). Obrigada pelo seu tempo.

Atenciosamente,

Directora do Serviço de Apoio à Literacia

-----  
Projecto de Investigação sobre a Leitura (Reading Research Project)

Por favor assinale com um tique ✓

Nome da criança:

**Sim, autorizo o meu filho** a participar no estudo. ☐

**Não, não quero que o meu filho** participe no estudo. ☐

**Não, não quero ser entrevistado** para este estudo. ☐

**Sim, quero ser entrevistado** para este estudo. ☐

Como pai/mãe/encarregado de educação prefiro ser entrevistado(a) **em casa**. ☐

(Por favor dê-me o seu número de telefone de casa ou do telemóvel para que eu o possa contactar).

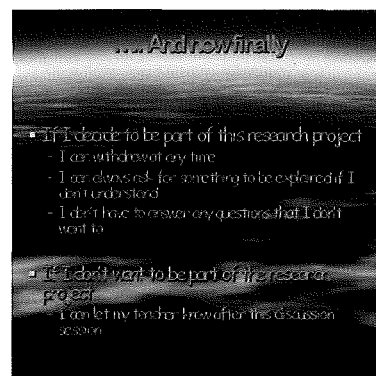
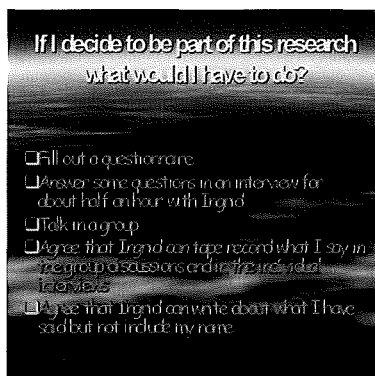
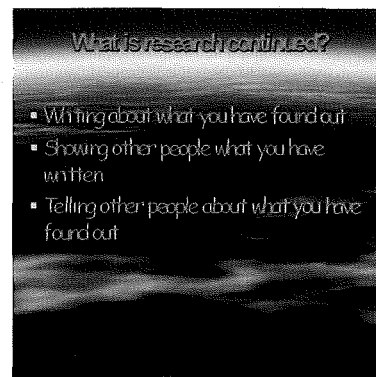
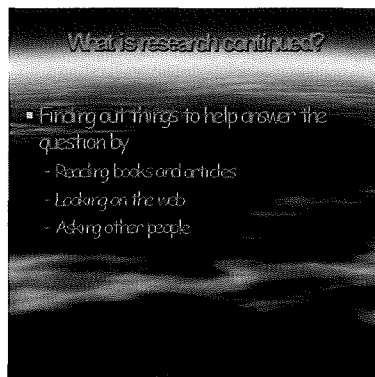
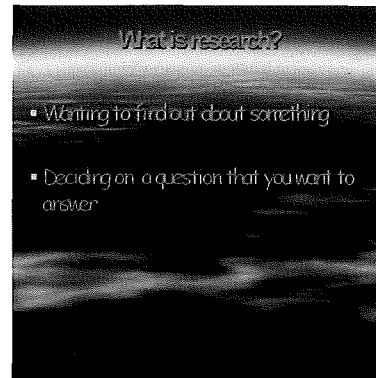
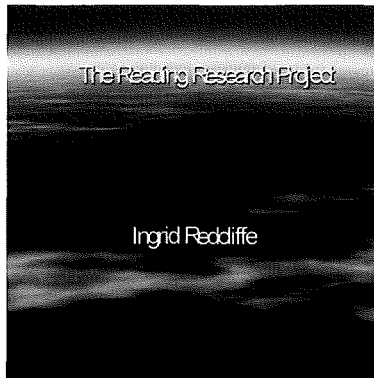
Como pai/mãe/encarregado de educação prefiro ser entrevistado(a) **na escola**. ☐

(Por favor diga que hora é mais conveniente para si)

Nome do pai/mãe/encarregado de educação:

Assinatura:

## Appendix 4: Introductory research presentation



## **Appendix 5: Student interview part 1**

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this research and giving up your time to talk to me today.

### **Individual interview**

- ❖ Introduce topic - reading –interested in what student thinks about reading in English but also elicit if student reads or speaks another language/s
- ❖ What languages do you speak at home (elicit names, level of experience and exposure. Parental languages etc.)
- ❖ Can you read in any of these languages (elicit what- when –extent of use)

### **Part 1**

Explain that the next questions are about reading in English - early experiences of learning to read - memories

- ❖ How did they learn to read
  - Do you remember learning to read? About what age where you. How did it happen?
- ❖ What kind of experience was it?
  - Can you remember any of the first things that you read when you first learnt to read?
  - Where did you enjoy reading most
  - Who did you enjoy reading with most
  - If you wanted to help someone younger learn how to read what do you think they would have to do?

## **Appendix 6: Student Interview part 2.**

### **'Motivation to Read': Conversational Interview**

#### **Motivation to Read Profile**

#### **Conversational Interview**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### **A. Emphasis: Narrative text**

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): I have been reading a good book ..... I was talking with ..... about it last night. I enjoy talking about good stories and books that I've been reading. Today I'd like to hear about what you have been reading.

1. Tell me about the most interesting story or book you have read this week (or even last week). Take a few minutes to think about it. (Wait time.) Now, tell me about the book or story.

Probes: What else can you tell me? Is there anything else?

How did you know or find out about this story?

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> assigned | <input type="checkbox"/> in school     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> chosen   | <input type="checkbox"/> out of school |

Why was this story interesting to you?

#### **B. Emphasis: Informational text**

Suggested prompt (designed to engage student in a natural conversation): Often we read to find out about something or to learn about something. We read for information. For example, I remember a student of mine ..... who read a lot of books about ..... to find out as much as he/she could about ..... Now, I'd like to hear about some of the informational reading you have been doing.

1. Think about something important that you learned recently, not from your teacher and not from television, but from a book or some other reading material. What did you read about? (Wait time.) Tell me about what you learned.

Probes: What else could you tell me? Is there anything else?

How did you know or find out about this book/article?

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> assigned | <input type="checkbox"/> in school     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> chosen   | <input type="checkbox"/> out of school |

Why was this book (or article) important to you? \_

**C. Emphasis: General reading**

1. Did you read anything at home yesterday? \_\_\_\_\_ What?

Do you have any books at school (in your desk/storage area/locker/book bag) today that you are reading? \_\_\_\_\_ Tell me about them.

2. Tell me about your favourite author.

3. What do you think you have to learn to be a better reader?

4. Do you know about any books right now that you'd like to read? Tell me about them.

5. How did you find out about these books?

What are some things that get you really excited about reading books?  
Tell me about...

6. Who gets you really interested and excited about reading books?  
Tell me more about what they do.

### **Appendix 7: Student interview part 3.**

#### **❖ Present experiences of reading**

Draw a picture of what you think is important about reading.

Tell me about this in your picture through drawing.

When child has finished discuss picture

Tell me about your picture.

#### **❖ Out of school reading**

Tell me about any reading that you do when you are not in school

Do you read any thing like magazines or comics or newspapers?

Do you use the internet at all?

Do you use email?

Do you have a website?

## **Appendix 8: Teacher interview schedule**

### **Introduction**

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this research and giving up your time to talk to me today. Just to remind you that the research is about reading and motivation in relation to EAL readers. I also wanted to talk about parental support at home for reading.

### **The first sets of questions are in relation to children**

- ❖ What do you think about motivation in relation to the development of reading?
- ❖ What does the motivated reader bring to their reading?
- ❖ What happens if a reader isn't motivated?
- ❖ Can an unmotivated reader be a successful reader in your experience?
- ❖ Would you describe the children that I have interviewed as motivated and successful readers and why?
- ❖ Is it different for an EAL child to become a motivated reader than for a monolingual child in your experience and why?

### **The next sets of questions are about parents.**

- ❖ Do you think parents have a role to play in helping their children with reading?
- ❖ How can they help?
- ❖ Do you think that the parents of the children that I have interviewed support their children with their reading?
- ❖ What does this support help the children to do?
- ❖ Do you know how these same parents feel about reading and how easy or not it is for them to support their children with reading in any way?

## **Appendix 9: Parents' interview schedule**

### **Introduction**

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this research and giving up your time to talk to me today. Explain questions are about reading and that I am interested in their views as readers who speak more than one language.

### **Questions around areas mentioned below:**

To find out about the parents/carers' initial experiences of learning to read.

To find out about the parents/carers' own experiences of learning to read when they were growing up.

To find out what parents/carers think are the purposes of reading in general for themselves and their children (leisure education employment).

What kinds of reading do parents/carers engage in now?

What kinds of reading do their children bring home from school?

How do they get involved with this?

### **Ideas for additional drawing out in parent/carer interviews**

How specifically do parents help their children with reading?

Why did they decide to do it this way?

What different kinds of reading go on at home with the children i.e. magazine Qur'an school books personal book reading?

Eliciting how parents perceive the value of the different kinds of reading that goes on.



## **Appendix 10: Focus group schedule**

### **Purpose**

To discover

- What the children thought about the experience of being part of the research.
- What they had learnt about the research process.
- What is significant for them in terms of their reading and being bilingual?

### **Introduction**

Explain that in this group all the children have been involved in the individual interviews. Thank them for agreeing to be part of this research and giving up their time to talk to me today. Explain that we are coming together today to talk about their experiences of being involved in the research project. That I have some questions but they ask questions themselves if they want to. They can also comment on what other children say. This is a group discussion sometimes called a focus group because we have a special thing that we are focusing or concentrating on which is the reading research.

### **Introduce procedures**

Only talking one at a time so that the tape can pick up what is being said and give everyone a chance to have his or her say without being interrupted.

Being confident to say what you think because no one is judging. There are no right or wrong answers only your own opinion.

### **Possible areas for discussion in the focus group.**

- ❖ The students' experience of being interviewed.
- ❖ Reasons for agreeing to be interviewed?
- ❖ What was learnt about the research process?
- ❖ Reading and being bilingual.

## Appendix 11: Pictures about reading with student comments

The students were asked to draw a picture about what they thought was important about reading to them and if they seemed puzzled I expanded it by saying what they liked about reading or what was 'good about reading'.

All the students' pictures and comments are included here apart from Izabel's picture. She was unavailable to complete this part of the interview.

Azhar

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR  
OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Azhar said about his picture:-

*I am in the Tv room in the evening and normally I would be watching TV but the TV is off I can lie down on the sofa I am reading a funny book like 'the twits' (well known childrens book by Roald Dalh) until my sister comes to watch TV. My sister has come into the room and she has bought a book to give to me its Harry Potter maybe*

Muhammed

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR  
OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Muhammed said about his picture:-

*Me and my friends in the library in the school I am waving at my friends*

Adra

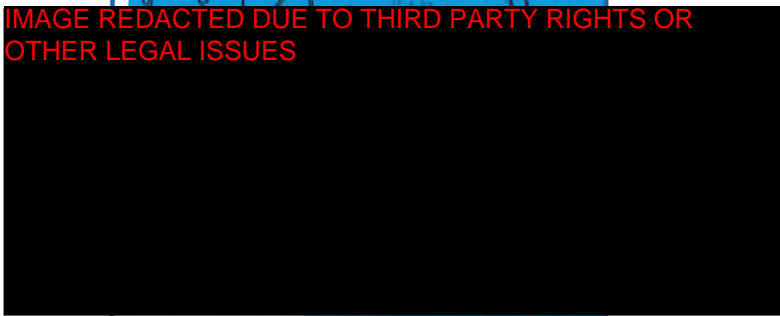
IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR  
OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Adra's interview was conducted with an Urdu interpreter and she did not want to make a comment about her picture

Bisher

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR  
OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Bisher said about his picture:-:

*This is army people they caught rebels and they are taking them to the thingy. The jail they have a gun in their hands so other rebels don't shoot them. It's basically about a funny version of world war. The places involved in world war do this and stuff that's why I just like books like army guns. I like adventure stories. I was at my cousin's house in Leicester and we went there right. His name is M he likes reading they live in Leicester I went there yeah he said read this book and I said yeah. I like reading*

Nihal

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Nihal said about his picture:-:

*That's me that drawing, that's what makes me happy. It's a bubble. What makes me happy like if it's got nice phrases and makes me want to read it more, if it's exciting and makes me happy and makes me smile*

Abraar

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Abraar said about his picture:-:

*These are my two friends who I talk to about reading they like reading... this is a book that I am reading at the moment Harvey Angel. I like reading*

Saabiq

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER  
LEGAL ISSUES



Saabiq said about his picture:-:

*I will do a bubble around... what makes me happy about reading?*

Umar

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER  
LEGAL ISSUES



Umar said about his picture:

*If someone just sits when there is loads of noise they are probably not going to be able to concentrate on their book whereas if they sat somewhere it is quiet then they could be like more into the book and they wouldn't be distracted (one side) there's people in a noisy space (on the other side) here is where you are supposed to read maybe in your classroom you could have a quiet place and no one is allowed to make noise .... because I can't concentrate in a noisy place and I am trying to read the book ...because if you can't concentrate and you sit in a noisy place you are not really going to understand when you're reading and you are not really going to know what is going on ...if you concentrate you can say that was a really good book... that makes me feel good that I know what happened in the book and I can understand it better than if I was in a noisy place ....if it's a good book you can really enjoy it.*

Adra

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER  
LEGAL ISSUES



Adra said about her picture:-

*It's a wedding dress I think because some people have weddings and the wedding Peach is a German story- these are shoes these are flowers. There is a fairy in the wedding. The fairy is going to get married to a boy a man a. the wedding in nearly going to stop because they were both fighting about the man*

Sharfaa

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR  
OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Sharfaa said about her picture:-

*I'm lying in bed reading my book about Matilda*



Aadil

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR  
OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Aadil said about his picture:-

*A book about football that I read with my friend Stan*  
*Another book about fighting that my big brother had at home*

Jarek

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR  
OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Jarek about his picture:-

*These are all the things which are important to me about reading*  
In his picture there are drawings of characters from favourite books

Sidrah

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR  
OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Sidrah about her picture:-

*Just a rainbow with the twins from Tracey Beaker*

Zaki

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS  
OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Zaki said about his picture:-

*Reading is good serious but sometimes you can have a laugh feel better relaxes  
you*



Sumairaa

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR  
OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Sumairaa about her picture:-

*I'm watering a plant and I'm reading while I'm doing it*

Zaakirah

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR  
OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Zaakirah said about his picture:-

*Ok when I think of reading I think of a square because reading is just like a book. It's like the front cover of a book Reading is reading. Reading is like when there's letters and when you are trying to sound those letters out and read it loud and I draw colour pencils because in the book sometimes they have colour in the book on the pictures, they have some colours on the pictures and on the back and all of that. So that's how, colour in the book there can be colour pages Inside it would be maybe a fairy book, a mermaid book, an adventure book, a fantasy book.*

Aaleyah

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Aaleyah's interview was conducted with a Somali interpreter and she did not want to make a comment about her picture.

## Appendix 12: Learning to read in English

Theme: Early Experiences of Learning to Read	
Students	Learning to read in English at home
<b>School A.</b>	
Sumairaa	<i>My mum taught me how to read... Yeah, we had a book and she reads one word and I repeat after her.</i>
Zaakirah	<i>I can remember I was small and then my mum got me a book and she was saying the alphabet and I was reading after her.... then my mum started getting me books</i>
Nihal	remembers learning with his father what he calls 'the ABC' in both Arabic and English at an early age, which he found difficult to recall exactly but his recollections ranged between 1 and 4 years of age.
Bisher	
Sidrah	<i>Well, the first time we start doing our ABCs ... (was in the) nursery.</i>
<b>School B.</b>	
Azhar	<i>I learnt to read but I'm not sure Like different words, the meaning of different bits and other things</i>
Muhammed	seemed to talk about learning to read when he came to England
Adra	learnt to read in Germany
Aamina	learnt to read in Germany
<b>School C.</b>	
Umar	Didn't mention
Sharfaa	Started her education in Pakistan but in an English medium school.
Zaki	<i>No when I came to school, when I came in reception they were just telling us the names and everything. And they were mostly doing a little alphabets and numbers and they were doing mostly fun, like playing. it wasn't that hard Yeah when you're reading they are reading it to you and they can make plays and something</i>

	<p><i>like that....that. There were some alphabet books. In the alphabet books they used to do A for Apple like that and pictures.</i></p> <p><i>No when I came to school, when I came in reception they were just telling us the names and everything. And they were mostly doing little alphabets and numbers and they were doing mostly fun, like playing.</i></p> <p><i>In book and then the teacher would put a line</i></p>
Jarek	<i>Because my mum used to teach me – reading in Polish and also in English.</i>
Aaleyah	interpreter reported that she went to school in Finland not clear if she learnt to read in Finnish
Aadil	His mother had taught him at home and he was able to read a little in Somali.
Izabel	
Abraar	First experiences in Pakistan learning to read in English and Urdu
Saabiq	Learnt in current school. His dad also taught him at home

**Appendix 13: Learning to read in English when you speak another language at home.**

Learning to read in English when you speak another language at home	
<b>Students</b>	
<b>School A</b>	
Sumairaa	<i>It was my first time so I didn't feel like, I didn't feel anything coz I didn't know English. It wasn't that hard <u>it was quite easy.</u></i>
Zaakirah	<i>I can't remember much.</i>
Nihal	<i>Didn't mention learning to read was either difficult or easy.</i>
Bisher	<i><u>Yeah a little bit hard</u> because when I used to learn to read, I couldn't read I used to say everything wrong.. Yeah because when I used to read and everyone used to know my teacher said first of all do you know how to read, so I said no and so he gave me a book and if it said once upon a time I used to spell it out, all the letters.</i>
Sidrah	<i><u>Exciting</u></i>
<b>School B.</b>	
Azhar	<i><u>Kind of ( difficult)</u> Like different words, the meaning of different bits and other things. Like how you say it sometimes</i>
Muhammed	<i><u>It was a bit hard</u> because I didn't know the language and I had to read as well.</i>
Adra	<i>didn't mention</i>
Aamina	<i>learning to read in German was easy . <u>English was harder</u></i>
<b>School C.</b>	
Umar	<i><u>Well it was a bit hard</u> because some words, like when I was small some words were a bit hard for me and as I grew up it became easier and easier Well some of them were really really long and I didn't know how to pronounce them or read them</i>

Sharfaa	<p>No it was in Pakistan, I was six when I came to England Difficult because the English accent was different from what I used to learn in Pakistan <u>so I found it difficult.</u></p> <p>They said the word bit different, so here I got a bit confused with the meaning .. Because in Pakistan it was like a different word and different accent and so I didn't really understand</p> <p>Yeah when I start reading harder books and they help me to learn the meanings and new words Because I read English books at home and I spoke a bit of English with my mum and my brother.</p>
Zaki	<p>There was ... <u>it was a bit easier for me.</u> (learning to read in English) Well, cos everyone in my family could speak my language. They would always speak it and when my mum would always say a simple word I would ask her what does that mean she would say [for example] hello and then if I didn't get another word she would say we were speaking about so and so.</p> <p>It is.. not different for me to learn to read in English because although I've got my mum and my dad and all my aunties that mostly speak in my language, I usually speak English to them and I speak English a lot to my mum and I speak English and my language to my dad. and I only speak English to my brother. To my auntie I speak both, to my grandma I speak both as well. I think I am more used to English than my own language.</p>
Jarek	<p>Jarek remembers it being hard at the beginning: Well, <u>it was just hard</u> because it was just new and that's why I found it hard. He then recalled how his knowledge began to develop: At first I read these little books for little boys then I started reading these bigger books, then I read even bigger kind of books</p>
Aaleyah	said it was <u>little hard</u> for her to read
Aadil	<u>its easy</u> ... books ... its fun
Izabel	First I learnt in Portugal and then I came here. <u>It was a bit difficult.</u>
Abraar	In Pakistan not that many people speak English and here not that many people speak Urdu so I have to speak both languages only Zaki and a boy in Year 4 are the only people who can read Urdu and English its just

	<i>different</i>
Saabiq	<i><u>Quite difficult t</u> because I was little that time I couldn't even understand English</i>

#### Appendix 14: Reading and excitement.

Student pseudonym	What's exciting about reading books	Which person/s makes reading exciting	How does this person/s make reading exciting
Sumairaa	<i>When something exciting is gonna happen and if I had to, for example, go to sleep and I wanted to know what was gonna happen next.</i>	<i>No, I do it by myself.</i>	n/a
Zaakirah	<i>Like sometimes something is about to happen and the teacher says stop, its finished the lesson.</i>	<i>my friends my teacher</i>	<i>my friends by recommending books swapping books with me reading themselves my teacher by reading good books to the class.</i>
Nihal	<i>Finding out what is going out happen.</i>	Not given	n/a
Bisher	Not given	Not really	n/a
Sidrah	<i>Competitions and reading football books</i>	Friends	<i>We talk about books</i>
Azhar	Adventure books	<i>'My sister'</i>	<i>By reading herself and giving me books to read instead of watching the television.</i>



Muhammed	<i>Finding out what's going to happen</i>	Friends	<i>They say you have to read this - encourage you to read.</i>
Adra	<i>Finding out what is going to happen.</i>	Sister	<i>Tell me about books</i>
Aamina	Not given	Not given	Not given
Umar	<i>Well, mostly like it gets interesting when someone's gonna die, or someone needs to save someone else or something like that.</i>	<i>From the cover</i>	No answer
Sharfaa	No answer	'My mum'	<i>'Cos she's read books and then she says, "Read this one; it might help you to think a bit to think and get good words and good vocabulary".</i>
Zaki	<i>Sometimes, you know, when the teacher is reading; you can't keep begging the teacher to keep reading.</i>	Not sure	n/a
Jarek	<i>Fighting, where there's like a gun and then I have to stop reading and read tomorrow, I'm excited. And also when they finally discover something.</i>	<i>My best friend Callum. And my other best friend Ben.</i>	Not given
Aaleyah	No answer	No answer	n/a
Aadil	'exciting'	Friend at school	'My friends helping me.'

Izabel	<i>When you start reading it and you have to stop because it gets really exciting.</i>	Friends at home and school older brother at secondary school	<i>Talking about books with friends and older brother reading to me.</i>
Abraar	<i>What's going to happen in them'</i>	<i>Dylan, a friend in class</i>	<i>Talking about books - but only for about 10 minutes.</i>
Saabiq	<i>interesting things like football'</i> <i>'knowledge'</i> <i>'entertainment</i>	<i>Dad told me to read books.'</i> <i>'My mum, other friends at home, cousins.</i>	<i>Cousins talking about exciting books recommend books, mainly football, some funny adventure.</i>

### Appendix 15: Information reading.

Student pseudonym	Title of information text	The subject matter	What was learnt	How they found out about the text	Why of interest/ importance
School A.					
Sumairaa	Not given	Science book	<i>Something about when an experiment is completed. If their prediction was right or wrong.</i>	In the classroom	Personal interest in experiments about ice and water
Zaakirah	Not given	<i>Arts and crafts during the time of the Greeks</i>	<i>Married women were not allowed to go to the Olympic Games because the men used to be naked.</i>	Self chosen from school library for homework project	For homework and for the class topic
Nihal	Not given	<i>Football. I've got two football books. One is like a poster book. I've got a sticker book and I've got cards.'</i>	<i>That there were players as skilful as Ronaldo. That Rooney was best at shooting.</i>	At home	Because I am a Man U football supporter.
Bisher	Not given	1000 things you must know about science.	<i>In the Stone Age they used to use wooden tools to make food.</i>	In the classroom	<i>One day I saw my friend reading it and it looked nice.</i>

Sidrah	Not given	Christianity and Islam	<i>That Muslims respect Christians as they respect themselves and that a Christian prays in a church similar to a mosque as Islam and Christianity have things in common'</i>	Text provided in Islamic studies in school	<i>Because Muslims have to learn religious information before they die and they [Muslims] have to learn Arabic because it is the language used in "Jarekna". [word mentioned in the Qur'an generally interpreted as paradise]</i>
School B.					
Azhar	Play	Play of a story used in assembly	<i>The word narcissistic with the meaning of being big headed</i>	In school	<i>Because I learnt something new.</i>
Muhammed	Not given	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Adra	Not given	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Aamina	Not given	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School C.					
Umar	Not given	n/a	<i>'How to pronounce words properly.'</i>	n/a	n/a

Sharfaa	Not given	Unclear	<i>I learnt lots of the words from the book.</i>	In the classroom	<i>Learnt a lot about words.</i>
Zaki	Not given	Science book	<i>About how sound is created.</i>	School	<i>It's important to meet personal targets</i>
Jarek	Encyclopedia	Science	<i>I've learnt loads of Science now'. I'm almost top of my class. I learn loads from it'</i>	<i>My Auntie bought it for me and I didn't want it at first but then I tried it and it was interesting and then I liked it.</i>	<i>It helped me.</i>
Aaleyah	Not given	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Aadil	Not given	Football books	<i>About football</i>	In school	<i>My friend at school</i>
Izabel	Not sure; maybe Vasco da Gama	History	<i>That someone from Portugal made his way from Portugal to India.'</i>	talked about this historical figure at home	Public library book as part of a school project with help from the librarian in own time
Abraar	Thrass card	Spelling	<i>How to pronounce the words properly.</i>	In school	<i>Helped me pronounce properly, then I learn more words, then I can understand more.'</i>

Saabiq	Not given	History	<i>Learnt about Tudors</i>	School activity	<i>Topic important for knowledge</i>
		Football book	<i>Learnt about football</i>	From home	<i>Because I have been playing football since I was a little kid so its quite important to me</i>

## Appendix 16: Religious reading.

<b>Theme: Religious reading</b>	
<b>Students</b>	
<b>School A</b>	
Sumairaa	<i>Didn't mention reading the Qur'an</i>
Zaakirah	<i>Didn't mention reading the Qur'an but did engage me in conversation at the end of the interview about issues in relation to do with being a Muslim and my reaction as a non Muslim I have chosen not to include this information because it would threaten the anonymity of the school.</i>
Nihal	<i>The Qur'an. Every single day except for Saturdays. I used to (go to Arabic school) but now I don't because it's easy for me now I used to go about 1 year ago, 2 years or 3 years and I was top of the whole school. (Reading at home the previous day) The Qur'an.</i>
Bisher	<i>reported reading the Qur'an</i>
Sidrah	<i>It's not books it's like Qur'an... Yeah, theres books but not in Arabic they are in English, so there's some books you read about the prophets and how they were created and stories about them.... No there's some stuff and they are called duas (prayers). that's means when you want to make something happen so you read, like if someone's in the hospital you make duas that they get out and they will be safe and stuff there's Arabic... Yeah it's like that but we just say it, like sometimes you say it three times or two There's different ones. There's like sickness, lots of stuff.</i>
Azhar	<i>(I read) the Qur'an. You know when you go Mosque and I read it with my mum sometimes I can read the Qur'an but Arabic's hard to read</i>
Muhammed	<i>I am learning Arabic (I go to the Moqsue) (on)... Saturday I can read the Qur'an a bit</i>
Adra	<i>didn't mention reading the Qur'an</i>
Aamina	<i>Majidah the interpreter reported that Aamina reads the Qur'an at home every day</i>
Umar	<i>didn't mention reading the Qur'an</i>

Sharfaa	didn't mention reading the Qur'an
Zaki	<i>Qur'an Thursday and Wednesday teacher comes to my house</i>
Jarek (non Muslim)	Didn't mention reading any religious texts
Aaleyah	<i>Fathia (interpreter) reported that Mum teach her to read the Qur'an She said the Qur'an has some pages, some she has to read some pages and sometimes mum helps her to read and sometimes she goes to the computer and the computer helps her to read. She said she went to a Qur'an school before but they didn't teach her very well, they were just teaching her the alphabet. So she doesn't go to any Qur'an school anymore.</i>
Aadil	Didn't mention reading the Qur'an
Izabel non Muslim	Didn't mention reading any religious texts
Abraar	<i>I go to the mosque five days a week for two hours and I read the Qur'an there, but I don't understand it. I am a Muslim man I do read the Qur'an in Mosque I go 5 times a week for 2 hours but I don't understand it.</i>
Saabiq	<i>I read the Qur'an at home six times a week, (he used to read at the mosque and read the Qur'an there twice a week. He said he read without understanding it). It's different because it not like something to do with some fun or something. It's really important to me, but if you read it – it makes me feel happy inside and makes my day at school go well.</i>



# Appendix 17: Narrative reading.

Student	Title of most interesting book/story	Content of most interesting book/story	Why this book is of interest	How the student found out about the book
Sumairaa	The Monster in the Wardrobe	Detailed account of the plot of the story	<i>the way the spiders came in and the monster came in. It's got good illustrations.</i>	Self chosen from the books in the classroom
Zaakirah	Hacker	Crime suspense story. Detailed account of the plot of the story	<i>Gripping story that you find out what happens in it.</i>	Book read by the teacher in class
Nihal	The Blurred Man	Mystery. Detailed account of the plot of the story	Not answered	Friend was reading it
Bisher	The Vicious Vikings	Detailed account of the content	<i>It was funny and it taught facts as well'</i>	(I found it in) 'a shop, like a Matalan [clothes store]. There were kids' books and stuff. I started reading it.
Sidrah	Tracey Beaker	<i>It's about two twins who thought they were the only twins in the whole world. They enter a competition on the television.'</i>	<i>It's a bit funny. Exciting because you want to find out what happens next.</i>	
Azhar	Dennis the Menace	jokes	fun	Self chosen

Muhammed	Extreme Survival	<i>It's about a plane. There were rugby players and they crashed near the mountains and then they didn't have any food. There were lots of airplanes passing them. So then they didn't have food so then they had to eat the dead.</i>	Not answered	Self chosen from the books in the classroom (book corner)
Adra	The Wedding Peach	Tale of good over evil	<i>Parents said that bad people don't prosper.</i>	Sister
Aamina	The Chocolate Cake	Not given	Not given	Not given
Umar	Collection of books: The Secrets of Droon	<i>It's these people in a basement they have a trap door and when they go into the trap door they come into a totally different world called Droon.</i>	<i>I like a lot of interesting things like monsters and stuff that you would not really see anywhere.</i>	<i>I went to the book corner to choose one. I just saw it coz the front cover was colourful and had loads of stuff on it.</i>
Sharfaa	The More the Merrier	Detailed account of the content	Not answered	<i>I went to the library and I was looking for Anne Fine's books that I haven't read. So I saw The More the Merrier, I read the blurb and thought it might be interesting.</i>

Zaki	Aragon	Talked about the story	<i>'Like my brother and I at home'</i>	Book from school
Jarek	South by South East	<i>In the end it turned out to be the person you least expected.</i>	Read a book by the same author in literature circles in school, so decided to read another book by the same author.	Teacher introduced as part of reading curriculum
Aaleyah	Horrid Henry	Not given	<i>funny.</i>	Sister
Aadil	<i>Books about fighting - power books</i>	<i>'Fighting wars</i>	<i>Things boys are interested in.</i>	Friend at school
Izabel	There's a boy in the girls' bathroom: Louis Sacker  The other side of truth: Beverley Naidoo	Individual account of main features of plot.  <i>A very sad story. In-depth description of this moving story of events in South Africa</i>	<i>interesting because it makes us feel we are in her shoes. Her mother got shot and she didn't do anything wrong.</i>	Friend in class  Book is part of reading project in school 'The power of reading'
Abraar	Captain Underpants	Amusing children's story	<i>I like funny books.</i>	<i>My friend in school.</i>
Saabiq	Goal	Fictional story - family story involving a boy in a coma who is brought round by his football hero Zola	<i>interesting because it was about football and it was exciting finding out about whether the boy would survive.</i>	School library

# Appendix 18: Personal reading.

Student	Reading at home the previous day	Book in book bag or equivalent	Favourite author	Future reading choice	How they knew about it
Sumairaa	Nothing	Public library book	Jacqueline Wilson	Ordinary story books and some picture books	Books available at home
Zaakirah	Bethany's Song	The Mean Dream Wonder Machine	<i>Anthony Horowitz and I like Malorie Blackman.</i>	<i>Mr. Majeka books or some, like, horrible science</i>	Books available at home
Nihal	The Qur'an	The Blurred Man	John Grisham as well as Anthony Horowitz	The Falcon's Malteser	
Bisher	Nothing	no	no	none	n/a
Sidrah	Tracey Beaker	Robin Hood	no	Bish Bash Bosh	<i>My friend's reading it right now and I just read the back of the thingy and it sounded like a very nice book.</i>
Azhar	Newspaper	Free book from a burger place	Roald Dahl ('kind of')	Harry Potter books	Older sister has the book
Muhammed	No answer	No answer	ling	The Golden Compass	Friend recommended
Adra	No answer	No answer	No answer	No answer	n/a

Aamina	No answer	No answer	No answer	None	n/a
Umar	No	The Secrets of Droon	Roald Dahl		
Sharfaa	Truffle gar	Becky Bananas  The Sleepover Girls Go Pop	Roald Dahl	The next series of Sleepovers	School
Zaki	Tom Tidler's Ground  Literature Circle Book		Dave Pinkney  Francesca Simon	New Captain Underpants coming out	Friend's dad makes films, the author of Captain Underpants came to the set and so the friend's dad got to hear about the new book coming out
Jarek	The Falcon's Malteser	The Touchstone	Anthony Horowitz  C.S Lewis	French (The French) Confection, which is by Anthony Horowitz. I want to read the whole Alex Rider series, which is 7 books.	Anthony Horowitz books literature circle at school  C.S Lewis and Harry Potter from the films.
Aaleyah	Not given	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	Roald Dahl. I like his books mostly because	Not given	'So that's from school really.'

			<i>he's made one book I think called Fantastic Mr. Fox and it's really good.</i>		
Aadil	Not given	Not given	Not given	Not given	
Izabel	Holes	<i>Books like the ones I've talked about by Louis Sacker and Beverley Naidoo.</i>	no	no	
Abraar	Awesome Attacking (Football)	<i>Harvey Angel</i>	<i>Louis Sacker</i>		My friend
Saabiq	No	Football book	Francesca Simmon Michael Morpugo Paul Jennings	Secret Seven	Friend in class

# Appendix 19: Out of school reading.

Student pseudonym	Newspapers	Comics	Magazines	Emails	internet	Own Website
<b>School A.</b>						
Sumairaa						
Zaakirah		⊗	⊗		⊗	
Nihal		⊗	⊗		⊗	
Bisher			⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
Sidrah						
<b>School B.</b>						
Azhar		⊗			⊗	
Muhammed			⊗		⊗	
Adra						
Aamina						
<b>School C.</b>						
Umar			⊗			
Sharfaa		⊗	⊗			
Zaki			⊗	⊗		⊗
Jarek	⊗	⊗	⊗			
Aaleyah						
Aadil			⊗			
Izabel		⊗	⊗			
Abraar		⊗	⊗		⊗	

## Appendix 20: Early experiences of learning to read

<b>Parents</b>	<i>Early experiences of learning to read</i>
<b>School A.</b>	
Ms. AB.	<i>Little for me (to start school) (I was) 8 .In school (I) learnt it (it) was alright (I had a) book like it (was a) story. It was good Arabic as well.</i>
Ms. AR.	<i>Yes I went to school here, read and write here as well. I found it very difficult (to learn to read in English), especially when you're coming from abroad</i>
Mr. A.	Spoke about going to school in Algeria and mentioned activities that were aimed at developing the word level in reading. Mr. A. said: <i>First learning the alphabet and writing their letters and then using primers. [simple books with pictures]</i> He remembered methods being quite formal but he said that he learnt to read in Arabic and also later in French.
Ms. A.	Ms. A had gone to a state primary school in London and talked about her memories of exciting books and reading stories with her mother and sisters. She remembered particular children's stories and the excitement of pictures and illustrations shared with family.
Ms. H.	<i>We start with alphabet...yes the alphabet with Arabic there is alphabet with little marks. Those marks then we start with little words then pictures. I think I remember.(laughs).. when I went to school.. No I start 5 myself I remember my mum used to ...she take me to nursery. Nursery at 5 yes. Then we start school normally at 7 nursery. Well I used yeah I remember I used to like it because of the picture the colours.. yes with books yes with books... yes pictures colours big letters in Arabic. You see those books why I remember them now because when I go to Morocco I got them for my kids to learn Arabic... this is what I do I got it at home so I used to tell then this how I learned I learned from these books</i>
<b>School B.</b>	
Ms. S.	<i>From age 5 children go to school. At 12</i>



	(we) learn to speak English. We use slate.. books... exercise books
Mr. AH. Ms. AH.	<i>Majidah the Urdu interpreter reported that Mr. and Ms. AH talked about their own experiences of learning to read and write by talking generally about the education system in Pakistan. They said that from the age of 4 to 5, children are learning the alphabet, key words and looking at picture books. Then they start different subjects at the end of the equivalent of Key Stage 2 like history and geography etc. At the age of 11 they start to learn the English language. Additionally they read for entertainment and information.</i>
<b>School C.</b>	
Mr. G.	<i>Mr. G. didn't mention any particular details of learning to read. He said that came to England when he was quite young and therefore went through the English school system.</i>
Ms. AS.	<i>At five years old then I start the school I was very little... we had alphabet and teacher told stories now here (in England) is a better system a lot of learning by heart (in Pakistan)</i>
Ms. Z.	<i>I didn't go to school in early years here. I think I did go to maybe nursery or reception here, and then I went back to my country, Pakistan, and I was there until the age of 14 to 15. It was our like, you know, Urdu ...Yeah, whereas from class 1 to class 5 was just pure Urdu and nothing else. I remember we used to write on, it was a wooden plate type, and we used to write on it with ink and we used to sharpen the pencils with wooden sticks and then dip it in ink and then practise your writing. And then it was like slates with white chalk; we used to practice with that.</i>
Ms. P.	<i>I remember I learnt when I was in between 5 and 6 and I learnt before I went to school because I went at 6 which is unusual because children go at 7. But I went a year earlier and I remember my dad taught me. I don't exactly remember but I can imagine because we teach sounds, like this letter and this letter join .....There are rules, so if you know not too many it's easier. Yes, and it's easier to learn to read (In Polish). Yes I remember I did read a lot compared to other children, yes. No TV .. We didn't watch TV and I remember I liked adventure books....School library mostly.]...No (the</i>

	teachers didn't have to push me) <i>because it (reading) came easy to me.</i>
Ms. AL.	<i>didn't talk about this</i>
Ms. AA.	<i>Fathia explained on Ms. AA.'s behalf that: when she (Ms AA) started the school system the first 2 years were in English language then they start nationalisation after 1972 it was very hard the move into using Somali ..they changed everything the curriculum it was very difficult.</i>

## Appendix 21: Reading history as a young person

<b>Parents</b>	Reading history as a young person
<b>School A.</b>	
Ms. AB.	<i>(I) start high school then the fighting start</i>
Ms. AR.	said that he was a keen reader always with her head in a book reading the texts required for school in England.
Mr. A. Ms. A.	didn't seem to want to talk about this aspect
Ms. H.	Ms. H. also talked about how she loved reading as a young person in Morocco. She recalled the pleasure of long hours spent reading and the seclusion, and the privacy
<b>School B.</b>	
Ms. S.	Ms. S. mentioned briefly that she read magazines.
Mr. AH. Ms. AH.	Mr. and Ms. AH. didn't really answer this question
<b>School C.</b>	
Mr. G.	Talked about how his father couldn't offer him support when I asked about his reading experiences as a young person.
Ms. AS.	With Ms. AS. was that in general it was quiet and sometimes awkward. However, when asked if she had enjoyed reading she became very animated and said how much she loved reading as a young person. She quickly recounted a string of names of writers and poets that she liked, becoming freer in her conversation as she threw out their names in her own language. I later asked during one of the ethnographic interviews about some of the names she had mentioned. Some were famous well-known poets familiar to my Pakistani informant but I had to undertake research on the internet to discover the contemporary writer Bano Qudsia and the feminist poet Bushra Rehman.
Ms. Z.	Seemed overwhelmed by the negative experience of returning to England when she was fifteen and her abilities not being recognised and this seemed to overshadow everything at that time for her.

Ms. P.	Was an avid reader - reading texts that were required for school in Poland. She said she enjoyed them but had no time really to develop her own tastes.
Ms. AL. Ms. AA	<i>Combined their answers to talk via the interpreter about how they remembered the teacher reading poetry in Somalia. They recalled how the poetry would bring images alive. They gave the example of a tree and how you could imagine how beautiful it was and how nature can come alive through the words of poetry. They were both reminiscing about how difficult it was to learn poetry. Ms. AA. and Fathia talked about not being able to learn poetry, and how awful it was having to learn something by heart. They talked more about poetry, and how this gave a perspective on life.</i>

## Appendix 22: Current reading practices

Parents	Current reading practices
<b>School A.</b>	
Ms. AB.	(I) Read in Somali now ..not a lot of books. I have magazines, magazines, news fun for stories about ladies I read now in Somali. She also explained that she reads in: Arabic for my religion.
Ms. AR.	Yes, I mean I read magazines, Woman's Own, Best... Every day I get a Metro... (But) the Metro as soon as I get indoors. I sit and have a cup of tea and I read the Metro.  My husband, my husband loves reading but he reads in his language, Urdu. More in Urdu- and English (likes to read in English), yeah, but he prefers it in Urdu.
Mr. A. Ms. A.	didn't seem to be a priority didn't want to talk about this changed the subject
Ms. H.	I read books in Arabic I'm not going to lie and say every single day but I read for pleasure magazines Arabic magazines I love to read. Sometimes there is an Arabic book fair I go I get some books some novels I read them sometimes poems I love poems. She also bemoaned the fact that she couldn't find the kind of stories that she wanted presumably in Arabic: I wish I could find stories because in Morocco you find a big variety to choose...oh yes even if you can't afford brand new books you can get second hand books. Then Ms. H. smilingly explained that religious reading was sometimes all she managed to do these days because she was so busy. She talked of how she now didn't have that much time to spend reading because of the demands of children and family.
<b>School B.</b>	
Ms. S.	magazines newspapers
Mr. AH. Ms. AH.	Majidah the Urdu interpreter reported that Mr. and Ms. AH:  Still read books from the library, though not so much in English because they have lived

	<p>in Germany. Instead, they read mostly Urdu or German books, but they are now trying to read dual English German split word translations in order to learn English. They would both like to start English courses. Mum reads magazines in Urdu mainly, and a few in English; she finds it easier to read English than speak it. They have plenty of their own books in Urdu at home and they are able to get books in Urdu from the library also. They didn't learn German to a great extent, they just learnt the basics in order to get by and help the children, but now they feel they need to learn English as they will be settling in this country and need it to get on here.</p>
<b>School C.</b>	
Mr. G.	<p>didn't seem to be a priority didn't want to talk about this changed the subject</p>
Ms. AS.	<p>magazines</p>
Ms. Z.	<p>Mostly I read English. Yeah, Yeah I get novels and you know I've read quite a few of those Virginia Andrews, Catherine Clarkson ones, who else, I've read a few of the authors. Another one Hoffman, something Hoffman I've read hers as well. Explained that she doesn't read as much as she used to because of lack of time. She said:</p> <p><i>I do, I used to read quite a lot when I didn't have children but then I just read when they are reading or they see me read and then they can sit and read as well. And before going to sleep it's like a sleeping medicine....Well it gives me some kind of pleasure as well because it's like time for myself And I just get pleasure in reading</i></p>
Ms. P.	<p>Yes. There are lots of free Polish newspapers here so... You know like 5 at least.</p> <p>She also reads novels as part of an English Literature course that she is attending:-</p> <p><i>Yeah well I read the books they introduce me to at my classes and I read 'Animal Farm' and some by 'Oscar Wilde'. Well they are quite difficult for me but not that difficult. I'm now on 'Lord of the Flies', which is quite difficult but I read it in Polish.</i></p> <p>She also engaged in personal reading in her first language.</p> <p><i>When I go to Poland I always bring about two books to read. I'm quite often in Poland so; I sometimes borrow from my friends. I</i></p>

	<i>love 'Lord of the Rings' but that is quite difficult so I read it in Polish.</i>
Ms. AL.	didn't mention
Ms. AA	didn't mention

## Appendix 23: Importance of reading

<b>Importance of Reading</b>	
<b>Parents</b>	
Ms. AB.	<i>Reading is important learning for ... education ...number 1 reading then the writing</i>
Ms. AR.	<i>I say its more knowledge for our children, they learn a bit more through books as well and their grammar.</i>
Ms. A. Mr. A.	Ms. A. allowed Mr A to speak mostly on this subject of the importance of reading although she nodded and seemed to be in agreement. He mentioned it in relation to what his parents hadn't given him which was expanding his thinking and 'developing his brain' as he put it.
Ms. H.	<i>reading is important oh yes..it's good for them knowledge ...spelling- when you read about something you know about it. One day just coincidence you talk about something and you think I read about that. Reading is the best thing they can do. I wish my kids liked it.. were addicted to reading in English I would think okay enjoyment comes first knowledge second... if you don't enjoy something you don't learn nothing obviously I have to enjoy that book to know what's inside I: yes you have to understand the subject you are reading about so you can know what is going on.</i>
<b>School B</b>	
Ms. S.	what was important in reading was gaining knowledge of the world and current events.
Mr. AH.  Ms. AH.	Through the interpreter - They feel that reading should be done both for pleasure and for learning as it enlightens people, gives more knowledge, and expands the thought process. It's important for reading for pleasure as it keeps people interested in things/topics.  Reading is important because education is important and reading is the first thing that children learn.
<b>School C</b>	
Mr. G.	Mr. G. talked very passionately about the importance of reading and intimated that reading was important because competition for desirable work positions was fierce, suggesting that as a member of a linguistic minority one had to be particularly well qualified.
Ms. AS.	<i>important for learning</i>



Ms. Z.	<i>At the early age when I tell them (to read for) information.. but for myself I just read it for pleasure and magazines for more information Yeah and newspapers just for news, yeah</i>
Ms. P.	<i>important for learning and enjoyment</i>
Ms. AL.	<i>didn't mention</i>
Ms. AA.	<i>Became a little upset when we talked about the significance of reading but also mentioned the effect reading can have on the brain. Fathia said on her behalf: The brain opens up (during reading) .. (it is )so difficult. The children were born during the war in Somalia .... they had no education. Nothing.</i>

## Appendix 24: Support for reading at home

Parents	<i>Support for reading at home</i>
School A.	
Ms. AB.	<p>Had help from her older daughters' in terms of supporting reading. She mentioned that she talked about the stories that Sumairaa was reading, although she could not read in English herself, and that Sumairaa's two older sisters helped out with reading as well. Ms. AB. explained that her two daughters help each other and that they also help her son in reception. She said about Sumairaa:</p> <p><i>She is good with reading understand everything English from year 1 ...always loved reading ...older sister not so good. I buy book (she) love read(ing) sometimes she asleep and (still) reading. I say stop now.</i></p> <p><i>I always push reading. I'm not very (good) in English</i></p>
Ms. AR.	<p><i>And if I'm out shopping and she's interested and wants to buy a girlie magazine... Yes, and I say to her yes, ok, you can buy it, and she'll sit and read through it.</i></p> <p>Talked about how it is important that the reading activity is interesting so that the child is interested in reading. She also talked about the importance of spending time, and how she encourages others in her family to do the same thing, in order to encourage reading. She talked about the importance of the library. She added:</p> <p><i>You've got to sit with them and encourage them (to read). That's the way I think of it, encouraging them. You've got to encourage them. That's why I encourage anybody in our family, you know, to spend time with the children, take them to the library.</i></p> <p>She talked about the importance of being a role model by showing that reading was a worthwhile activity:</p> <p><i>Yeah, because if I didn't touch a book then they would say, 'Oh she doesn't read, so why does she tell us to read? (They would</i></p>

	<i>think) I don't want to read, it's just a waste of time.'</i>
Mr. A. Ms. A.	Mr. A. talked (Ms. A. listened at this point) about routines of school reading and Qur'anic reading that were in place at home. He explained how these happened on a daily basis. Time was set aside for Qur'anic reading and school reading which included novels, and also leisure reading of football books and collecting stickers. He talked passionately as Mr G had done about his commitment to providing these activities.
Ms. H.	Spoke about reading to her children and how her husband read the bedtime story: <i>When they were little I used to read them a lot. I used to read them so much.. and dad as well... and her dad as well he used to read them stories every night in English</i> Sometimes didn't have time to hear them read now they were older.
<b>School B.</b>	
Ms. S.	Indicated that Fadilah Adra's older sister who was in the room helping with translating the conversation also helped with supporting Adra with reading. However, she said that what is important is: <i>(Giving) time and following the child..helping them in a way that is in keeping with their nature.</i>
Mr. AH. Ms. AH.	Didn't mention specific support offered.
<b>School C.</b>	
Mr. G.	Mr. G. spoke passionately about the role a parent has in terms of supporting their child with reading at school. He also mentioned the importance of being a role model. He explained that it was important to organise activities and support school reading. He felt it was particularly important that he was involved with his children because his wife did not speak English and therefore she could not be as involved as he would have liked in supporting his son's reading. Mr. G. talked at length about the importance of offering support for home reading that reflects what is going on at school. He talked about how he understood the school system particularly well because he worked

	in community education, and that this was important in helping his child with not only learning to read but what the system values in terms of reading.
Ms. AS.	didn't mention specific support
Ms. Z.	<p>How she read to her children and helped them from an early age.</p> <p><i>From the beginning I used to read to them before sleeping when they were little, yeah. And then I think maybe when they were 4, 5 then I used to get them to read and I used to sit with them and they would read and that's how they started to do it on their own.</i></p> <p><i>Yeah or when they used to, or when they started their playgroup, private nursery. They used to say like oh it's a really nice thing when you put the child to bed and read them a story and . . . . . I don't know I was, from when they were born, when they were tiny I used to buy those little books</i></p>
Ms. P.	<i>I helped him when he was starting but now he makes his own choices and he reads a lot. I didn't know much about the theories. I know he read Narnia and Harry Potter and some of the books I go through but some I don't. but I help him with his polish because he's not very good</i>
Ms. AL.	Didn't mention specific support offered- also talked about the importance of children having their time organised to carry out reading. She seemed to think that the act of organising time during the day would help embed good habits. She said this had started in Finland where children came home for lunch and then could have allocated time later on during the afternoon.
Ms. AA	Had difficulty supporting her son because she felt that her own English language wasn't good enough

## Appendix 25: Reading and Motivation

<b>Reading and Motivation</b>	
<b>Teachers</b>	
<b>School A</b>	
Mr. V.	<i>I make children understand that reading is an important research tool. I say it can help you to learn,</i>
Ms. X.	<i>I develop positive attitudes towards books by actively promoting authors and encouraging children through discussion.</i>  <i>Some of them are interested and they love books. They get motivated when I read a book and say can I take it home</i>
<b>School B.</b>	
Ms. R.	<i>Oh, it's massively important really, because if they're not interested and motivated then what's gonna get them to pick up the <u>book</u>.' [this word was unclear] If she had a chance, she would have her head in a book all the time. She's zooming through them (the books).</i>
Ms. T.	<i>You can't keep them away from books You find them in the corner reading.</i>
<b>School C.</b>	
Ms. Y.	<i>So for them they are always heads in a book, you know, they read a lot.</i>
Ms. W.	<i>Absolutely (motivation is important). If they are not motivated, they will miss out on the enjoyment of stories.</i>

## Appendix 26: Reading and Motivation and the student reading in EAL

<b>Reading and Motivation and the student reading in EAL</b>	
<b>Teachers</b>	
<b>School A</b>	
Mr. V.	didn't differentiate between monolingual and bilingual students
Ms. X.	didn't differentiate between monolingual and bilingual students
<b>School B.</b>	
Ms. R.	<i>Adra is really interested and motivated by reading of what I see at school; I don't think quite so much at the beginning of the year, but she's got more and more so. You know she's been at school a little bit longer now. She's settled in a lot – lot better and just confidence in her fluency levels and everything we do at school has built up a lot this year</i>
Ms. T.	<p><i>It takes more (for the bilingual student) to be motivated because it must be harder. The reading is more difficult for them and often the sounds and everything is more difficult you only have to look at the reading groups and the top group is all children who don't have English as a second language and the bottom groups the vast majority are English as a second language even children who have been here a long time seem to find it hard.</i></p> <p><i>Then her (Aamina) character is so switched on and she takes in a lot more...she is more with it. Aamina has come on leaps and bounds. She just absorbs everything like a sponge .....asks what things mean.</i></p> <p><i>(Azhar is) not as motivated to get going. His parents if I'm honest they are not ... they are nice but not as keen as Aamina's family are keen for her to do well. There are doctors in the family you know obviously they place an importance on education. Whereas Azhar I send lots of sheets (implication being they are not completed) home and mum and dad just don't place any importance on helping him.</i></p>
<b>School C.</b>	
Ms. Y.	<i>You've obviously got Zaki, Umar and you're gonna meet Jarek who are three very able boys anyway. So for them they are always heads in a book; you know, they read a lot. And from all accounts that's something they do on their own ... it's not something that's been enforced by anyone; they just enjoy reading – which is similar to</i>

	<p><i>other able children in the class who are not EAL.</i></p> <p><i>I suppose the difference I find particularly with Aadil and Aaleyah is because their parents are not so confident in English, they are not so confident about going to the library and borrowing books or asking me to borrow books.</i></p> <p><i>I think it becomes problematic because you know ....I'll talk about what they've been up to (the students). Where with those parents who don't speak English I find myself not doing it because you come across as being very patronising because you don't know what their level of English</i></p>
Ms. W.	<p><i>Yes, (motivation is different for EAL students) as the vocabulary in any book is normally always more varied than in classroom speech.</i></p>

**Appendix 27: Perceptions of parents' role in supporting their children with reading at home**

<i>Perceptions of parents' role in supporting their children with reading at home</i>	
<b>Teachers</b>	
<b>School A</b>	
Mr. V.	<p>Spoke about a generalised notion of 'parents' that seemed to be formed from experiences they he had had with friends and their own families</p> <p>talked about the importance of parent support he made generalised comments about how some parents couldn't speak English so support was limited <i>She didn't speak English, and couldn't help with reading.</i></p>
Ms. X.	<p>Spoke about a generalised notion of 'parents' that seemed to be formed from experiences they she had had with the parents of children she had taught in the school. .</p> <p>Spoke about how some of the Muslim parents might not consider reading (by this she meant the reading of fiction) to be important and therefore would not actively support their children with reading. She said that this was because they were very 'religious':</p> <p><i>Sometimes parents may be very religious and don't thinks its (reading) important.</i></p> <p><i>They (the parents) do not always see the place for it (reading). Often parents haven't been educated here; they don't understand what is important; they are not aware of the system.</i></p>
<b>School B.</b>	
Ms. R.	<p>(The parents) <i>can't sit and go through newspaper articles and sort of have discussions in English the way that obviously other children might do.</i></p> <p><i>They (speaking of Ms. S. and other parents with similar linguistic skills in English) can't sit necessarily and hear children read in English.</i></p>
Ms. T.	Ms. T. talked about how informal contact with parents became almost impossible in this situation and how she felt that students 'missed out' in these situations
<b>School C.</b>	
Ms. Y.	<p>felt that students acting as interpreters for their parents was not appropriate and this might also impact on motivation.</p> <p><i>it's just you don't want always the child to be the</i></p>



	<p><i>mediator because sometimes it's not appropriate Aadil came in for instance last parents evening and he was having to help translate the conversation and yet his English isn't strong enough to do that and it was just. And so I think in terms of motivation I might not be as, you know to help your child do xyz because I don't have the ability to have that conversation with them.</i></p> <p><i>I think it becomes problematic because you know ....I'll talk about what they've been up to (the students). Where with those parents who don't speak English I find myself not doing it because you come across as being very patronising because you don't know what their level of English (is)</i></p>
Ms. W.	<p>Ms W. talked about parents who 'don't speak much English' and how this can result in parents being unable to liaise with the class teacher.</p> <p><i>I don't think (they are able to help with reading) as they have very limited English and don't speak English at home.</i></p>

**Appendix 28: Table of students' English fluency stages and National Curriculum (NC) reading levels**

Student	English fluency stage	Year 5 English reading NC level
<b>School A.</b>		
Sumairaa	4	3a
Zaakirah	4	3b
Nihal	4	3c
Bisher	4	3b
Sidrah	4	3a
<b>School B.</b>		
Azhar	3	3b
Muhammed	3	3b
Adra	2	2b
Aamina (In current school less than a year)	2	2b
<b>School C.</b>		
Umar	4	3a
Sharfaa	4	3b
Zaki	4	4c
Jarek	4	4c
Aaleyah	3	1b
Aadil (In current school less than a year)	2	1c
Izabel	4	2c
Saabiq	4	2c
Abraar	3	3c

## Appendix 29: CLPE Reading Scale 2 Ages 8 – 12

Level	Description	NC Level
<b>Inexperienced reader 1</b>	Experience as a reader has been limited. Generally chooses to read very easy and familiar texts where illustrations play an important part. Has difficulty with any unfamiliar material and yet may be able to read own dictated texts confidently. Needs a great deal of support with the reading demands of the classroom. Over-dependent on one strategy when reading aloud; often reads word by word. Rarely chooses to read for pleasure.	1-2c/b
<b>Less experienced reader 2</b>	Developing fluency as a reader and reading certain kinds of material with confidence. Usually chooses short books with simple narrative shapes and with illustrations, and may read these silently; often re-reads favourite books. Reading for pleasure often includes comics and magazines. Needs help with the reading demands of the classroom and especially with using reference and information books.	2b/c
<b>Moderately experienced reader 3</b>	A confident reader who feels at home with books. Generally reads silently and is developing stamina as a reader. Is able to read for longer periods and cope with more demanding texts, including children's novels. Willing to reflect on reading and often uses reading in own learning. Selects books independently and can use information books and materials for straightforward reference purposes, but still needs help with unfamiliar material, particularly non-narrative prose.	3
<b>Experienced reader 4</b>	A self-motivated, confident and experienced reader who may be pursuing particular interests through reading. Capable of tackling some demanding texts and can cope well with the reading of the curriculum. Reads thoughtfully and appreciates shades of meaning. Capable of locating and drawing on a variety of sources in order to research a topic independently.	4
<b>Exceptionally experienced reader 5</b>	An enthusiastic and reflective reader who has strong established tastes in fiction and/or non-fiction. Enjoys pursuing own reading interests independently. Can handle a wide range of texts, including some adult material. Recognises that different kinds of texts require different styles of reading. Able to evaluate evidence drawn from a variety of information sources. Is developing critical awareness as a reader.	5

## **Appendix 30: Stages of fluency in English**

### **STAGES OF FLUENCY IN ENGLISH**

These stages are designed to assist in assessing different levels of support needed by bilingual English learners. The stages described require judgements about pupils' knowledge of English as it relates to the English language demands of the classroom. The term "bilingual" refers to pupils who live in two languages and have access to, or need to use two or more languages at home and at school. It does not mean that they have fluency in both languages or that they are competent and literate in both languages.

#### **Stage 1: Bilingual learners new to English.**

Makes contact with another child in the class. Joins in activities with other children but may not speak.

Uses non-verbal gestures to indicate meaning particularly needs likes and dislikes. Watches carefully what other children are doing, and often imitates them.

Listens carefully and often 'echoes' words and phrases of other children and adults. Needs opportunities for listening to the sounds, rhythms and tunes of English through songs, rhymes, stories and conversations.

If young may join in repetitive chorus of a story. Beginning to label objects in the classroom and personal things. Beginning to put words together into *holistic* phrases (e.g. me no want not go etc.)

May be involved in classroom learning activities in the first language with children who speak the same first language.

May choose to use first language only in most contexts. May be willing to write in the first language (if s/he can), and invited to. May be very aware of negative attitudes by peer group to the first language. May choose to move into English through story and reading, rather than speaking.

#### **Stage 2: Bilingual learners becoming familiar with English**

Growing confidence in using the English s/he is acquiring. Growing ability to move between the languages, and to hold conversations with peer groups.

Simple holistic phrases may be combined or expanded to create new ideas. Beginning to sort out small details (e.g. 'he' and 'she' distinction) but more interested in communicating meaning than in 'correctness'. Increasing control of the English tense system in particular contexts such as story-telling, reporting events and activities that s/he has been involved in, and from book language.

Understands more English than s/he can use. Growing vocabulary for naming objects and events, and beginning to qualify nouns with adjectives (e.g. colour, size, quantity) and using simple adverbs. Increasingly confident in taking part in activities with other children through English.

Beginning to write simple stories often modelled on those s/he has heard read aloud. Beginning to write simple accounts of activities s/he has been involved in, but may need considerable support. Confident enough to substitute words from her/his first language if s/he needs to. Continuing to rely on support of her/his friends. Very sensitive to criticism of peers about her/his use of the first and second language.

#### **Stage 3: Bilingual pupils becoming confident as users of English.**

Shows great confidence in using English in most social situations. This confidence may mask the need for support in taking on other registers (e.g. science investigation, historical research.) Growing command of the syntactic structure, and developing an understanding of metaphor or pun.

Widening vocabulary from reading of story, poems and information books and from being involved in maths and science investigations and other curriculum areas. May choose to explore complex ideas (such as drama/role play) in the first language with children who share the same first language. Increasingly sure of development of the verb system (e.g. relationships of time, use of modal verbs) the pronoun system and sentence structure. Pronunciation may be very native-speaker like, especially that of young children

#### **Stage 4: Bilingual pupils who are very fluent users of English in most social and learning contexts.**

A very experienced user of English, and exceptionally fluent in most contexts. May continue to need support in understanding subtle nuances of metaphor, and in Anglo-centric cultural context in poems and literature. Confident in exchanges and collaboration with English-speaking peers.

Writing confidently in English with a growing competence over different genre. Continuing new development in English often revealed in writing. Will move with ease between English and the first language depending on the contexts s/he finds her/himself in, what s/he judges appropriate, and the encouragement of the school.

**Special Schools only: pupils who cannot be classified.** This category should be used only for pupils for whom it would be inappropriate to attempt to classify their ability in English because their speech and/or comprehension of any spoken language (not only English) is absent or very limited. Please include here pupils who suffer from language delay or disorder or a severe auditory or motor disability which makes speech very difficult for them. **Please code these pupils as '6'**

### Appendix 31: Research journal extract

Ms. AS. spoke only a little English. The class teacher considered her an approachable parent. The teacher suggested she was similar to many other linguistic minority mothers who had been living in England for some time and still 'didn't speak much English'. I remember thinking myself, part way through the interview, that I should have used an interpreter and why had I not somehow managed to prevent this. What intrigued me is why a parent would agree to be interviewed, in connection with a project such as this, when she spoke very little English. However, I felt at the end as with all the parents that perhaps they came forward to be interviewed because they had an interest in the research subject. Sharfaa, her daughter, herself a little lacking in confidence, was an able motivated reader. Sharfaa explained that it was her mother who made reading exciting. She said:

Cos she's read books and then she says, "Read this one; it might help you to think a bit to think and get good words and good vocabulary".'

What emerged during the interview was how passionate Mrs. AS was about reading in her home language. Her whole body language - changed - she lit up as she quickly gave out names in Urdu that I couldn't understand. I had to ask her to slow down so that I could write them down. Later after talking to G. I realised what a wealth of literature she was talking about. Her reported interest in literature included a traditional poet laureate of her native Pakistan, a Lenin peace prize winner, a contemporary woman's writer and a feminist poet/performance artist. Did she find the interview pedestrian?

## **Appendix 32: Borough Learning Resources Service recommended reads**

<b>Book:</b>	<b>N.C. Reading Level</b>
FINE Anne, Stranger Danger.	3
SIMON Francesca, Horrid Henry's Nits.	3
DAHL Roald, Fantastic Mister Fox.	3
DAHL Roald, George's Marvellous Medicine.	3/4
FINE Anne, How to write really badly!	3/4
BLACKMAN Malorie, Hacker.	4
BLACKMAN Malorie, Operation Gadgetman.	4
BLACKMAN Malorie, Pig-Heart Boy.	4
DAHL Roald, Matilda.	4
DAHL Roald, The Twits.	4
GARNER Alan Elidor.	4/5
HENDRY Diana, Harvey Angell.	4
LEWIS C.S., The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe.	4
NAIDOO Beverley, The Other Side of Truth.	4
ROWLING, J.K., Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.	4
SACHAR Louis, Holes.	4
SACHAR Louis, There's a boy in the girls' bathroom.	4
WILSON Jacqueline, The Story of Tracy Beaker.	4