Language, identity and the school curriculum: challenges and opportunities for students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) in ‘low-incidence’ secondary school contexts

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PhD

2022

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Northumbria University at Newcastle for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Research undertaken in the Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences

Institute of the Humanities

February, 2022

ABSTRACT

In the education system in England, there are now over 1.6 million students studying through the medium of English as an Additional Language (EAL) (DfE 2020a). This population is unevenly distributed across regions in England; whilst a significant proportion attend schools in large urban areas, such as London and Birmingham, over half (54%) of schools elsewhere have less than 5% of their school population classed as EAL (Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015: 5). A vast body of research indicates that schools with large EAL populations have developed expertise, experience and provision over time to cater for the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their students with EAL. However, research investigating schools with small EAL cohorts, referred to as 'low-incidence' contexts, is scarce.

Thus, this case study is an exploration of the experiences of students with EAL and their teachers in two secondary schools in North Yorkshire with small EAL populations. Qualitative methods included classroom observations, diary recordings, focus groups with 17 EAL student participants and semi-structured interviews with 18 members of staff across both schools.

The findings reveal the complex and intertwined linguistic, social and cultural challenges students with EAL in these contexts face, including the normalisation of English monolingualism and the lack of cultural and ethnic diversity. This resulted in 'split identities' and subtractive bilingualism for these learners. Supporting such students was incredibly difficult for school leaders and teachers, considering the lack of expertise and the absence of cohesive policies and provision. These inequalities were unravelled in relation to existing research and poststructuralist theories of language and identity, including Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Norton's concept of investment.

The findings have significant implications for stakeholders regarding EAL practice, pedagogy, Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD), not just in 'low-incidence' contexts but in the education system in England overall.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
DfE	Department for Education
DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ELT	English Language Teacher
EMAG	Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant
EU	European Union
FLE	First Language English
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
L1	First Language
MFL	Modern Foreign Language
NALDIC	National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum
NC	National Curriculum
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
SCITT	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
TA	Teaching Assistant
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
UK	United Kingdom
VPRS	Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, this study would not have been possible without the participation of the staff, teachers, and students that generously shared their stories and experiences with me. Thank you for trusting me. It was a huge privilege to spend so much time in your schools.

My supervisor, Professor Graham Hall, was always a source of inspiration and advice. His words of wisdom, humour, and laid-back nature made this whole process much easier, particularly in the final year.

Dr Rola Naeb and Dr Brian Ward also provided helpful advice, constructive criticism, and guidance throughout the process.

My two dogs, Florrie and Frankie, were a blessing, keeping me company when writing and breaking up my days with walks.

My family and friends have always been the best form of escapism, supporting my dreams whilst also keeping me grounded. I am extremely grateful for the support they have provided.

Finally, there are many women in my life that have inspired me but there are certain ones that need particular acknowledgement for their consistent words of encouragement and support: my mam, Amanda, probably the strongest woman I know that has always taught me to work hard to achieve great things and make a difference; Dr Sarah Duffy, my second supervisor and friend that inspired and supported me to apply for a PhD and provided encouragement throughout; and finally, my lifelong mentor and friend, Kirsty Tate, who never fails to be there with advice and a bottle of Sauvignon Blanc.

When women support each other, incredible things happen.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas, and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the Researcher's submission to Northumbria University's Ethics Online System on 21/02/2019.

I declare that the word count of this thesis is 81,530.

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Date: 23/02/2022

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents an exploration of the experiences of students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and their teachers in secondary schools with small EAL cohorts, known as 'low-incidence' contexts, in the education system in England. In this introductory chapter to the project, the statement of the problem will be outlined (1.1), followed by the aims and research questions that guided the study (1.2). The final section will then present the structure of the thesis by providing an overview of the focus in each chapter (1.3).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In the last 70 years, there has been a significant and consistent increase in migration to England, as well as growth of substantial second-generation minority communities, which resulted in changes to the linguistic and cultural demographics of mainstream classrooms. Previous research into the historical changes in policy and provision for students with EAL has revealed an education system (and society) that, influenced by social and political trends, has struggled to respond to its everchanging diverse identity (Costley 2014; Race 2015; Reece 2018).

The most recent national statistics suggest that 1.6 million students in England (21.3% in primary school and 17.1% in secondary school) are exposed to a language known or believed to be other than English in their home (DfE 2020b). Previous research in the field of EAL in England has highlighted a range of issues that affect the educational (and indeed social) experiences of these students, as well as their teachers. This includes a monolingual bias that underpins society and the education system in England, which positions students with EAL as 'others' that must adapt and assimilate to the English monolingual 'norm' (Leung et al. 1997; Coleman 2011; Safford & Drury 2013; Sharples 2016; Reece 2018). Against this backdrop, students with EAL are tasked with developing their English proficiency in order to access a highly prescriptive National Curriculum based on assumptions of English monolingualism that does not value their potential multilingual abilities (Leung & Creese 2008; Costley 2014).

Consequently, there has been concern for a long time about this 'one size fits all' system and the underachievement of a large number of students with EAL. Detailed examinations of statistics have suggested, though, that the causal link between EAL status and underachievement is not as straightforward as it has been previously perceived (Demie 2018); the most recent statistics suggest that age of arrival to the UK and level of English proficiency are strong indicators of an EAL student's academic success (DfE 2019b; Hessel & Strand 2020).

Stakeholders within the field of EAL in England have also criticised the 2014 reformation of the National Curriculum for the ways in which it disregards the diverse cultural and ethnic identities of students with EAL (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard 2017; Mansell 2019; Ajayi 2020). Concerns that the "White, Eurocentric" curriculum can inhibit EAL students' sense of belonging in their school (and wider) community, affect their engagement in learning, and thus their academic success have prompted campaigns to 'decolonise' the curriculum (Arday 2021: 4).

Research also suggests that another important factor in the academic achievement of a student with EAL in England is where they live. As the rise in migration in the 1950s prompted an 'uneven' distribution of EAL learners across the education system that is still evident today, there is variation from school to school in approaches to educating such students. There is a vast body of research that indicates that schools in inner cities, such as Birmingham, London and Manchester, that are most associated with immigration and have high populations of students with EAL have developed expertise, experience and provision over time to cater for the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their EAL cohorts (Chen 2009; Wyness 2011; Kaneva 2012; Cunningham 2012; Wardman, Bell & Sharp 2012; Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015; Leung 2016; Payne 2017; see also section 2.3.3.1).

However, there is a paucity of research within the field that investigates areas with a thin distribution of students with EAL (referred to as 'low-incidence' contexts). The few studies that have been conducted in such schools have discovered distinct issues, such as a lack of teacher expertise and experience, and resentment over any additional provision and support for the needs of students with EAL (Cline et al. 2002; Murakami 2008; Hamilton 2013). Still, there are large gaps in our knowledge regarding how and the extent to which these issues affect the experiences of EAL learners in these schools. Indeed, the voices of students with EAL in secondary schools in 'low-incidence' contexts are notably absent in previous research. Furthermore, within the climate of severe budget cuts, changes to governmental policies regarding students with EAL, the dismantlement of local authority services, and changes to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses, there is reduced coordination between schools and a lack of national strategies and centralised policies for the EAL student population. Thus, as well as learners' experiences, a contemporary investigation into school leaders' and teachers' accounts of enacting their school-led approaches to supporting their EAL cohorts in 'low-incidence' contexts is needed.

1.2 Aims of the study and research questions

Considering the issues within the literature highlighted above, the principle aim of this study was to provide an in-depth exploration of the range of intertwined linguistic, cultural and

social challenges faced by students with EAL and their teachers in 'low-incidence' contexts. The overarching research questions that guided this study were:

1. How do students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts perceive their school experiences in the UK in terms of:
    - Language, accessing the curriculum, and support?
    - Opportunities to develop and express their developing and changing identities?
2. How do teachers and other staff members perceive their experiences of teaching and supporting these students with EAL?

In order to address these questions, this thesis adopted a constructivist approach to a case study of two secondary school contexts in North Yorkshire. The two research sites were selected on the basis of their small EAL cohorts: just 2% at Northbridge Academy and just under 6% at Southgate School were recorded as having EAL at the time of data collection in 2019-2020. These figures are considerably lower than the national average of 17.1% of students in secondary schools in the same year (DfE 2020a). The study adopted a range of qualitative methods, including multiple focus groups with a sample of 17 students with EAL, diary recordings, interviews with 18 members of staff, and a total of 225 classroom observations across both schools.

The findings were unravelled in relation to existing literature, as well as poststructuralist theories of language and identity; Bourdieu's (1977b) analytical toolkit (i.e., the 'logic of practice') and Norton's concept of investment (Norton Pierce 1995; Norton 2000; 2013) provided valuable interpretive frameworks for uncovering contextual factors and inequalities in the two educational contexts that shaped the experiences of the participants.

The study aimed to extend existing knowledge in the field of EAL in England and provide unique insights into 'low-incidence' schools. The findings have significant implications for policymakers, practitioners and other stakeholders, not just in schools with small EAL cohorts but the education system as a whole.

1.3 Overview of the thesis

This thesis is divided into 7 chapters, including this introductory chapter that has provided a statement of the problem and the aims of the study and research questions.

Chapter 2 provides a review of existing research and literature. Firstly, the study will be contextualised through an exploration of issues and trends related to migration in the UK, the positioning of the 'student with EAL' within the education system in England, and a historical

overview of policy and provision related to educating such students in the last 70 years. Several key issues within the literature that illustrate challenges associated with educating students with EAL in England will then be examined, including language issues, the National Curriculum, provision and support, 'low-incidence' contexts, and the role of the teacher.

Chapter 3 outlines the poststructuralist theories of language and identity that formed a conceptual framework and lens through which to view the data, including Pierre Bourdieu's (1977b; 1986; 1990) Theory of Practice and Bonny Norton's theories of language, identity and investment (Norton Pierce 1995; Norton 2000; 2013).

Chapter 4 elucidates the methodological approach that was undertaken to address the research questions of the study. The research stance is outlined through an exploration of the ontological and epistemological influences on the decision-making and a reflexive account of my role as the researcher. The research design is then covered in depth, including school recruitment, participant sampling, piloting, data collection methods, thematic data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study. Firstly, contextual information about the two secondary schools and the North Yorkshire EAL and GRT service is provided. The findings regarding the participating EAL students' perceptions of their school experiences (RQ1) are then covered, followed by the findings regarding the participating teachers' experiences of teaching and supporting such students (RQ2).

Chapter 6 discusses the findings of the study in relation to existing literature and poststructuralist theories of language and identity. It explores the normalisation of English monolingualism and the lack of ethnic and cultural diversity in the two school research sites. Recommendations for policy, practice, and provision are then proposed.

The thesis is concluded in Chapter 7 with a summary of the research and the conclusions drawn from the findings. I then highlight the original contributions of the study and how it sheds new light onto the experiences of students with EAL and their teachers in 'low-incidence' contexts. The potential limitations of the study are then discussed, followed by proposed avenues for further research. Finally, my final thoughts and personal reflections conclude the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The following literature review begins by contextualising the study through an exploration of trends and issues related to migration in the UK. Against this backdrop, the positioning of 'the student with EAL' within the education system in England is detailed through challenges related to the 'EAL' label and issues relating to students' backgrounds and prior experiences. In order to understand contemporary approaches to supporting such students, the chapter then provides a historical overview of policy and provision related to EAL education in England. Several key issues within the field that encapsulate the challenges associated with educating students with EAL are then explored, including: the linguistic challenges that students face in a monolingually-oriented education system; the 'one size fits all' nature of the National Curriculum; provision and support; schools with small EAL cohorts (i.e., 'low-incidence' contexts); and the role that teachers play in EAL education in England. The chapter then concludes with a summary and the study's research questions.

2.2 Contextualising the study

2.2.1 Migration: trends and issues in the UK

In order to understand the positioning of students with EAL in the education system in England, it is important to explore the wider concept of migration, both globally and in the generally English language-dominant context of the UK. Although accurate figures are hard to come by, it is estimated that, on a global scale, around 80% (and rising) of people in the world are bi- or multilingual (Conteh 2019: 43). Therefore, multilingualism is the norm worldwide, whereas monolinguals are in the minority. Due to increased globalisation and mobility, the number of international migrants worldwide is now over 258 million (United Nations 2017). In the UK, these trends, alongside refugee movement (characterised by some as a refugee 'crisis'), and the expansion of the European Union (EU) since its inception in 1993 have brought about a significant growth in migrant populations (Anderson et al. 2016). According to Rienzo & Vargas-Silva (2020), the foreign-born population in the UK increased from approximately 5.3 million in 2004 to almost 9.5 million in 2019. Consequently, the term 'superdiversity' has been used to refer to the complex range of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds that are increasingly prevalent across urban contexts and communities (Vertovec 2007). Despite these increases, multilingualism is not seen as the 'norm' in the UK; instead, Safford and Drury (2013) argue that the 'monolingual mindset' that is often dominant in certain Anglophone Western settings (such as the US and England) means there is a constant

strive to impose a single language or variety, which positions bi- and multilingual migrants as 'deficit'. This may be due to the global spread of English and its position as the preferred lingua franca by many speakers of EAL, as well as an ideological view of English as the language of the nation in the UK (Lanvers, Hultgren & Gayton 2018).

The increase in migration can also (and indeed has, in some cases) create divisions between those that welcome migrants and those who oppose them. Ford, Jennings and Somerville (2015) found that public perceptions of migration have responded to changes in immigration levels in the UK, as well as perceived differences between migrant groups. As Creighton & Jamal (2020) note, anti-immigration sentiments are frequently shaped by economic and political crises, which can prompt arguments that migration causes higher demands on public services and resources, such as health care, housing, and education (Rasmussen 2011). This may account for a spike in immigration becoming an important political concern in the immediate aftermath of the 2007/8 global financial crisis (Creighton & Jamal 2020). More recently, the views of some of those in opposition to migration (or the volume of migrants) into Britain have been intensified by the UK Home Office's hostile environment policy, first introduced in 2012 (Goodfellow 2020), and global events, such as the displacement of people due to the civil war in Syria, named the "most massive refugee and displacement crisis of our time" (Atitwa 2018). Statistics from World Vision (2019) show that, at the peak of the crisis in 2015, 1.3 million Syrians requested asylum in Europe. This has been linked to the spread of anti-refugee and anti-Muslim sentiments in Britain, which were further intensified by Islamic State terrorist attacks in London and Manchester (Rhodes & Hall 2020). And whilst Britain's vote to leave the EU in the referendum in 2016 was influenced by a range of political concerns, sovereignty, border control and the threat of immigration were central to the campaign and result (Creighton & Jamal 2020). Subsequent to the vote, anti-foreigner views manifested in a sudden increase in racist hate crime and xenophobic attacks (Corcoran & Smith 2016). Most recently, Hartman et al (2020) revealed evidence that the global COVID-19 crisis has also had an impact on perceptions of migration as they found that anxiety over the threat of the virus is associated with an increase in nationalism and anti-immigration sentiment. In addition, far-right backlash against the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, prompted by the death of George Floyd in the US, has seen a rise in white nationalist ideology in the UK (Murdoch 2020).

These divisions and tensions in Britain, as well as the 'monolingual mindset', mean that migrants are often vulnerable to rejection and marginalisation, which presents challenges for schools that support and teach students from a diverse range of backgrounds (Hall 2019). Rasmussen (2011) argues that education is one of the areas where it is most crucial that the needs of migrants are met as the system has the challenge of preparing them for society in

Britain, as well as respecting their right to maintain their linguistic and cultural traditions. However, as Safford & Drury (2013) argue, multilingualism is commonly seen as a 'problem' by educators and policymakers in the UK and the first language of students with EAL is implicitly discouraged. Section 2.3 will bring these issues to light by exploring the various angles in the professional and academic literature in the field of EAL education in Britain. Prior to uncovering these key issues, the concept of the 'student with EAL' will be explored, followed by an account of the history of EAL policy and provision in education in England.

2.2.2 Students 'with EAL'

2.2.2.1 The 'EAL' label

In the education system in England, the most recent statistics suggest that there are now over 1.6 million children studying through the medium of English as an Additional Language (EAL), a figure that has tripled since 1997 (DfE 2020a; Demie 2018). The proportion of students with EAL has been increasing steadily in recent years, with national figures suggesting that 21.3% of primary school students and 17.1% of secondary school students are exposed to a language known or believed to be other than English in their home (DfE 2020b). In contrast to the discourses around migration outlined above, the DfE (2019a) put this growth down to increases in the birth rate of pre-existing minority language communities, rather than increases in migration.

A variety of terms has been used to refer to students that have EAL, both nationally and internationally, including English as a Second Language (ESL), English Language Learner (ELL) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (Anderson et al. 2016). In the early 1990s, the term English as a Second Language (ESL) gradually began to be replaced by English as an Additional Language (EAL) in the UK, in recognition of the fact that some learners already spoke two or more languages (Leung 2016). The term 'EAL' is now recognised in official education discourse, including government documents and policy, such as data collection for the school census (DfE 2020a) and the Teachers' Standards (DfE 2011). In the education system in England, a student is to be recorded as having EAL if "she/he is exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English" (DfE 2020b: 4).

The term therefore covers an extremely heterogeneous group of students with English language skills that vary considerably; at one extreme, the term includes advanced bilingual students that have lived in the UK all their life and are fluent in English and, at the other extreme, recent arrivals that are new to English (Leung 2016; Reece 2018). Therefore, there is a concern that the term EAL is too 'broad' and researchers in the field of EAL education have argued for a long time that the simple binary definition masks the huge variation in English proficiency and the educational achievement in students with EAL (Demie & Strand

2006; Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015; Anderson et al. 2016; Strand & Hessel 2018; Hutchinson 2018). Sharples (2016) suggests the label fails to provide teachers with critical information regarding their linguistic proficiencies and uncovers very little of the data that schools actually need to support the learning of these students. Furthermore, Bracken, Driver and Kadi-Hanifi (2017) argue that the term suggests an aspiration to maintain and develop the students' first language(s), whereas, in reality (and problematically), the predominant focus in schools is to assimilate students into the use of English as the dominant language as quickly as possible. The ambiguities and issues arising from the EAL label mean that many students with EAL are "invisible" and do not appear in school statistics (Arnot et al. 2014: 12). This may be because their parents or the school have not identified them as having EAL on intake documentation when they arrive at the school.

Despite the criticisms, this study will use the term 'EAL' as it is in line with professional and academic discourses. Furthermore, it is an arguably more inclusive definition of students that "use two or more languages in their everyday lives" and allows us to discuss "a commonality of issues that are linked to such a diverse group" (Anderson et al. 2016: 2). Additionally, the term 'first language' (L1) will be used throughout this research as it is preferred to the terms 'native language', 'home language' or 'mother tongue', which are each loaded with connotations and ideologies. 'Native language', for example, combines several concepts, including linguistic competence, order of acquisition and geographical origin, all of which are problematic when considering the diverse background of EAL speakers (Hall 2019; see Rampton 1990, Davies 2013 and Llurda 2016 for further discussion). And even though the term 'home language' is common across EAL literature, it implies that students use a different language at home to that which they use at school, which is not always the case (Hall 2019).

However, this is not to say that the term 'first language' is completely satisfactory, as it implies an order in which languages are learned and for bi- and multilingual speakers it is often not possible to pinpoint the L1 in their repertoire of multiple languages (Jenkins 2015). Nevertheless, the term 'first language' is common across the literature and in educational discourse, as well as the term 'First Language English' (FLE), which will be used in this study to refer to the non-EAL peers of EAL students (Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015).

2.2.2.2 Backgrounds and prior experiences

Students that are recorded as having EAL across England belong to an extremely diverse population that differ in terms of their linguistic background and geographical origin, but also in terms of their educational experiences, levels of literacy in their first language(s), time in the UK and reasons for migration (Hall 2019). In terms of their migration experiences, students may, for example, be part of 2nd or 3rd generation ethnic minority communities that

may speak English at home; part of a family that has migrated for economic reasons; asylum seekers or refugees; or they may have been trafficked into the country (Bracken, Driver and Kadi-Hanifi 2017). Between them, such students in England speak more than 360 languages (Flynn & Curdt-Christiansen 2018). In recent years, eastern European languages (such as Polish) were the fastest growing language group in English schools due to EU migration (Flynn 2019). However, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian and Pakistani still form the majority of students with EAL's first languages across the English education system (Schneider & Arnot 2018).

The English language proficiencies of EAL students vary significantly, as well as their L1 literacy skills, both of which have implications for their ability to reach their full academic potential in English-dominant schools (Hall 2019). Although advanced bilinguals typically outperform non-EAL students academically, research suggests that those that are new to English, those arriving late to the school system and those that have had poor prior education can be "left behind" (Bell Foundation 2019; also see section 2.3.2 for a discussion of the curriculum and academic achievement in students with EAL).

Due to the vast range of geographical origins of students with EAL and their families, the cultural background of this population is also extremely diverse. Kramsch (1995: 2) refers to culture as the "attitudes and beliefs, ways of thinking, behaving, and remembering shared by members of that community". As well as continuing (or sometimes starting) their education in an additional language, migrant students face the challenge of acculturation: the process of psychological, social, and cultural change that occurs when groups and individuals experience contact with another culture (Burcham 2009). Throughout this process of adjustment, they may face many complex social challenges that overlap with their linguistic experiences, such as forming friendships, dealing with loneliness, and racism or anti-immigration prejudice (Reynolds 2008). Their cultural beliefs, values and attitudes to learning and education can also affect the process of adjusting to a new school culture. This can have a significant effect on migrant students' sense of belonging; some may suffer from extreme feelings of isolation in the process of acculturation, whilst others may have moved into or with a multilingual network of migrants (Simpson 2016).

The parents of students with EAL also have diverse backgrounds of their own, including their linguistic abilities, educational experiences and attitudes towards English and bilingualism, all of which can have an effect on the students' acculturation process both inside and outside of school (Walters 2013). For example, there may be a 'language divide' between students with EAL and their parents in terms of attitudes to their first language, which can affect the student's investment and maintenance of it (Reece 2018). Furthermore, they may also differ

from their parents in the extent to which they place importance on maintaining aspects of their heritage culture, such as their commitment to religious practices (Berry 1994). All of these social challenges may be complicated further by the issue of adolescence, a "period of flux and uncertainty" between childhood and adulthood (Lamb & Budiyanto 2013: 3).

Thus, the EAL population in the UK is extremely heterogeneous, but, whatever their background, the majority of these students share a common challenge in education: to learn English whilst simultaneously learning the curriculum and navigating the social aspects of school life. This is particularly difficult when they are entering an education system that has roots in assumptions of homogeneity and monolingualism (Sharples 2016).

2.2.3 A history of EAL policy and provision in education in England

In order to contextualise the settings, students and teachers in this study, the aim of the following section is to provide an overview of the changes in EAL policy and provision in the education system in England over the last 70 years. Researchers have suggested there have been three phases in approaches to educating students with EAL during this time: assimilation, withdrawal, and mainstreaming (Costley 2014; Race 2015; Reece 2018).

2.2.3.1 Assimilation (1950s- mid 1960s)

Although Britain has a rich history of immigration, the 1950s was an especially important period as there was a significant increase in Britain's migrant populations, particularly those arriving from the countries of the former British Empire and Commonwealth, such as India, Pakistan, and the Caribbean (Costley 2014). As Commonwealth citizens, many of these migrants were invited by the UK government to England to help rebuild 'the mother country' following World War Two (Boronski & Hassan 2015).

Prior to this, education in England (and society in general) was considered monolingual and monocultural, where English was the language expected of all students (Edwards 1984). Against this existing monolingual backdrop, classrooms diversified in the 1950s as they became home to students that had recently migrated. However, EAL speakers were expected to adapt, and schools were encouraged to "simply get on with it and absorb students into existing school structures and curricula" (Bracken et al. 2017: 36). Migrant students were expected to learn sufficient levels of English through their own efforts (Race 2015). Now recognised as assimilation, Coelho (1998: 19) describes this approach as "a one-way process whereby minorities abandon, at least publicly, their ethnic identities" as cultural differences were seen as "socially divisive". At the time, there was a belief that migrant populations were

'temporary' and these 'non-permanent' residents that would return to their 'home' countries, so changes to practice and pedagogy were perceived as unnecessary (Costley 2014: 277-278).

This rise in migration in the 1950s prompted an 'uneven' distribution of EAL learners across education in England that is still evident today. For some areas across England, schools saw very little change in the diversity of their school populations so the assimilation of EAL learners was relatively straightforward. However, the inner cities of the likes of Birmingham and London found themselves dealing with significant increases. With no central policy to meet the needs of these students, this influx created difficulties, as learners arrived at different times throughout the school year and with a range of educational backgrounds (Costley 2014). Leung and Franson (2001: 155) argue that there was an assumption at this time that the students with EAL threatened "the maintenance of academic standards and scholarly attainments of the indigenous students". Therefore, Leung, Davison & Mohan (2014) argue that the central aim was to transform EAL learners into 'ordinary' English students as quickly as possible. Underlying this aim was the assumption that the more the EAL learners had in common with the white British majority in terms of language and culture, the more likely they were to succeed in society, a process now recognised as an attempt at assimilation (Costley 2014).

2.2.3.2 Withdrawal (mid 1960s-1970s)

In the mid-1960s, the 'assimilation' approach was questioned as it became apparent that it did not provide enough support for students with EAL. In recognition of this, government funding was provided for 'immigrants from the new Commonwealth' under Section 11 of the Local Education Act of 1966 (HMSO 1966), a policy that was ultimately concerned with teaching the students English as quickly as possible (Costley 2014). Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were left to decide how the funds were spent, but support mainly involved additional teachers, resources, and 'withdrawal' (total or partial) from the mainstream classroom in order to learn English. Partial withdrawal meant that students had extra classes to learn English at lunch time or after school. Total withdrawal meant that students were taught EAL in a language centre, a separate school facility away from the mainstream classroom, until they were considered to have attained a sufficient level of English to be able to study the mainstream curriculum (Bracken, Driver & Kadi-Hanifi 2017). A lack of a national coordinated plan meant that teacher expertise and practice in these language centres were unmonitored, and provision varied from one school to another (Edwards 1984; Leung 2016). Although it is unclear what the content of the curriculum involved for EAL students in withdrawal classes, it was certainly different to that of their peers in the mainstream classroom. Costley (2014) argues that it was likely the language centres drew upon TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) sources from overseas contexts that, at the time, often focused

on teaching language for social situations. This means that the academic language needed to access the curriculum in the mainstream classroom was overlooked and, despite the positive intentions of the withdrawal approach, an unintended educational gap developed (Leung & Franson 2001). However, it must be acknowledged that progress was being made at this time in the form of the development of teaching materials and the work of individual teachers in addressing the needs of their EAL learners (Tomlinson 2008).

2.2.3.3 Mainstreaming (mid-1980s onwards)

Although the 'withdrawal' phase appears to reflect a country coming to terms with increasing diversity, there were wider demonstrations, debates, and clashes in Britain in the 1970s and early 1980s that centred around claims of societal inequality and racism (Costley 2014). In response to criticisms and concerns relating specifically to education, the government commissioned an investigation into the education system's ability to respond to ethnic diversity in a way that promoted equality (Race 2015). In 1981, The Rampton Report stated that the ways in which schools were operating were disadvantaging ethnic minority groups and children of West Indian descent in particular were found to be underachieving. Many of these West Indian students argued that it was racism that caused this, whilst the report also found that inadequate pre-school provision, the linguistic abilities of the students, and teachers' low expectations contributed to their underachievement. Building on Rampton's findings, the Swann Report (1985), *Education for all*, found that the separate language centres for students with EAL (noted above), though originally well-intentioned, were in effect an example of 'institutional racism', which it defined as:

> "*the way in which a range of long-established systems, practices and procedures, both within education and the wider society, which were originally conceived and devised to meet the needs and aspirations of a relatively homogeneous society, can now be seen not only to fail to take account of the multi-racial nature of Britain today but may also ignore or even actively work against the interests of ethnic minority communities*."
>
> (The Swann Report 1985: 28)

It was suggested that the language centres demonstrated how society as a whole defined itself as homogeneous, not recognising the complex and diverse nature of Britain at the time. Therefore, the report called for students with EAL to return to the mainstream classroom for reasons of inclusivity and in order to increase their academic attainment. Subsequently, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE 1986) also found that withdrawal from the mainstream classroom disadvantaged students with EAL both educationally and socially. Language became just one element in a broader agenda for inclusion, multiculturalism, and anti-racism of and for minority students, and thus students with EAL were again integrated into

mainstream classrooms, a policy that, in theory, still stands today (Leung 2001; Safford & Drury 2013).

2.3 Key issues in EAL education in England

As we have seen, over the last 70 years, global migration patterns and mobility have changed rapidly. Yet many argue that England has not prepared itself effectively for ongoing and increasing migration, nor for the broad shift from immigration from the Commonwealth to economic migrants from the European Union and to refugees and asylum seekers from across the world (Tomlinson 2008; Safford & Drury 2013; World Vision 2019). Furthermore, despite this shift, some of the challenges facing students with EAL have not altered; they must adapt and cope with everyday life in a new country whilst simultaneously continuing their education in an additional language. For the schools supporting this process, Sharples (2016) argues that the challenge is that the system and policies in place are based on assumptions that the students are monolingual, culturally homogeneous and following educational pathways that are predictable. The following section will explore key issues related to these assumptions that need to be considered when exploring the experiences of students with EAL in the UK.

2.3.1 Language and the student with EAL

Language plays a key role in the everyday experiences of students with EAL, both inside and outside of school. As Conteh and Meier (2014) note, the identity of a multilingual student is shaped by the languages they use and the social contexts in which they use them. Whilst English is an essential tool for accessing the curriculum in the classroom, it is also a significant part of their social life that enables them to feel a sense of belonging to their school and wider community (Anderson et al. 2016). However, the ethnic, cultural and social identity of students with EAL is also tightly bound to their first language. These links between language and the formation of their identities will be discussed in depth in Chapter 3 in relation to theories of poststructuralism. Meanwhile, sections 2.3.1.1-2.3.1.4 will explore four key areas related to language and the student with EAL: the 'monolingual mindset' in England, linguicism and the subtractive influence of English on other languages, BICS and CALP, and translanguaging.

2.3.1.1 The 'monolingual mindset' in England

Despite evidence that suggests bilingualism and literacy skills in more than one language can enhance aspects of cognition, the current approach in England is to educate bilinguals in a monolingual setting so that they can learn English as quickly as possible. This mainstreaming immersive approach rests on several assumptions, such as those based on Krashen's (1982) 'input hypothesis', which suggests that language acquisition is achieved through exposing

learners to the 'target language' as much as possible. There is also a perception in many western anglophone settings (such as England, the US and Australia) that linguistic diversity is problematic, despite multilingualism being the norm worldwide (as noted earlier). The 'monolingual mindset' is a term that refers to the tendency in these contexts to impose a single language variety (i.e., English) and stigmatise multilingualism (Safford & Drury 2013).

In England, Coleman (2011: 128) suggests the public's views of multilingualism are "shaped and echoed by a xenophobic media" that demonises linguistic diversity. These views filter into mainstream classrooms in schools as such "signals from the wider community that languages are (or are not) important are noted and internalised" by students (Carr & Pauwels 2005: 3). Education policy also influences perceptions of other languages in the classroom; for example, as Lanvers, Hultgren & Gayton (2019: 1) note, studying a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) beyond the age of 14 was made optional in 2004, which, along with the "mentality of insularity" in the UK, has contributed to a decline in interest in language learning in schools.

Reece (2018: 1) suggests that the Anglocentric 'monolingual mindset' that dominates the education system in the UK is rooted in 'othering', a process that involves two steps: categorising a group of people according to perceived differences (for example, religion, gender, ethnicity), followed by identifying that group as inferior, which creates an 'us and them' divide (Dervin 2012). According to Reece (2018), therefore, positioning students with EAL as 'the other' portrays multilingualism as 'deficit'. In the field of educational psychology, 'deficit models' posit that racial or ethnic minority groups fail to achieve as well as their White majority peers in school because of their own deficiencies (Valencia 2012). Rooted in institutional racism, Reece (2018) argues that the perception of 'English language deficiency' positions students with EAL as 'others' that must adapt, conform and assimilate to monolingual norms. In the context of education in England, the 'norm' is "constituted as the 'white British English-speaking pupil'", with the binary opposition being the "'black, non-white, non-British EAL learner'", conceived as less preferable (Reece 2018: 23).

The 'monolingual mindset' and deficit thinking clearly seem to underpin policies regarding EAL education in England. Sharples (2016) argues that current policy positions languages other than English as 'irrelevant' to the mainstream classroom, whereas acquisition of EAL is positioned as having two aims: developing English to a 'native-like' level and attaining a level of proficiency that requires no further provision or support. This is reflected in the English Proficiency Scales in the descriptor for 'Fluent':

> "*Fluent [Code 'F']: Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language. Operates without EAL support across the curriculum*."

(DfE 2016: 63).

This descriptor seems to suggest that students with EAL may be 'othered' until they have acquired a 'fluent' level of English. However, based on the "abstracted notion of an idealised native speaker of English from which ethnic and linguistic minorities are automatically excluded", it may be that students with EAL will always be labelled as 'non-native' speakers and positioned as never-ending learners (Leung et al. 1997: 546).

Other official government discourse around EAL, such as the Teachers Standards (DfE 2011b), fails to "differentiate bilingualism from specific physical and cognitive needs" (Safford & Drury 2013: 74). Sharples (2016) argues that this also positions students with EAL as 'deficit' and they face an ongoing struggle of trying to make their voices heard and finding their place in the classroom, the school and the wider community. This may be shown in the early stages of their English learning, as a 'silent period' is common for many students with EAL, where they listen to the language around them and absorb it (Graf 2011). Although speaking in class can be a daunting prospect for *all* students, research has suggested that those with EAL may choose to be silent or withdraw as a survival reaction in order to hide their ascribed 'deficiency' (Safford & Costley 2006, 2008; Bligh 2014; Anderson et al. 2016; Underwood 2016). Furthermore, in Safford & Costley's (2006) study, secondary school EAL students also reported a strong commitment to their English learning to become part of the 'norm'.

2.3.1.2 Linguicism: the subtractive influence of English on other languages

The pervasive ideology of monolingual English-speaking as the societal norm in the UK (discussed above) may have a subtractive influence on students with EAL in that learning English is often at the expense of the maintenance of other languages (de Britos 2020). This is a form of 'linguicism', a term coined by Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) to refer to discrimination and marginalisation of others on the basis of language. This perspective on the dominance of English has, however, been criticised for the deterministic ways in which it positions English language learners as powerless speakers that lack agency and fails to recognise the ways in which they can choose to learn English for their own benefits (Joseph 2006). Nevertheless, the subtractive influence of linguicism highlights the dominance of English and the 'monolingual mindset' in England that has had a significant impact on the experiences of students with EAL.

Overington (2012) argues that, although the government claims to recognise the benefits gained from maintaining the first language of students with EAL, the responsibility for this lies with the ethnic minority community themselves. Within EAL government discourse, policies or guidance on how to effectively incorporate the L1 of students with EAL into their

learning or socialisation in school are notably absent (Overington 2012). Thus, there is variation in teachers' acceptance of the first language in the classroom within and across schools in England. Research has suggested that some schools have made efforts to incorporate the L1 of students with EAL into the school environment: Graf (2011) notes that some schools recognise the value of using the L1 as a scaffold for the acquisition of English, as students with EAL may already be familiar with concepts and ideas and so can learn new ways to express themselves; a number of studies have also highlighted the importance of the use of the L1 in the mainstream classroom, particularly in enhancing a student's self-esteem and feelings of social identity (Duquette 1999; Johnstone et al 1999; Cummins 2000; Wardman, Bell & Sharp 2012); and Hall (2019) reports that literacy in the first language can also inform learners' second language literacy, which may also have implications for the students' progress and achievements in school.

However, Leung (2001) notes that effectively transferring literacy skills from an EAL student's L1 into English depends on the similarities and differences between the two languages, which many subject teachers are unaware of. Plus, Anderson et al. (2016: 8) suggest there is a common misconception by some teachers that the first language may be seen as interfering with opportunities to develop proficiency in English and hindering students' ability to 'fit in' by marking them as 'different'. Wardman, Bell & Sharp (2012: 40) also found that some teachers do not encourage the use of the first language due to "fear; lack of resources; and lack of knowledge". Furthermore, with an education system that is heavily reliant on summative assessments and examinations, there are very few opportunities to develop literacy skills in the first language of students with EAL (Bracken, Driver and Kadi-Hanifi 2017).

According to Garcia (2011), discouragement of the L1 in many school contexts and the obsession with monolingualism as the norm means that bilingual students can suffer linguistic shame. This often leads to 'subtractive bilingualism', where the student's L1 gradually fades and is replaced by English (Carroll & Combs 2016). This contrasts with 'additive bilingualism', where the aim is to add to the learner's linguistic repertoire (Monaghan 2012). Cunningham (2012) argues that the shift towards the dominant language means that some children end up as 'semi-lingual', having an underdeveloped first language and being robbed of the possibility to develop their bilingualism effectively, which has been found in studies in London (Wallace & Mallows 2009; Mehmedbegović 2014) and in Scotland (de Britos 2020). This can also have significant implications for their social and cultural identity, as well as family relationships (Garcia 2010, see Chapter 3).

2.3.1.3 BICS, CALP and the language of schooling

As Strand & Hessel (2018) state, the likelihood of a student's success is strongly influenced by their mastery of the medium of instruction. Schooling, according to Schleppegrell (2004), is a linguistic process, as language plays a role in both classroom management and presentation of the curriculum. The 'language of schooling' presents linguistic challenges for *all* students that increase as they progress through each school year (Schleppegrell 2004). Indeed, the language of secondary school subjects can be demanding for all students, not only those with EAL. Subject-specific language is often technical, complex, and abstract and is very different to the interactional language that students may use outside of the classroom for social purposes (Fang et al. 2008). The particular linguistic challenges that students with EAL face in the classroom are thus articulated well by Pauline Gibbons:

> "*Language is integral to most of what happens in classrooms, but to a competent language user its role is like that of a window through which we look at the content. It is transparent and although we may recognise that it is there, its transparency means that it is very hard to see. Focusing on content alone makes language the invisible curriculum in the school. And for children with poor English skills the language becomes the block to learning. To put it another way, their window is made of frosted glass."*
>
> (Gibbons 1991: 12)

In the field of the language of schooling, Cummins (1979; 1981) developed an influential framework with the aim of drawing attention to the challenges and timelines that second language learners encounter. He distinguished between the two different dimensions of language use that students with EAL need to develop: the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) that are needed for everyday, social conversation and the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) that is needed for academic study, both oral and written, and strongly associated with achievement. BICS is said to be acquired relatively rapidly, that is, within 6 months to 2 years of arriving in a new context, as long as there is contextual support (e.g., face-to-face communication, gestures and other non-verbal support) (Cummins 1984). However, CALP is considered to be a lot more challenging to acquire and can take 5 to 11 years to develop due to, for example, the more abstract nature of the language, the higher literacy demands of texts and textbooks, and the cultural knowledge which is often needed to understand academic concepts and content (Cummins 2000; Demie 2013a). This has implications for teaching as students need to be assisted in progressively developing CALP further to BICS in order to access the curriculum (Leung 2014).

However, since the framework's inception, the distinction between the two has been critiqued on a number of grounds, including the implicit notion that it posits a straightforward linear progression in language development from BICS to CALP, based on the assumption that the

former is easier to learn (Haneda 2014). This underestimates the challenges of everyday communication, which actually requires complex social negotiation skills (Bailey 2007). Furthermore, language use in the classroom cannot be as easily divided into 'social' and 'academic' functions as the model seems to suggest. Thus, Cummins (2001) later suggested that the two dimensions are seen to be on a continuum, rather than two discrete language proficiencies. And, in actual classroom activities, Gibbons (2009) has found that teachers and students merge everyday and academic language to achieve their communicative purposes. Consequently, Conteh and Meier (2014) suggest that moving along the continuum between BICS and CALP during the various stages of the school day is possible for students with EAL, but needs to be learned and, therefore, supported by schools and within pedagogy.

Chen (2007) argues that it is critical that teachers are aware of the challenges associated with acquiring CALP, as some students with EAL have reported feeling overwhelmed by, and had significant difficulties understanding, the subject vocabulary their teachers use. Other findings have revealed that primary school students with EAL experience difficulties understanding written texts, based on their limited knowledge of relevant vocabulary (Burgoyne et al. 2009). As Pettit (2011) notes, teachers that are inexperienced in EAL education often do not recognise disparities between a student's BICS and CALP and conversational fluency is often assumed to mean that students can cope equally well with the linguistic demands of academic study. This has been acknowledged in government policy:

> "*Cummins' research has shown that because the pupils appear so fluent in everyday social language, teachers are unaware of the need for explicit teaching of academic language. The need for all teachers to be teachers of language in the context of their subject cannot be overstressed and nor can the advantages of such an approach for their EMT [English as Mother Tongue] peers.*"
>
> (DfES 2006: 14)

Thus, currently, each subject teacher in a secondary school holds the responsibility of being aware of the language that is required for students to understand, and take part in activities, and demonstrate understanding of the subject. This includes planning for and supporting students with EAL (Walters 2013). Gibbons (1991) argues that such students can be supported by using a 'language conscious pedagogy', and maintaining a focus on language is key to their engagement with the curriculum and ultimate achievement. Indeed, interventions that have directly targeted vocabulary learning have been found to be extremely beneficial for language acquisition (Murphy & Unthiah 2015).

As vocabulary has increasingly been recognised as a crucial factor in academic success for all students, Beck, Mckeown & Kucan's (2002; 2008) three tiers framework has been increasingly seen as a useful approach in education in the last 20 years. The tiered framework

has provided ways of categorising language according to *complexity*, *meaning* and *frequency*. Tier one refers to high frequency, conversational, 'everyday' words (e.g., *dog, tired, run*) that can be aligned with the BICS dimension of Cummins' framework (Roessingh 2016). Tier two words are not common in everyday conversation but are referred to as academic language that is characteristic of written text, with examples including *circumstances*, *contradict* and *retrospect*. Tier three refers to low frequency words that are often limited to specific domains and academic subjects, such as *epidermis* or *photosynthesis* (Beck, Mckeown & Kucan 2008). Although tier two vocabulary is considered less likely to be learned independently by students, it plays a large role in the repertoires of language users in educational settings. Thus, Beck, Mckeown & Kucan (2008) argue that explicit instruction in tier two words is the most productive approach to acquiring vocabulary for academic achievement. They also point out the complexity of 'knowing' vocabulary and therefore argue that many aspects of a word need to be explicitly taught, such as its pronunciation, meaning, spelling and the contexts for use. Although not developed specifically for students learning EAL, this tiered vocabulary framework, alongside knowledge of BICS and CALP, can be a valuable guide for teachers and provide a language-focused curriculum for students with EAL.

2.3.1.4 The translanguaging lens

In parallel with the increasing 'superdiversity' of migrant communities (Vertovec 2007), there has been a shift towards recognising that the boundaries between languages are less distinct than previously thought. Historically, languages have been understood to be discrete 'monolingualisms' (Anderson et al. 2016). However, these traditional views of language boundaries have been challenged by recent rapidly developing research into translanguaging (Li 2018). Within the literature, there are many definitions of the term; for example, it is described as a 'concept', 'pedagogy', 'interaction' and even a 'continuum' (Creese 2017; Conteh 2018; Anderson 2017). Coined in bilingual education in Wales in the 1980s, translanguaging was originally constructed as a pedagogical strategy for "the planned and systematic use of two languages for teaching and learning inside the same lesson" (Lewis, Jones & Baker 2012: 643). Since then, the term has been used to refer to the process of speakers drawing upon elements from their full linguistic repertoire simultaneously to achieve their purposes (García and Li 2014; Conteh 2018).

The concept of translanguaging does not refer to a bilingual speaker's ability to switch from one 'named' language (English, for example) to another, often referred to as 'code-switching' (Garcia 2017). Instead, whilst 'code-switching' is seen to recognise discrete and defined languages, translanguaging sees speakers as having no "regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages" (Otheguy, García and Reid 2015: 281). Thus, Creese & Blackledge (2015) argue that the established term 'code-

switching' is inadequate in the face of the more complex and multifaceted sociolinguistic realities. From a translanguaging perspective, bilinguals are seen to be practising 'feature selection', rather than switching grammars, in order to meet communicative needs (Otheguy, García & Reid 2015).

In EAL education, a translanguaging lens can be useful in terms of exploring language and identities as it recognises the ways in which multilinguals move fluidly across their linguistic repertoire in everyday communication (Anderson et al. 2016). Research has demonstrated that the children of multilingual homes are aware of their abilities to translanguage (Kenner & Ruby 2012; Conteh & Meier 2014) and this can facilitate links between experiences inside and outside of the classroom (Lewis, Jones & Baker 2012); for example, Conteh (2015) notes that children can develop their understanding of a concept by linking the English vocabulary to words used in their first language with family members. Translanguaging is also important for a healthy sense of self-identity as multilinguals can learn to develop a sense of belonging in different social worlds (Anderson et al. 2016). However, it mainly occurs 'naturally' in multilingual societies; in contrast, students with EAL in predominantly monolingual settings, such as England, may be restricted in their translanguaging practices as they are burdened with a monolingually biased education system. Garcia (2011) also notes that bilingual teachers in these contexts make attempts to hide their translanguaging practices as they have been conditioned by ideologies that only value monolingualism, meaning they should draw only on their English language linguistic resources. This may be in spite of the fact that they know that effective teaching in classrooms with students with EAL involves translanguaging. Cunningham's (2012) research, meanwhile, showed that monolingual teachers in primary schools that are inexperienced in EAL fear the use of language in a classroom that they themselves do not speak. Furthermore, they reported that they found it "difficult" and "time-consuming" to produce learning resources in the student's first language to aid their access to the curriculum (Cunningham 2012: 13).

In practice, Conteh (2018) argues that translanguaging in the classroom can facilitate relationships between teachers and their students that encourage mutual empowerment, although mainstream education in the UK rarely recognises the ability to shift between linguistic codes as a resource or language learning process. Leung & Scarino (2016: 88) argue that language teaching should aim to develop the multilingual capabilities of learners, rather than treating them "as developing native speakers" (which, as we have seen, is at times regarded as an impossibility anyway). Such arguments fundamentally challenge the monolingual mindset of mainstream classrooms across the UK, but, ultimately, the practicalities and possibilities of translanguaging pedagogies in these classrooms are extremely challenging. However, exploring the range of linguistic resources that

translanguaging students can bring to the classroom in the UK has the potential to make the voices of students with EAL more audible, which can develop effective pedagogies that allow for and support translanguaging in the future (Garcia et al. 2017).

2.3.2 The National Curriculum: striving for equality

Given the heterogeneous nature of students with EAL and their language use, the following section will explore the challenges they face in relation to the curriculum in England. The development of the first National Curriculum (NC) for England by the Education Act of 1988 (HMSO 1988) marked the end of independent and autonomous curricula by Local Education Authorities (LEAs). Developed for all state-funded institutions, the NC sets out the content matter, learning objectives and assessments for all students. However, research into EAL education has highlighted the problematic nature of the 'one size fits all' approach of the NC in terms of EAL and diversity, which will be outlined below.

2.3.2.1 The curriculum, EAL and achievement

A fundamental principle of the National Curriculum, ongoing from the time of its inception in 1988, addresses the notion that all students are entitled to experience the same processes and curriculum 'irrespective of ethnicity, language background, culture, gender, ability, social background, sexuality, or religion' (DfEE and QCA 1999: 12). This has been taken as the achievement of equality (for EAL and FLE students) of access to education (Leung 2016) and was promoted by many practitioners at the time, including Levine (1990: 1), who argued that it is "absolutely necessary" to oppose the assumption "that other languages and cultures negatively interfere with successful learning" and "achievement in the curriculum".

However, Costley (2014) argues that the NC is a particular model that is inherently monolingual as it assumes that all students (both those with EAL and FLE students) have the same needs in terms of language development and use. Within the curriculum, schemes of work and assessment criteria for examinations are the same for all students; their linguistic abilities are not taken into account (Leung & Creese 2008). As EAL is not a recognised 'subject' within the curriculum, Leung (2001: 45) argues that it is an "invisible" concern for policymakers. Here, Costley (2014) highlights the contradictory nature of the mainstreaming approach to EAL provision: although policy expresses openness and aims to embrace linguistic diversity in the classroom, it ultimately disregards the distinct and diverse learning needs of EAL learners in the NC. This seems to result in a clear advantage for First Language English (FLE) students that already understand the language of the classroom. Currently, all students with EAL are assessed from the age of 5 by the same statutory standards and tests as FLE students; they can only be exempted from these measures if they are new arrivals with

very little English exposure (Safford & Drury 2013). This has clear potential implications for their academic attainment as measured through such tests.

Many policymakers and educators have been concerned for a long time about this 'one size fits all' perspective and the underachievement of large numbers of students with EAL (Costley 2014). Detailed examinations of statistics, however, show that the link between EAL status and underachievement is not the straightforward, causal relationship it is often perceived to be (Demie 2018). Some research has shown that the achievement of students with EAL varies according to where the students live in England; for example, evidence has found that students identified as EAL in areas such as London, Coventry and Manchester outperform FLE students in these contexts (Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015; Schneider & Arnot 2018). Similarly, findings by Wyness (2011) also showed that students with EAL perform significantly better in London than in all other regions in the UK, which Wyness (2011) refers to as 'the London advantage'. In contrast, the Yorkshire and Humber region has the most persistent and largest attainment gap in GCSE results between students with EAL and FLE students (Hollingworth & Mansaray 2012; Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015). Explanations behind the variation in the achievement of students with EAL across England are difficult to determine. Variation in teacher and institutional expertise and experience in EAL education may be a contributing factor, but further intensive and in-depth research of areas with attainment gaps, such as the Yorkshire and the Humber region, are needed to explore the context in which these students learn (Hollingworth & Mansaray 2012).

Overall, in an analysis of the 2013 National Pupil Database, Strand, Malmberg & Hall (2015) found that there was a national achievement gap between EAL (59.2%) and FLE students (62.2%) at KS4 achieving 5 or more A*-C GCSEs, including Maths and English. However, they note themselves that this gap is "fairly meaningless" due to the "heterogeneity within the EAL group" (Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015: 28). As noted earlier (section 2.2.2.1), the categorisation of students with EAL masks the huge variation in their English language skills. When the relationship between English proficiency and academic achievement are explored, a much clearer insight into the challenges they face is presented. Based on a nationally representative sample of 140,000 students aged between 5 and 16 years old, Hessel & Strand (2020) compared EAL status and proficiency in English as tools for capturing the achievement of students in England and found that the latter was a significantly better predictor, particularly in language-heavy subjects like literacy and English. Using linguistic proficiency in English as a predictor, analyses of Key Stage 2 (KS2) and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination results show that students with EAL in the early stages of English language acquisition achieve significantly lower scores than their monolingual FLE peers (Demie 2013a, 2016, 2017, 2018; Demie & Strand 2006; Strand & Hessel 2018). These studies

found that the attainment of students with EAL increased with greater English proficiency and those that were rated as Competent or Fluent on the proficiency scales scored significantly above the national average for all students. Closing the achievement gap between students that are rated as New to English and FLE students is extremely difficult- typically, as they develop their lexicon and English literacy skills, so do their monolingual non-EAL peers (Demie 2018). However, the increased attainment scores of EAL students with greater English proficiency found in these studies highlight the benefits of bi- and multilingualism, rather than perceiving them as a barrier to learning (Strand & Hessel 2018).

The most recent statistics, published by the Department for Education (DfE) in June 2019, strongly suggest that the age of arrival in England is also an indicator of their ability to reach the expected standard in age-related subject assessments in the NC. Interestingly, students with EAL that join an English school in reception (aged 4-5) are more likely to reach the expected standard in reading, writing and maths than FLE students. However, the likelihood of a student with EAL meeting this expected standard declines the later they arrive in the school system. Similarly, in the Key Stage 4 statistics, students with EAL who joined before year 2 (aged 6-7) achieved a slightly higher Attainment 8[1] score than FLE students on average. However, students with EAL who joined after this have lower Attainment 8 scores, with a noticeably strong decline for students that arrived after year 8 (aged 12-13) (DfE 2019b).

Hutchinson (2018) suggests that the findings of these studies show that perceptions that students with EAL are either a burden on the education system or that they routinely outperform other students are incorrect. The reality is much more complex due to the heterogeneous nature of the EAL population, which makes average overall achievement figures extremely misleading. As discussed above (section 2.2.2.1), there are issues with the EAL label in that it covers a wide range of English proficiencies, and these difficulties extend further when considering the EAL categorisation and its relationship with the curriculum and educational attainment data (Arnot et al. 2014). It is clear that the individual variability within the EAL cohort needs to be cross referenced with other key factors, such as stage of fluency in English and age of arrival in the UK (Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015). However, exploring the link between language proficiency and educational attainment is no longer possible on a national level following the removal of the requirement for schools to report on levels of English language proficiency in the School Census (Strand & Hessel 2018; see section 2.3.3.3).

To conclude, although the underpinning ideology of the National Curriculum is an equal, 'one size fits all' approach, the literature suggests it does not take the range of linguistic

[1] Attainment 8 measures a student's average grade across 8 GCSE subjects (Hutchinson 2018).

proficiencies of students with EAL into consideration. Thus, research has shown that teachers are dismayed that the age-related assessments of the curriculum do not reflect what students with EAL *can* do (Flynn 2019). Flynn (2019) refers to the 'monolingual' National Curriculum as disempowering and oppressive and argues that it does not value the success that multilingualism can bring; even if teachers are aware of alternative pedagogy and assessment that can be effective in showcasing the abilities of multilingual students, they report that they are restricted to the ways dictated by policy.

2.3.2.2 Diversity and the curriculum

When exploring the National Curriculum as a factor in the educational experiences of students with EAL, the relationship between their language development and academic achievement is not the only issue that needs to be taken into consideration. As identified above (section 2.2.2.2), students within the EAL population in England come from a diverse range of cultural heritages and ethnicities due to the variety of geographical contexts from which they and their families come to the UK. The extent to which the NC reflects and values the diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds of students with EAL has been questioned by many stakeholders in education.

In 2014, the National Curriculum was reformed and launched in schools in England with the aim of providing students with "the essential knowledge they need to be educated citizens" (DfE 2013: 5). Based on their duties under the Equality Act of 2010 (HMSO 2010), teachers are expected to ensure that their teaching of the curriculum is inclusive and adaptable in order to meet the diverse needs and abilities of all learners (DfE 2013). Despite the intended inclusivity, the revised NC has been surrounded by controversy; in particular, the revised curriculums of English Literature and History have been highly controversial and "heavily criticised for being ethnocentric and narrowly nationalistic" (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard 2017: 479).

Serving as education minister from 2010 to 2014, Michael Gove placed the subject of history at the centre of his vision of giving rise to a renewed national pride in schools (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard 2017). Claiming that the previous curriculum denied students "the opportunity to hear our island story" (Gove 2010), Gove's aim was for students to have a better understanding of "Britain's impact on the world and the world's impact on Britain" (Vasagar 2011). Thus, the curriculum changed to a focus on British history, characterised as "Kings, Queens and Wars", which has been strongly criticised by stakeholders in education (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard 2017). In particular, there are concerns about how the reformed history curriculum neglects ethnic and racial diversity within its narrative of British history, prompting campaigns to 'decolonise' the curriculum (Ajayi 2020). Arday (2021: 4)

argues that the "White, Eurocentric" curriculum that focuses on celebrating the British Empire does not reflect the ethnically diverse society of the UK. The most recent statistics show that the number of students of minority ethnic origins (i.e., of any origin other than White British) have been steadily increasing since 2006 and now make up 33.9% of primary school students and 32.3% of secondary school students in England (DfE 2020a). Failing to recognise this increasing diversity of classrooms can have significant implications; as Alexander, Chatterji & Weekes-Bernard (2012: 7) argue, the importance of history as a subject to be studied lies not with the past but "with its role in providing insights into, and understanding of, the present". Indeed, Lavinya Stennett who launched *The Black Curriculum* campaign, argues that omitting Black British history can have dangerous consequences in society, such as preserving racism, or the deportation of UK nationals, a reference to the 2018 Windrush Scandal (Arday 2021). For students with EAL that come from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, it can also have a significant impact on their identity formation, how they value their culture and their sense of belonging (see Chapter 3). Thus, rather than instilling a sense of national pride, Arday (2021) argues that the reformed history curriculum has the potential to exclude the voices of students with EAL from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds and consequently pushes an assimilationist agenda.

In terms of the English Literature syllabus, the reformed NC now emphasises 'classic literature', requiring that students "read and appreciate the depth and power of the English literary heritage" (DfE 2014), thereby removing the stipulation that students analyse texts from other cultures (Mansell 2019). In 2016, the reading lists for GCSE and A Level were criticised for the domination of "white, deceased, male writers", prompting campaigns and petitions urging the government to recognise the lack of diversity (Ali 2016). Eaton (2016) argued that the literature curriculum "predominantly teaches one voice" that does not reflect the ethnic diversity of students in schools. Indeed, a review from *Teach First* in 2020 reported that the biggest exam board for GCSE English Literature did not feature any novels by a Black author and only two written by ethnic minority authors (Sundorph 2020). Consequently, in a survey, it was found that 75% of English teachers expressed concern about the lack of diversity in their curriculum (Sundorph 2020).

Due to these concerns, many English teachers are exploring ways in which they can adapt their curriculums and lessons in Key Stage 3 in order to incorporate more diversity, such as the inclusion of poetry from other cultures that was part of the GCSE curriculum before the reform (Sundorph 2020). The American novels *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee have historically been popular choices of texts for providing opportunities for teaching and learning about racism. Hence, Gove's decision to remove the texts from the GCSE English Literature curriculum in the reform was met with heavy criticism

(Kennedy 2014). However, Bennett & Lee-Treweek's (2014) research in secondary schools in Cheshire highlights the challenges of studying such texts in predominantly White settings; in focus groups, BAME students described their uncomfortable experiences of being the only Black student in their class when reading the texts as they found that the racist expletives would prompt their White British peers to turn and look at them. One student described how this made them feel "awkward", whilst another commented that "[the White students] just don't understand how it makes you feel" (Bennett & Lee-Treweek's 2014: 41). Although these texts provided opportunities to explore race in depth, the students' accounts reflected the lack of discussion about race in the schools, which Bennett & Lee-Treweek (2014: 42) felt needed "serious consideration". Importantly, the feelings of the students towards these texts have been echoed by teachers: a Black teacher in London in *Teach First*'s report described the personal challenges they felt when encountering the racist expletives in *Of Mice and Men* and therefore advocated including more positive representations of diversity in the curriculum (Sundorph 2020). Harper (2019: 5), a trainee teacher that described herself as a "white, privileged female" reported feeling "unprepared" and "anxious" when reading the text to a class for the first time. Indeed, studies exploring Initial Teacher Training (ITT) indicate that there is an issue; the trainee teachers in Bhopal & Rhamie's (2014) research said that the training they received was insufficient to deal with issues of race in the classroom and in the most recent survey by the DfE (2018a: 26), only 53% of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) reported that they felt prepared to teach across all ethnic backgrounds. Thus, the extent to which teachers can use the curriculum as a vehicle for developing students' understanding and empathy towards other cultures and ethnicities is questionable.

Thus, as well as language, literature related to the lack of ethnic diversity within the NC highlights additional challenges associated with educating students with EAL. Although schools in England have been a site of struggle for ethnic, religious and racial equality for over 50 years, Alexander & Weekes-Bernard (2017) argue that the reformed English Literature and History curriculums push 'Britishness' ideologies and fail to represent the diversity of the student population and the globalised nature of contemporary society. Further research exploring these issues in the field of EAL education has the potential to uncover students' own perceptions of their curriculum and the ways in which it impacts upon their identities.

2.3.3 Policies, provision, and support

As the above discussion indicates, it is evident that many students with EAL would be helped significantly by specific policies, provision, and support in schools. Willes (2012) refers to the process of 'becoming a pupil' to describe how children are socialised into schooling from an early age, learning practices and procedures in order to become 'acceptable' members of

school society. Students with EAL that arrive later in the school system are, in a sense, starting this process in an unfamiliar school, as well as integrating as a new member of the wider society. This can be even more challenging for students with EAL that have had difficult previous education experiences, including disrupted education or no schooling at all (Arnot et al. 2014; Reece 2018). Many schools recognise this complex transition into a new social, cultural, linguistic and academic environment and put provisions and support in place for students with EAL (Anderson et al. 2016).

2.3.3.1 Variation in EAL provision from school to school

Currently, the specifics of how to support students with EAL are largely decided by individual schools, which means there is a vast range of practices in place nationally, depending on context, resources and priorities (e.g., budget constraints, diversity and no. of EAL students and more general beliefs). The local authorities in the places most associated with immigration, such as inner cities like London, Birmingham, and Bradford, have many years of experience in EAL education that have resulted in the development of a range of strategies for supporting their students. For new arrivals, some schools have a 'buddy' system in place, either within a group of other students with EAL or with a FLE peer (Wardman, Bell & Sharp 2012; Hall 2019). In the mainstream classroom, some schools may alter their curriculum provision for students with EAL that are new to English, and some may employ bilingual teachers and teacher assistants to provide personalised support for the students. For those students that are new to English or need support to develop their language, some schools have effective partial and temporary withdrawal practices in place that involves EAL support staff or teacher assistants, as found in Cunningham's (2012) and Chen's (2009) research into primary schools, and Payne's (2017) study in a secondary school in Sheffield.

Many schools with higher populations of students with EAL have staff that deal specifically with EAL provision. They are often an information and communication hub for and about EAL (Schneider & Arnot 2018). They may also deal with initial induction meetings with students with EAL and their parents, the administrative aspects of EAL provision and providing one-to-one support for the students both inside and outside of the classroom. Furthermore, EAL departments can carry out language assessments of students with EAL and track their progress, as reported by Kaneva (2012) in a case study of a diverse inner-city school in the northwest of England. In a diverse, multilingual secondary school in Sheffield, Payne (2017) found that staff had often improvised and reacted to the ever-changing demographics of their context, which provided them with crucial expertise and experience over time.

Across England, many schools within linguistically diverse cities have well-established, large populations of students with EAL that often come from communities with the same first language(s). This often means that teachers in these contexts have found appropriate and

effective ways of facilitating their first languages in school, such as grouping students that share the same L1 together for a classroom activity (Wardman, Bell & Sharp 2012). Additionally, Reynolds (2008) suggests that these schools, that are more ethnically and linguistically diverse, often achieve better inclusion and experience less hostility towards students with EAL. Plus, the schools may provide clubs or physical places (e.g., prayer rooms) for their EAL cohort that helps them to feel a sense of belonging to the school community.

2.3.3.2 Decreases in funding

Despite the provisions and procedures that many schools have put in place for their EAL cohorts, researchers in the field have been concerned over recent decreases in funding and the dismantling of support for students with EAL, even though there has been an increase in speakers of EAL in classrooms across Britain (Leung 2001; Creese 2004; Conteh & Brock 2011; Demie 2013a; Demie 2013b; Safford & Drury 2013; Leung 2016; Flynn & Curdt-Christiansen 2018). Over the years, government funding has sought to address the underachievement of specific students with EAL and ethnic groups (as identified in section 2.3.2.1 in relation to the National Curriculum). Section 11 funding, first introduced in 1966, was replaced by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) in 1999, a ring-fenced grant for additional support for students with EAL. This support could include the use of the local authority's Ethnic Minority Achievement service, which involves access to centrally employed EAL specialist teachers and consultants (Arnot et al. 2014). However, in 2011, the EMAG was directed into the more general Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which meant that EAL support services were no longer provided by local authorities free of charge (Costley 2014). Therefore, schools have the choice of whether to buy these services for their students and how much they spend on them (Schneider & Arnot 2018). However, significant budget cuts also mean that many of these services are closing, meaning specialists are retiring or being made redundant, especially in rural areas with small EAL populations (NUT & NALDIC 2011; Costley 2014). Furthermore, in 2021, Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) opted to abolish the role of a specialist national lead for the education of EAL, ESOL and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students (NALDIC 2021). This has been heavily criticised by stakeholders, including NALDIC (National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum), a UK charity and professional forum for EAL education, who argued that in failing to identify students with EAL as a discrete group, Ofsted will never appropriately develop the linguistic and academic abilities of such students. Without effective expertise, guidance and policies, Flynn & Curdt-Christiansen (2018: 414) argue that it is almost impossible to hold schools accountable for their EAL provision and the variation from school to school encourages "potential for an uneven playing field".

2.3.3.3 The DfE English Proficiency Scales

Considering the variation from school to school in terms of EAL provision and decreases in funding over the years, Evans et. al (2020: 23) argue that "there is no overarching consensus in policy or academic research about what constitutes best practice for newly arrived migrants in school". However, in October 2016, the government introduced what Flynn (2018) referred to as "the one piece of substantive EAL legislation enacted by government since 2010": the Department for Education English Proficiency Scales (DfE 2020b), which required that schools annually report data on EAL students' proficiency in English. Each student was required to be assessed and placed in one of the following categories: A. New to English; B. Early Acquisition; C. Developing Competence; D. Competent; E. Fluent. Schools were also required to report students' countries of birth and nationalities (NASSEA 2016). Flynn (2018) argues that the data had the potential to break down students with EAL in the education system into stages of English acquisition and provide teachers with guidance for effective planning for EAL. However, in the first year of its implementation, a significant number of teachers did not know enough about the scales to judge a student's proficiency and others perceived it negatively as part of political discourse about migration as there was no guidance as to how the data would be used (Strand & Hessel 2018; Flynn & Curdt-Christiansen 2018; Flynn 2018). This may explain why more than 20% of students did not provide information on their country of birth in the first year (DfE 2017).

Furthermore, in 2018, the government removed the mandatory requirement that schools report the English language proficiency levels of their students with EAL in a controversial decision that was received negatively by many experts in the field of EAL education (NALDIC 2018). Flynn (2018), for example, argues that there was "clear potential" for the scales to have a positive influence on EAL if they had "more time to bed down in practice." Acknowledging the value of the proficiency scales, NALDIC (2018) recommends that schools still assess their pupils for internal purposes and urged the DfE to review their decision. Flynn (2018) argues that the removal of the policy presents the current government's lack of care for the academic achievement of students with EAL. Situated against a backdrop of migration tensions in Britain, such migration-related discourse undoubtedly influences attitudes towards the teaching of students with EAL.

2.3.4 Students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts

As outlined in the previous section, schools across England have reacted to increasing numbers of students with EAL and developed a vast range of good practices and strategies for supporting them, despite a lack of government policies, funding, and guidance. Debates within the field over what strategies, policies and procedures are the most successful for supporting students with EAL highlight the convolution of the issues and the heterogeneity of the EAL

population. These debates are made even more complex by the uneven distribution of students with EAL across regions in England (Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015, and as already noted in section 2.2.3.1). A significant proportion of the EAL population attend schools in large urban areas where linguistic diversity is regarded as 'ordinary' (Leung 2016). For example, in Inner London, the proportion of students with EAL was over half (56%) in the 2013 National Pupil Database; however, almost one-quarter (22%) of schools elsewhere in England had less than 1% and over half (54%) had less than 5% of their school population classed as EAL (Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015: 5).

Prior to the EU referendum in 2016, rural areas of the UK that have historically appeared relatively monolingual and homogeneous experienced increases in migration. For example, the 2004 EU expansion to include the A8 countries (including Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia) saw a rise in migration of Eastern Europeans to the UK for employment (Kierans 2020). Many of these migrants found agricultural work in rural areas in the north of England (Grant 2017), as well as low-wage jobs, such as cleaning, food processing and working in warehouses to fill labour shortages (Sumption & Fernández-Reino 2018). This included migrants that identify (or are identified) as Roma, a group whose mobility has attracted a considerable amount of attention in public discourse and the media (Matras, Howley & Jones 2020). In addition, some refugees (mainly Syrian nationals) that have arrived in the UK have also been dispersed to rural areas, including areas in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, through the Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) since 2014 (Home Office 2020). These demographic changes to populations in rural areas have been reflected in schools which have seen an increase in the number of students with EAL. However, within the field of EAL education, the students in these contexts are often referred to as 'isolated learners' as none or very few of the students and school staff share their first language, or they are in school settings which have little previous experience of dealing with students with EAL (Grieve & Haining 2011; Conteh 2019). Arguably, though, the term 'isolated learners' is problematic and loaded with connotations as it may implicitly suggest students with EAL in these settings are 'outsiders' that are not integrated into the school community. As such, this study will adopt Murakami's (2008: 266) term and refer to schools with a thin distribution of students with EAL as 'low-incidence' contexts.

These 'low-incidence' contexts have been somewhat neglected in research in the field of EAL education as the majority of studies within the UK have explored primary and secondary schools in urban areas with large EAL cohorts (Arnot et al. 2014). However, the few studies that have been conducted in areas with smaller EAL cohorts have identified distinct context-specific issues; for example, as these areas are less culturally and linguistically diverse than inner-city areas, Arnot et. al (2014) found that differences between EAL and FLE students can

be felt more strongly, often leading to feelings of animosity and resentment. Similarly, Cline et al. (2002) explored the experiences of minority ethnic pupils in mainly white schools across four English regions and found that race-related name-calling and verbal abuse was a regular occurrence. Anderson et al (2016) suggest that the students in these contexts were unable to take comfort and encouragement from the presence of other students with EAL in the classroom that would have shared experiences with them. Hostility and resentment was also discovered in the 'low-incidence' contexts of Murakami's (2008: 277) study, as it was reported that parents had requested that their children do not sit next to students with EAL in the classroom as they perceived them to be "a distraction or a drain upon what can be made available to their own children". Although these parents stressed that they were not racist, their opinions were that the schools should focus on the needs of white British children, commenting that "we should be looking out for our own first" (Murakami 2008: 277). Worryingly, this resentment also seemed to be reflected in comments from school leaders who expressed concern over the effects of students with EAL in the schools' performance in national league tables. Thus, Murakami (2008: 277) highlights the predicament for students with EAL in these 'low-incidence' areas: provision to support their achievement is "resented as much as their liability to underachieve".

A lack of teacher expertise and experience in EAL education has also been identified as an issue in the few studies conducted in 'low-incidence' areas. Staff in both Murakami's (2008) and Hamilton's (2013) studies reported a lack of knowledge, resources, training and expertise in teaching students with EAL. Similarly, the teachers in Cline et al.'s (2002: 4) research described having very little experience or confidence in supporting these students and their schools often relied on "ad hoc arrangements" and staff trained in SEN. Indeed, due to the small size of their EAL cohorts, the research shows that specific EAL hubs or departments are uncommon in these schools and EAL leads are also scarce, so provision for students with EAL is often overseen (if at all) by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) (Murakami 2008; Safford & Drury 2013). Additionally, if withdrawal from the mainstream classroom for additional English learning is implemented, it often takes place in designated Special Educational Needs (SEN) settings (Safford & Drury 2013). Crucially, these practices may unintentionally position students with EAL as 'deficit', along with the construction of EAL as synonymous with special needs in educational policies (Pearce 2012; Reece 2018).

The complex nature of the ethnic and linguistic identities of students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts was also a key finding identified by Cline et al. (2002). Building on the work of Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco (2001), Cline & de Abreu (2005) identified a set of options available to minority ethnic students in mainly white schools in the UK: *ethnic flight*, where the student strongly identifies with the dominant majority culture; *split identities*, where

the student presents different identities in different contexts; and *transcultural identities*, where the student evolves a sense of self that incorporates their bilingual and bicultural competencies. The interviews with students with EAL in Cline et al.'s (2002) study suggest that Anglocentrism and the 'monolingual mindset' were even more pervasive in these 'low-incidence' contexts as Cline & de Abreu (2005) reported that the students displayed 'split identities': many of the students suppressed their ethnic minority identity in school due to pressures to conform from their white peers but took conscious steps at home to maintain their L1 and traditional culture. However, despite encouraging L1 maintenance, the parents of some of the students in this study reported a significant decay or loss in the L1 of their children. Thus, Cline & de Abreu (2005: 551) referred to the challenges of having a minority language in a mainly white school as "like an ethnic identity assault course" and only those students that were developing a confidence in themselves as bilingual and bicultural would successfully maintain their first language.

Although these studies have made a valuable contribution to our understanding of students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts, there is still a large gap in the field of EAL education that explores students and their teachers in these areas. In the years since the research of Murakami (2008) and Cline et al. (2002), there have been societal and policy changes in England that have impacted EAL education, such as increases in migration (particularly in rural contexts), the curriculum reformation and decreases in funding and support. Thus, there is a crucial need for up-to-date research that explores the influences of these factors on the language development, social integration and academic achievement of students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts.

2.3.5 The teacher's role

In the field of EAL education, a considerable amount of research has explored the challenges and opportunities associated with the teacher's role in supporting students with EAL. As Gandara et al. (2005) note, teachers' beliefs, attitudes, practice and pedagogy are influenced by the contexts in which they teach. Thus, as this study is concerned with EAL education in 'low-incidence' contexts, the following section will explore literature related to the teacher's role in such settings.

Costley (2014) argues that both the employment of the mainstreaming approach to EAL education and the formation of the National Curriculum in 1988 implicitly positioned *all* teachers across education as language teachers, which had significant implications for teacher training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). However, there was very little explicit concern for pedagogy and practice in EAL policy, training, and guidance in the early years of mainstreaming, possibly because EAL did not (and still does not) exist as an 'official'

subject in the curriculum (Costley 2014). However, the responsibility of recognising the needs of students with EAL is evident in the most recent *Teachers' Standards*, implemented in England in 2012, which set out the level of practice expected of teachers, including the requirement that they:

> "*have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them*."
>
> (DfE 2011: 12)

Despite this training requirement in the *Teachers' Standards*, it is not possible to gain specialism in EAL through pre-service teacher training; instead, specialist EAL teachers and leads move into the field once in the mainstream school setting and develop their specialism through CPD courses (Cajkler & Hall 2012). Leung (2016) argues that, overall, there is a shortage of systematic training for education involving EAL and research has found that this area is a major concern for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), with many expressing a lack of confidence in practical teaching methods and assessment of students with EAL (Hall & Cajkler 2008; Cajkler & Hall 2009; Cajkler & Hall 2012). Furthermore, the most recent Department for Education (DfE) survey of NQTs' perceptions of how their Initial Teacher Training (ITT) prepared them for teaching showed that they felt the least prepared to teach EAL (39%), compared to other skills, such as teaching pupils with SEN (53%) and teaching across a range of abilities (73%) (DfE 2018a: 26). Echoing these concerns, NALDIC (2013) has argued that EAL is insufficiently covered in ITT, and so teachers are inadequately trained in teaching students with EAL, as are the Teaching Assistants (TAs) that are increasingly given responsibility for this provision.

Recently, there have been changes to ITT that have seen a shift from university-led Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses to School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT), where all training is delivered through the school (Costley 2014). This is a potential advantage for trainee teachers in schools with high numbers of students with EAL as they can benefit from the expertise and experience of other teachers. However, Sharples (2016) argues that this is also a significant risk to the provision for EAL in areas where the population is less diverse than urban settings (i.e., 'low-incidence' contexts) as he suggests there is often little expertise on EAL education in these schools. According to Graf (2011), teacher training providers and schools in these areas are less likely to allocate time to EAL teaching and learning strategies as it is perceived as less of a priority. Murakami's (2008: 272) research seemed to support this idea that teacher training is related "to the extent to which the presence of EAL pupils is actually acknowledged and considered to matter"; the lecturers on PGCE programmes in the 'low-incidence' contexts in this study did not see EAL provision as

a priority and noted that the trainee teachers failed to see the professional relevance of it. The teachers confirmed this, explaining that they did not anticipate that they would teach students with EAL, with one commenting that "she 'just assume[d] that EAL pupils would not be able to understand' regardless of how she taught" (Murakami 2008: 273). The secondary school teachers and support staff in the schools in Murakami's study that worked closely with students with EAL on a daily basis were often unsure of what was 'right' and what was 'wrong' in relation to provision and teaching and learning strategies. Teachers were also "trawling the internet" to find appropriate resources to adapt for their EAL cohort, as producing these materials for an increasingly diverse range of students for both withdrawal tutoring and mainstream lessons is extremely complex and time-consuming (Murakami 2008: 277). The teachers also expressed concern over their lack of time to meet these individual needs and admitted that eventually they came to expect lower levels of achievement from their students with EAL. These findings were echoed in Bailey & Marsden's (2017) study in primary schools with small EAL cohorts: although the teachers showed willingness to implement strategies that incorporated students' first languages, they lacked confidence and awareness of EAL issues. Costley (2014) makes the point that the teachers in Murakami's (2008) study reveal similar experiences to those teachers in urban areas in England 30 years earlier, when the ethnolinguistic landscape of their classrooms was changing significantly.

In these 'low-incidence' contexts, the teachers' feelings of a lack of preparedness for teaching students with EAL is particularly concerning in light of research into the link between teachers' beliefs and their students' academic attainment. For example, Karabenick & Noda (2004) found that teachers that felt confident in their ability to meet the needs of students with EAL positively influenced the motivation and performance of those students. In addition, research suggests that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are influenced by the contexts in which they teach as those that have more students with EAL in their classes feel more competent to teach them and hold more positive attitudes towards them and towards bilingual education more generally (Shin & Krashen 1996; Gandara et al. 2005). These findings demonstrate the significant role that teachers' perceptions of linguistic competency and academic success play in the pedagogy and practice provided to students with EAL (Pettit 2011). Furthermore, many teachers in 'low-incidence' contexts may hold deficit beliefs and lower expectations of students with a limited command of English in their classrooms (Sood & Mistry 2011), which may be due to the social stigma that is based on "the implicit association between how well individuals express themselves and their intelligence" (Torres-Guzmán 2007: 54). If these attitudes are not explored and examined, Peregoy & Boyle (1997) suggest that teachers might be at risk of discriminating against these students without even realising it. In contrast, Pettit

(2011) argues that teachers that hold high expectations of students with EAL will make a positive impact on their experiences and academic outcomes.

Research has also found that a teacher's own ethnic and linguistic identity can have an impact upon culture and learning in the classroom, as well as their students' identity formation. Studies in a range of English-dominant contexts, such as the UK, US and Australia have explored the extent to which the White, middle class monolingual teachers that are prevalent in these settings can really understand the lived experiences of students with EAL and Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students in their classrooms. Murakami (2008), for instance, argues that monolingual teachers' knowledge of language acquisition and how language works is likely to be limited and suggests that training in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions should aim to raise their awareness. In Northern Ireland, Hagan & McGlynn (2004) surveyed teachers in their initial training that had little experience of diverse contexts and found that, although they viewed accommodation of diversity in the classroom as an important issue, only just over a third of the respondents reported feeling comfortable in diverse situations. In Cline et al.'s (2002) study of 'low-incidence' contexts, the White British teachers reported that they did not know enough about the cultural and religious backgrounds of their minority ethnic students, which echoed concerns of the students and their parents. On the basis of fairness and equality, these teachers argued that ethnic and cultural differences should be ignored in the classroom. Bennett & Lee-Treweek (2014) suggest that this popular rhetoric of aiming to treat everyone the same could be based on political correctness and promotes a silent 'colour-blind' approach to race and diversity in the classroom. Despite good intentions, Bennett & Lee-Treweek (2014: 43) argue that this is extremely problematic as "an equality based on stripping away the essential aspects of a person which make up their identity is a negative equality".

On the other hand, research into the role of ethnic minority and bilingual teachers has found that they can have a positive influence on the learning of students with EAL. For example, a bilingual teacher in Conteh's (2007) study used translanguaging to aid students' understanding and give their multiple languages equal status in the classroom. The students reacted positively to these practices as they helped to recognise the cultural importance of their first language. In Australia, Santoro (2007) found that teachers from Indigenous and ethnic minority backgrounds were able to use their own experiences of being 'othered' and their cultural knowledge to understand and empathise with students from a similar background to themselves. Similarly, based on shared cultural knowledge and experiences, bilingual teacher assistants (TAs) in primary schools in the Northwest of England were able to make links between their bilingual students' home, community and school to facilitate their learning (Martin-Jones & Saxena 2003). In observations, the researchers noted that the TAs were able

to build on knowledge that the students brought from home in ways in which their monolingual class teachers were unable to do.

It is clear from previous research that the teacher plays a crucial role in supporting students with EAL. Their beliefs, attitudes and confidence regarding EAL education, as well as their knowledge and understanding of the complex identities of their students, can have a significant impact on their academic success. Murakami's (2008) findings in 'low-incidence' contexts are particularly significant as they highlight the challenges that teachers in these under-researched areas face if they lack experience and expertise in EAL education. Due to the paucity of research in these contexts, it is important for research to explore the experiences of these teachers in depth in order to understand their roles in educating students with EAL.

2.4 Chapter summary and research questions

The exploration of the literature in this chapter has revealed an education system that has constantly changed and yet struggled to respond to increasing mobility and diversity in the UK. The chapter began by exploring how responses to migration trends and recent global events have problematised the status of immigrants and the provision offered to students with EAL in the education system in England. The discussion of the characterisation of the 'student with EAL' in terms of the 'EAL' label and their diverse backgrounds and prior experiences highlighted the heterogeneous nature of the population in the UK. The historical overview of EAL policy and provision over the last 70 years showed how the three phases- assimilation, withdrawal and mainstreaming- have been "consistently inconsistent" and heavily influenced by political and social trends (Costley 2014: 289).

Despite calls for inclusivity and anti-racism policies and practices prompted by the Rampton and Swann Committees in the 1980s, there are still significant issues in contemporary EAL education in the UK that highlight the importance of studies in this field. Research suggests that the 'monolingual mindset' that underpins the education system in England has 'othered' EAL learners and positioned them as 'deficit' students that must adapt and assimilate to the White, British, monolingual norm. Against this backdrop, students with EAL have the challenge of developing their English language proficiency in terms of both BICS and CALP whilst simultaneously learning the curriculum in an environment that does not value their abilities to practise translanguaging. These concepts warrant further research into education for speakers of EAL as language plays a crucial role in the identity formation of these students, which will be explored in more depth in Chapter 3 in relation to theoretical frameworks.

The review also highlighted the problematic nature of the 'one size fits all' approach of the National Curriculum, which, in practice, fails to take the linguistic abilities of students with

EAL into account. As research suggests, this means that there is an achievement gap between students that are new to English and their FLE peers. Furthermore, the reformed English Literature and History curriculums have also been criticised by educators for failing to take the ethnic and cultural diversity of students across the UK into account and for pushing British nationalistic ideologies.

The literature also highlighted the vast diversity of provision and support that schools across the UK put into place for their EAL cohorts. However, as discussed, stakeholders in EAL education have expressed strong concerns about reductions in funding and the dismantling of EAL specialist support that has left schools without effective policies and guidance. This is particularly concerning in 'low-incidence' contexts as the few studies that have been conducted in these areas have highlighted a lack of teacher expertise and experience in EAL education, as well as resentment over the additional support that students with EAL may need (Cline et al. 2002; Murakami 2008; Arnot et al. 2014).

Research has also emphasised the important role that teachers play in supporting students with EAL. However, studies have shown a lack of training as EAL has not been prioritised in both Initial Teacher Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions, particularly in 'low-incidence' contexts. Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) have recognised this and identified their lack of confidence in teaching students with EAL. This is particularly important as a teacher's beliefs, attitudes and identity have been shown to have a significant impact on the academic achievement of such students.

The review in this chapter has thus demonstrated the vast range of key issues that have a bearing on the experiences of students with EAL in mainstream education in England. However, there is a crucial requirement for research in 'low-incidence' contexts as there are large gaps in our knowledge regarding how these key issues affect students in these schools. In particular, research into secondary school contexts is important as there are "high stakes in formal examinations" for students at this level and they need to have developed high levels of proficiency in English in terms of both BICS and CALP in order to achieve higher results on their national examinations, as shown in the literature (Murphy and Unthiah 2015: iv). Furthermore, very little research has presented EAL students' own accounts of their educational experiences in 'low-incidence' contexts in England. Considering the role that they play in supporting such students and the issues found in the literature, the perspectives of teachers in these contexts also need to be explored in depth.

It is important to investigate how the concerns in the literature regarding the positioning of students with EAL are reflected in practice in these schools, which can potentially provide a foundation for the sharing of good practice. Thus, the current study will address the research

gaps identified in this literature review by exploring the challenges associated with such areas, guided by the following research questions:

1. How do students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts perceive their school experiences in the UK in terms of:
    - Language, accessing the curriculum, and support?
    - Opportunities to develop and express their developing and changing identities?
2. How do teachers and other staff members perceive their experiences of teaching and supporting these students with EAL?

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Introduction

The literature discussed in the review in Chapter 2 facilitates the placement of this study amongst existing knowledge and previous research in the field of EAL education. Throughout the literature review, several poststructuralist theories of language and identity emerged as relevant to this study, which together will form a conceptual framework for this study and provide a lens through which to view the data. In this shorter chapter, these theories and their relevance to EAL education in England will be outlined and explored.

3.2 Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism refers to a series of related developments that began in France in the 1960s as a response to the prevailing influence of structuralism. A poststructuralist framework critiques and challenges "the conditions and foundations of knowledge, particularly with reference to its apparent objectivity and universal applicability" (Norton & Morgan 2013: 1). There are several areas of poststructuralist theories that are of particular relevance to this study. They recognise the key role that language plays in the production and reproduction of social relations, and "the role of social dynamics in the processes of additional language learning and use" (Pavlenko 2002: 282). The theories also critique prevailing assumptions about identity construction, a central feature in the developmental trajectory of adolescence to adulthood, a process that is even more complex for students that have the added challenges of learning EAL and settling into a new educational environment (Hill et al. 2013). Thus, elements of poststructuralist theories, discussed below, will form a lens through which the experiences of students with EAL can be explored.

3.2.1 Poststructuralist theories of language

Gaining prominence in the late 20th century, poststructuralist theories of language have been influenced by scholars such as Bourdieu (1977a; 1991), Derrida (1978), Weedon (1997) and Foucault (1972). These theories are built on, but are discrete from, structuralist theories of language, which originated in the work of the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. Theorising language as an abstract system, Saussure (1966) suggested that the building blocks of language are signs comprising of the *signifier* (sound image) and the *signified* (concept or meaning). These two components are intrinsically arbitrary, thus there is no natural connection between them (Norton & Morgan 2013).

Poststructuralism has built on these ideas, but, whilst structuralism views "signs as having arbitrary meanings and linguistic communities as being relatively homogeneous" (Norton &

Morgan 2013: 2), poststructuralists often explore the extrinsic conditions of language- in other words, the social intentions of speakers (Morgan 2007). This approach views dialogues between speakers as sites of struggle, as they attempt to create meanings and negotiate identities (Norton & Toohey 2011). Based on these ideas, Bakhtin (1981; 1984) explored the social view of language and proposed that spoken communication can be seen as a metaphorical chain that new speakers strive to join. Whilst structuralism may view language learning as a process of internalising a set of grammatical rules and a range of vocabulary, Bakhtin saw learners as struggling to use language as a tool for participating in a specific speech community (a group of people that use the same language) (Norton & Toohey 2011). For students with EAL in mainstream education, the extent to which they can 'join the chain' and participate in their new speech community strongly depends on their linguistic abilities. This includes both the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) needed for everyday social situations and the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) needed to participate in the classroom speech community (Cummins 1979; 1981; see section 2.3.1.3). This can have a significant effect on how respected, accepted, included and supported they feel in the community they are part of or are attempting to join- i.e., their sense of belonging (Goodenow and Grady 1993). Burcham (2009) notes that this goes beyond the simple process of enrolling in a school as a sense of belonging reflects a student's sense of the extent to which they 'fit in' and the development of reciprocal social relationships with their peers. In research, a sense of belonging in educational settings has been linked to higher levels of mental and physical wellbeing, healthier social relationships, higher self-esteem and better educational and occupational outcomes (Goodenow 1993; Finn & Rock 1997; Anderman 2002; Kia-Keating & Ellis 2007; Allen & Kern 2017; Allen et al. 2018). This has significant implications for students with EAL as feeling restrained in their sense of belonging and participation can negatively affect their speaking privileges and position them as disempowered in the speech community (Hall, Cheng & Carlson 2006; Conteh & Brock 2011).

3.2.1.1 Bourdieu's theory of practice

The poststructuralist work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has directly addressed the relationship between language and power, and the inequalities that exist in society, particularly in education (Bourdieu 1977b, 1991; Bourdieu & Passeron 1990). These inequalities can be unpacked through an exploration of Bourdieusian theory in relation to students with EAL in mainstream education in the UK.

In his theory of practice, Bourdieu (1977b; 1990) developed three interrelated concepts: habitus, field and capital. *Habitus* refers to a set of socially ingrained dispositions that influence the ways in which individuals perceive social reality and react in certain ways to it (Bourdieu 1991). Formed unconsciously, a habitus contains common and unquestioned

beliefs, which Bourdieu referred to as doxa (Flynn 2015a). A person's habitus is rooted in their family upbringing and conditioned by their position in social structures, which shape the parameters of their social possibilities (Bourdieu 2002). From his view, social reality has gradually divided into what Bourdieu refers to as *fields:* "a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or 'capital'" (Bourdieu 1991: 14). Fields (e.g., family, politics, education, art) develop on a hierarchical basis and are governed by a set of rules (i.e. the 'rules of the game' or the 'logic of practice') that determine the ways in which those within a field behave (Flynn 2013). The dominance of those that have established their knowledge or forms of *capital* within a field is accepted. The concept of capital is a term for which Bourdieu is well known among sociologists and educators, which not only refers to the traditional *economic capital* (i.e. material wealth), but also *cultural capital* (i.e. the knowledge, skills and credentials that have exchange value in different social settings), *symbolic capital* (i.e. honour, prestige or recognition) and *social capital* (i.e. a network of relationships) (Bourdieu 1991). For Bourdieu, individuals are not only defined by the social class that they belong to, but also by their different kinds of capital they can draw upon and 'exchange' in social settings (Norton & Toohey 2011).

In his early studies, Bourdieu focused on the role that education plays in the reproduction of social class. In the field of education, cultural capital can be recognised and given value in three ways: *institutionalised* (formal recognition of knowledge, such as academic qualifications), *embodied* (knowledge, skills and perceptions) and *objectified* (access to materials that carry cultural capital, such as art and literature) (Devine 2009). Bourdieu (1990) argued that these interlinked forms of cultural capital are inculcated in higher social class upbringings, enabling higher academic achievement for higher-class students than their lower-class peers. Thus, according to Bourdieu, education plays a key role in maintaining the status quo:

> *"[education] is in fact one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern, as it both provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a* social *gift treated as a* natural *one."*
>
> *(Bourdieu 1974: 32)*

As well as social class, Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital for exploring social inequalities has been widely deployed to understand migration and the educational experiences of students with EAL. For migrants, acceptance into a host community is based on the different forms of capital that they possess (Devine 2009). As noted earlier, an EAL student's ability to join a new speech community is heavily influenced by their linguistic competence, which Bourdieu (1991) refers to as *linguistic capital*, a form of embodied cultural capital that is seen to

determine a person's social positioning. According to Bourdieu (1977a: 648), "language is not only an instrument of communication or even knowledge, but also an instrument of power", which means that speakers rarely share equal "rights to speech" in the 'linguistic marketplace', where some varieties are valued, and others are stigmatised. In every field, the value of a particular language variety is derived from the extent to which it can provide access to education and desired employment, which can, in turn, be transformed into economic capital. English, aided by centuries of political domination, colonialism and globalisation, has come to be associated with modernity, capital wealth and opportunities for those that speak it (Mehmedbegovic 2017). Nowadays, the English language is commonly used as a *lingua franca*: a contact language between speakers that do not share the same L1 (Jenkins 2015). Due to its domination on a global scale, English is positioned as a language with "an immeasurable weighting of symbolic capital" (Flynn 2015b: 156). This grants power and authority to English language users and positions non-English speakers as delegitimised (Phillipson 1992).

According to Bourdieu (1977a), there is a dominant linguistic form in every field which he refers to as *legitimate language*. The most obvious examples of such are 'standard' forms, such as Standard English. These forms- "however imperfectly realised" – set a standard for what is considered to be acceptable linguistic usage (Grenfell 2012: 52). The global value of English is reflected in the field of education in the UK as it is the dominant language of UK society and has high value in providing access to the curriculum (Hardy 2012). As seen, students with EAL need to develop high levels of English proficiency, both in terms of their BICS and CALP (Cummins 1979; 1981), in order to participate in classroom life, to learn and to compete with their FLE peers on national standardised tests (see sections 2.3.1.3 and 2.3.2.1). Qualifications gained in these high-stakes assessments (i.e., institutionalised capital) can be exchanged in certain fields for jobs that carry more prestige or for access to higher education (Moskal 2016). However, as explored in the literature review, research has found that some students with EAL that arrive late to the education system in England and are new to English lack the linguistic capital they need to access the language of the curriculum. This highlights how the language of instruction in the education system in the UK perpetuates social inequalities and has the potential to disadvantage students with EAL. Additionally, it has been argued that the pervasive 'monolingual mindset' in England means that English is perceived as the only legitimate language and positions other languages as illegitimate (Safford & Drury 2013). Indeed, the policy that made studying a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) optional after the age of 14 in 2004 perhaps reflects the government's habitus regarding multilingualism. Georg (2004: 334) argues that this is significant as institutionalised cultural capital (i.e., academic qualifications) "is transmitted in a rational, controlled and explicitly

defined way, as outlined in the curricula of educational institutions" and has "the power to define what is important and unimportant knowledge". Hardy (2012) suggests that the perception of the value of English and monolingualism is also reflected in policy related to EAL education as multiple language competencies of many students with EAL are not viewed by schools as linguistic capital, but rather an obstacle to learning that must be overcome.

Bourdieu also highlighted the unbalanced power relations between students and their teachers (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990); in the classroom, a teacher can be seen to have linguistic capital as a fluent or native speaker of English due to its perceived value, embodied cultural capital in the form of their curriculum knowledge, and symbolic capital due to the status they hold as the professional that makes pedagogical decisions for the students they teach (Flynn 2013). However, studies have shown that some monolingual teachers may lack linguistic capital in terms of their understanding of the language learning process (Murakami 2008; Flynn 2013), whereas multilingual teachers or teacher assistants can use translanguaging practices to help support students with EAL (Conteh 2007; Santoro 2007; Martin-Jones & Saxena 2003; see section 2.3.5). These differences in linguistic capital in teachers can have significant implications for their pedagogical choices and therefore the academic success of students with EAL.

Inequalities in the 'linguistic marketplace' can also be reflected in the home settings of school students. According to Bourdieu (1977b), if the linguistic practices of a student's family match the language use that is promoted in school, the student acquires linguistic capital, which matches that of those that are in positions of power in society. That is, if a student uses the same linguistic variety at home (e.g., Standard English) that is used in the field of education and is considered to have high value, they will- according to Bourdieu's (1977b) theory- be educated more easily. This is concerning for students with EAL as it is not always the case that the linguistic practices of their home match those at school. As noted in the literature review, some of these students may use a language other than English at home, which means they are faced with the challenge of acquiring language practices that are appropriate for two very different fields (Hardy 2012). On the other hand, some parents may insist on their children speaking English due to its perceived value, resulting in their L1 being seen as inferior or illegitimate. In some cases, students with EAL speak different languages with different people: parents, siblings, grandparents, peers at school and friends in their home countries (Hoque 2015). Gregory (2005) argues that this means that they simultaneously develop membership of different speech communities and increase their linguistic capital. As Flynn (2013) suggests, there is potential for students to convert this capital into educational qualifications (i.e., institutionalised cultural capital) that can, in the future, lead to employment opportunities that generate economic capital. However, in the field of education in the UK, a

context that is biased towards English and monolingualism, linguistic capital in the form of multilingualism is not always recognised.

Due to the popularity of Bourdieu's work in education, the concept of *cultural capital* was introduced into Ofsted's (Office for Standards in Education) revised Education Inspection Framework in 2019, asserting that inspectors will evaluate the educational quality of an institution by judging the extent to which school leaders provide students with "the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life" (Ofsted 2019a: 9). Ofsted set out their understanding of the term, taken from the National Curriculum, in the school inspection handbook:

> "*It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement*."
>
> *(Ofsted 2019b: 43)*

Cultural capital was recognised by Nick Gibb, Minister of State for School Standards, in a speech in 2018 to promote "social justice and equality of opportunity" in the curriculum for all students (Gibb 2018), and its introduction into Ofsted's inspection framework is motivated by the aspiration to address the underachievement of disadvantaged students in England (Mansell 2019). However, Ofsted's use of the term has been heavily criticised by stakeholders in education, with some suggesting the term has been poorly defined, or even misunderstood (Mansell 2019). Through his work, Bourdieu (1977a; 1977b; 1990; 1991) aimed to argue that education entrenches inequality, and that current society cannot change that. Moylett (2019) argues that Ofsted's lack of consideration over this broader context of the term is "disingenuous" and has the potential "to perpetuate deficit models of working-class children (and many other children who are not white, British and middle class)". Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital was intended to include the knowledge and skills of all cultural, social and class groups, but, as he argued himself, not all forms are equally valued by society, particularly in the education system (Moylett 2019). This has important implications for students with EAL, which will be discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

Bourdieu's conceptual tools of habitus, field and capital thus provide a useful theoretical lens for exploring language and the positioning of students with EAL in the education system in the UK. The discussion of the theory of practice in this section has demonstrated how it can be used to delve further into key issues identified in the literature review in the 'low-incidence' settings of this study, including language issues, the curriculum and the teacher's role.

3.2.2 Poststructuralist theories of identity

In a poststructuralist framework, language is not only viewed as a form of social power and cultural capital, but also as "a site of identity construction" (Pavlenko 2002: 284). Indeed, it is widely believed that there is a connection between the language of a speech community and the identity of its members. As Kramsch (1998) notes, speakers derive pride, strength and a feeling of social importance from their membership of these communities. Students with EAL that enter the UK education system face the challenge of becoming a member of a new speech community, as discussed earlier, which can have a profound effect on the construction of their identity, which will be discussed in the following section.

A key theorist in regard to identity construction is Christine Weedon (1987/ 1997: 28), who argued that it is in language that an individual (i.e. the *subject*) constructs their *subjectivity*: "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself, and her ways of understanding her relation to the world". In contrast to Western humanist philosophy, which viewed the individual as fixed and coherent, Weedon's stance was that the *subject* and their *subjectivity* are diverse, dynamic and change over time (Norton & Morgan 2013). Kramsch (1998: 67) has focused on the subjectivity of language learners and argues that they "assume several collective identities" that change over time and are "liable to be in conflict with one another". For example, a student with EAL may present a different identity at home to their identity in school due to parental expectations and attitudes towards their language and cultural heritage (Cline et al. 2002). Anderson et al. (2016) note that, for students with EAL, these conflicting identities can mean that they feel they both belong and do not belong in the school context.

Social relationships are also considered to be crucial to this process of subjectivity construction as identities may be imposed on or assigned to an individual by others. Indeed, Norton & Toohey (2011: 417) note that Weedon's use of the term *subjectivity* is a reminder that "an individual can be simultaneously the subject *of* a set of relationships (e.g. in a position of power) or subject *to* a set of relationships (e.g. in a position of reduced power)". In schools, as students (and especially those with EAL) are most often in a position of reduced power due to the social structure of the settings, their identities are often imposed on them by others, which they may attempt to resist. Thus, the monolingual ideologies of the UK education system can have a significant effect on the identity construction and positioning of students with EAL. Indeed, Kenner and Ruby (2012: 23) argue that "if English is treated as the only significant language in school, children will try to construct monolingual identities". Relationships with their teachers at school play crucial roles in the construction of these identities (Conteh and Meier 2014). As explored in section 2.3.5, the beliefs and attitudes that teachers hold towards students with EAL can have implications for their educational

outcomes; if teachers hold deficit beliefs about multilingualism, students with EAL may suffer a devaluation of elements of their identity, resulting in feeling a sense of disempowerment, which can affect their achievement outcomes (Baker 2011).

When students with EAL first arrive in a school, their identity is often tightly bound to their first language and culture, as the two are "intimately linked" (Kramsch 1998: 8). As they become more proficient in English, the ways in which they use their repertoire of languages can significantly affect their sense of self and self-expression (Hall 2019). Some students may welcome English as a tool for developing a new identity, whereas others may resent that their first language is not valued or recognised, and they are disadvantaged in the English-speaking classroom environment (Maybin 2007). Baker (2011: 134) argues that those that experience a decay in their L1 in this process or regard it negatively may feel a "loss of primary identity". On the other hand, some may consciously and actively attempt to maintain their L1 as they hold passionate beliefs about its significance to their sense of identity (Creese & Blackledge 2015). In addition, parents may try to influence the identities of their multilingual children by insisting on the language(s) spoken at home due to their own beliefs and attitudes towards language (Reece 2018).

The migration experiences of students with EAL and the process of integrating into a new school community can also destabilise their sense of national and ethnic identity (Lamb and Budiyanto 2013). The sense of self of a student with EAL is often connected to their home country and first language, particularly when they first arrive in a new host country. However, based on perceptions of their national citizenship, others might attempt to impose an identity on them. For example, Hoque (2015) found that third generation British-born Bangladeshis in London faced difficult identity choices, questioning whether they were Bangladeshi, British, Muslim, or a fusion of the three. Hoque (2015: 3) argues that, due to cultural differences, they are marginalised by mainstream British society and may also be excluded from the Bangladeshi community "due to their adoption of a seemingly more Western lifestyle". This dual exclusion had forced them to seek an alternative identity that is complex, multi-faceted and constantly changing in order to respond to rapid social and political changes in modern society. Students with EAL that join a new school community may face similar challenges that impact on the construction of their multifaceted identities.

3.2.2.1 Norton: identity and investment

Delving further into poststructuralist theories of identity, the work of Bonny Norton and the concept of *investment*, which derived from research within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), has been highly influential and is extremely useful for exploring the identities of students with EAL. Within SLA, educators and educational researchers have

commonly used learners' traits to explain learning outcomes and often focused on the characteristics of learners as a concern (Toohey 2000). Norton Pierce (1995) argues that such research in the 1970s and 80s struggled to conceptualise a theory of social identity that brought together the relationship between the language learner and the social world. Instead, their research presented the identities, personalities and learning styles of language learners as fixed (Norton & Toohey 2011). Learners were described "unproblematically as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited", which Norton Pierce (1995: 12) argues does not consider "that such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space". Furthermore, the SLA theories focusing on 'the successful language learner' were developed with the idea that they can choose the conditions in which they interact with speakers of the target language and that the learner's access to this speech community is based on their motivation (Norton Pierce 1995). For example, Gardner & MacIntyre (1992) claimed that participation in informal language acquisition contexts is voluntary: language learners can either choose to participate or not. From a poststructuralist view that understands identity as "fluid, context-dependent, and context-producing" (Norton & Toohey 2011: 419), Norton Pierce (1995) argued that SLA theorists had not adequately investigated the extent to which inequitable relations of power can limit the opportunities that language learners have to practice using the target language outside of the SLA classroom. These arguments are important to the current study as students with EAL in the UK education system are operating in a context with inequitable power relations and they may not have a choice in the conditions in which they use English.

Drawing on these arguments, and research she conducted with immigrant women in Canada, Bonny Norton offered new perspectives on the relationship between language learning and identity (Norton Pierce 1995; Norton 2000; 2013). From this work, identity was established as a research area 'in its own right' (Zuengler & Miller 2006: 43) and poststructuralism often became the framework of choice for those that wished to explore identity and SLA (Block 2007). Norton defines identity as:

> *"how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future."*
>
> *(Norton 2000: 5)*

In her view, the identity of language learners is always fluid, as they "are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world" (Norton 2000: 11). This dynamic view of identity led to the construction of the concept referred to as *investment*. It is important to note that the development of investment was a departure from previous SLA conceptions of motivation, which attempted to quantify a language learner's

commitment to acquiring the target language (Norton Pierce 1995). In particular, Gardner & Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985) had introduced two types of motivation to the field: *instrumental motivation*, which refers to the desire to gain a social or economic reward from learning another language (such as employment), whereas *integrative motivation* is characterised by the learner's desire to integrate into the target language community.

Building on integrative motivation, Schumann (1978, 1986) developed his Acculturation Model[2], which predicts that the degree to which learners will acquire the target language is based on their acculturation to the target language group. According to Schumann (1986), the process of acculturation is influenced by social factors- i.e., variables that involve the relationship between two social groups. Schumann articulated his model through his case study of Alberto, an English language learner that had undergone a process of pidginization (Pittaway 2004). Based on an assumption that pidgin languages are non-integrative, Schumann (1986) claimed that Alberto could not be perceived as anything other than a person that did not wish to integrate if he continued to use his pidginized form of English. However, as Norton (2000) notes, Schumann failed to consider the possibility that, although Alberto did have integrative motivation to learn English, the target language community may have rejected him because he was perceived as an 'illegitimate speaker'. Thus, power relations can affect the language learning process. Furthermore, Schumann's model can be criticised for the ways in which it places the responsibility on the language learner to maximise interaction with the target language community (Norton 2000).

Thus, using a poststructuralist approach, Norton Pierce (1995) aimed to conceptualise the language learner and their complex identity with reference to the inequitable social structures that are frequent in everyday interactions. From this position, she foregrounded "the role of language as constitutive of and constituted by a language learner's social identity" (Norton Pierce 1995: 13). It is through language that an individual negotiates and constructs their identity across different social sites, and it is through language that they achieve (or are denied) access to powerful social communities that give language learners the right to speak (Heller 1987). This approach means that exploration of affective variables in language learning are not isolated from the social context.

The concept of investment signals the departure from isolating affective variables in language learning from the social context (Norton 2013). The term is best understood in relation to Bourdieu's (1977a, 1991) theory of practice and particularly the concept of cultural capital (see above). Norton Pierce (1995) argues that a language learner's investment in the target language is based on the understanding that they will acquire a wider variety of symbolic

[2] A separate and different theory to the process of acculturation that was introduced in section 2.2.2.2.

resources, such as education and friendship, as well as material resources, such as capital goods, money and real estate (Bourdieu 1991). Attaining these resources means they will increase their cultural capital and social power, hence there is a fundamental relationship between identity and investment (Norton 2013). Language learners often expect a good 'return' on their 'investment', such as access to otherwise unattainable resources, such as employment. This provides a different perspective for exploring a learner's commitment to learning the target language; for example, although they may be highly motivated, they may feel little investment in the language practices of the classroom, which may be, for example, anti-immigration, or biased towards monolingualism (Norton & Toohey 2011). They may also have a different perspective on teaching practices to those of the teacher, which also compromises their investment. The learner may then feel reluctant to engage in classroom activities, or be excluded from them, which, in time, positions them as 'poor' or 'unmotivated' (Norton 2013).

Also fundamental to a language learner's investment in the target language is the extent to which they are considered a *legitimate speaker* by people they wish to interact with (Bourdieu 1991). The ideology that a legitimate speaker exists underpins the concept of a native speaker, traditionally being viewed as the only fully competent speaker of their language that has instinctively acquired their linguistic knowledge (Hackert 2009). This brings a certain authority to native speakers that is associated with legitimacy and authenticity (Kramsch 1998). According to Kramsch (2012), the legitimacy of a language may be bestowed by an institution, such as a school, whereas authenticity is sanctioned by members of a community with which the speaker seeks to identify. Kramsch (1998) notes that language learners (e.g., students with EAL) interact with members of many different communities in different sites of socialisation in their daily lives, including their school, their neighbourhood, and, perhaps, their religious institution, and acquire common perceptions of the world through their interactions with other members of these communities. In addition, they also affiliate with communities of the imagination (Norton 2013). *Imagined communities*, a term first coined by Benedict Anderson, refers to groups of people that are not immediately accessible but whom we connect with through imagination (Kanno & Norton 2003). Anderson (1991: 6) argued that nations are imagined communities as the members of this socially constructed group "will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." Members of an imagined community are bound together by their shared belief in the membership of the community (Joseph 2010). Nowadays, it is increasingly difficult to define which imagined communities that one belongs to as societies are more interconnected than ever before. Furthermore, they have complex histories that make defining boundaries and the linguistic and cultural identities of the members

problematic. Thus, according to insights from poststructuralist theory, the national identity of a student with EAL may appear to be clear-cut on the surface, but their backgrounds and histories make it more difficult to define.

Kanno & Norton (2003) argue that a learner's investment in the target language is profoundly affected by their imagined communities. For example, a learner's identification with their home country (arguably an imagined community) can provide strong motivation for maintaining their first language. This may even be the case for second or third generation migrants that have not physically moved around but identify with an imagined community through their family. Alternatively, a learner may imagine that acquiring a target language will allow them to become a recognised member of a new social group. Therefore, investment in either developing the target language or maintaining the first language can be understood in terms of identifications or affiliations to imagined communities. Norton's (2013) research has found that a teacher's lack of awareness of the imagined communities and identities of learners can significantly affect the investment of learners in their language acquisition. Research in EAL education has found that integrating the identity of students with EAL into the classroom is crucial to successful second language acquisition (Neve & Lloyd 2016; Arnot et al. 2014). Creating an inclusive environment and securing a positive social identity for these students can help to build and maintain their self-esteem in a new cultural context. By increasing their self-esteem, they are more likely to engage in classroom discourse, which can improve their verbal skills in the new language (Neve & Lloyd 2016).

The poststructuralist theories explored in this section highlight the fundamental relationship between language and identity, which underpins investment in learning a target language. As, from this perspective, identity is complex and fluid, there is a fundamental issue with educators attempting to determine the nature of an EAL student's identities. Gewirtz & Cribb (2009) argue that the amount of time and energy that needs to be invested in order to try to understand these identities should not be underestimated, which highlights the crucial need for research. Although investigations into the complex roles of identity and investment in language learning have been taken up by many scholars in the fields of SLA and TESOL[3], there is a lack of such explorations in the field of EAL education in England.

3.3 Chapter summary

The review in this chapter suggests that poststructuralist theories of language and identity can provide a useful lens through which to view the multifaceted challenges that students with

[3] See, for example, Bearse & de Jong (2008), Carroll, Motha & Price (2008), Chang (2011), Murphy, Jin & Li-Chin (2005), Pavlenko (2003), Pittaway (2004) and Xu (2012).

EAL face in mainstream education in England. Drawing on a combination of these theories in the discussion in Chapter 6 will help to provide an understanding of the experiences of students with EAL and their teachers in the 'low-incidence' contexts in this study.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

4.1 Introduction

As the literature review identified, there is a paucity of research that has explored the experiences of students with EAL in secondary schools in England with small EAL cohorts, referred to as 'low-incidence' contexts. The following chapter will elucidate the approach that was undertaken to answer the following research questions that were designed for this study:

1. How do students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts perceive their school experiences in the UK in terms of:
    a. Language, accessing the curriculum, and support?
    b. Opportunities to develop and express their developing and changing identities?
2. How do teachers and other staff members perceive their experiences of teaching and supporting these students with EAL?

This research is a case study of two rural secondary schools with small EAL populations. The qualitative approach undertaken to explore these contexts involved a range of research tools, including diary recordings, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. In order to explain these methodological choices, the chapter begins by presenting the research stance by exploring the ontological and epistemological influences on the decision-making and providing a reflexive account of my role as the researcher in this study.

4.2 Research stance

4.2.1 Philosophical underpinnings

When conducting research, it is important that a researcher carefully reflects on the intellectual and philosophical assumptions they are making about the world, which therefore underpin their research decisions (Stanfield 2015). This process involves exploring their beliefs and values that are driving the research process by asking two fundamental questions: "What is reality?" and "What is knowledge?" (Croker 2009: 5). These questions refer to the principles of ontology and epistemology, respectively, which act together as the foundations of the approaches to the research questions (Barron 2006).

Ontology is concerned with examining whether a social reality exists that is independent from human interpretations and conceptions (Ormston et al. 2014). Braun & Clarke (2013) argue that variations in ontological perspectives range along a continuum, from a perspective that reality is entirely independent of human knowledge about it (known as realism), to a view that reality depends entirely on human interpretation (referred to as relativism). Epistemology is

concerned with *how* we come to learn about reality and the nature, limits, and possibility of human knowledge (Sumner 2006a). An epistemological perspective can also be realist or relativist. Epistemological realism claims that it is possible to obtain knowledge of reality that is independent from human conceptions and therefore there is a single reality and truth (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). In contrast, epistemological relativism argues that knowledge of the world is always subject to perspective and interpretation, and "therefore a singular, absolute truth is impossible" (Braun & Clarke 2013: 29). The stances that a researcher takes in terms of ontology and epistemology are applied through a research paradigm (Creswell & Poth 2018). In scientific research, the term *paradigm* was first used by Kuhn (1962) to refer to the philosophical beliefs and practices that underpin a scientific discipline. These paradigms have had a significant effect on the development of research, which can be illustrated through an exploration of the positivist and constructivist paradigms.

Positivism is adopted from the natural sciences, which Stanfield (2015: 68) argues perceive social reality as "existing independently of the unbiased observer". Central to positivism is ontological realism: the belief that there is a single, fixed reality that is objectively measurable and quantifiable (Braun & Clarke 2013). Therefore, the epistemological position is that quantitative methods can be used to measure this reality as precisely as possible (Ashworth 2015). As positivism assumes that there is only one universal reality, Ormston et al. (2014) argue that any truths that are discovered through this approach are presumed to be applicable to other situations, regardless of context. In discovering these truths, the researcher is seen as objective and is a separate, independent entity to what is being researched (Scotland 2012). In the social sciences, researchers are less likely to adhere to a strict form of positivism but may take a postpositivist stance instead (Braun & Clarke 2013). Having emerged from the critiques of scholars like Karl Popper (Popper 1959), postpositivism still takes the ontological perspective that there is a singular truth which we can know but acknowledges that the researcher is influenced by theories, context, their background knowledge, and values (Phillips & Burbules 2000).

Other approaches to research challenge the notion of a single, objective reality. For example, researchers in the constructivist paradigm are likely to take a subjective ontological position and assume that each individual creates their own unique understanding of the world; thus, there is no universal truth, but instead "multiple interpretations of reality" which change over time and contexts (Croker 2009: 6). Therefore, constructivist epistemologies take a relativist perspective as they argue that the world can be understood in relation to specific cultural and social contexts (Braun & Clarke 2013). For research undertaken within this paradigm, reality is viewed as being co-constructed between the researcher and participants (Croker 2009). Often, this involves exploring the participants' understanding of a situation through

interactions and discussions, which the researcher then interprets (Heigham & Croker 2009). Constructivist researchers recognise that this interpretation is shaped by their own personal background and experiences, so they adopt a reflexive approach throughout the research process (Creswell & Poth 2018; see section 4.2.3).

4.2.2 Qualitative research

In the mid to late twentieth century, the popularity of constructivism in the social sciences grew and researchers pursued more appropriate ways of interpreting the multiple perspectives of reality, as they saw them, resulting in the emergence of qualitative research methods (Scotland 2012). Although quantitative methods continue to be used by many researchers, rigorous and systematic qualitative methods developed, underpinned by constructivist views (Croker 2009). Heigham & Croker (2009) argue that researchers make a choice between using quantitative research, qualitative research, depending on their philosophical assumptions and the aims of their study. Developed from positivism and the natural sciences, quantitative research, broadly speaking, entails the collection of numerical data and analysis using statistical techniques (Braun & Clarke 2013). On the other hand, qualitative researchers investigate subject matters in the social sciences that are not amenable to quantification, focusing on meanings and interpretation (Sumner 2006b). Qualitative research is an umbrella term that refers to a wide range of research methodologies, which often involve collecting data in the natural settings of the phenomenon that is under study using multiple methods, such as observations, interviews, and documents (Creswell & Poth 2018).

Quantitative research cycles are often seen to be structured linearly at the outset, as each stage of research tends to be carried out one after another: the formulation of research questions, data collection, data analysis, and then the findings are written up and shared (Heigham and Croker 2009; Allwood 2012). On the other hand, the research cycle in a qualitative approach is characteristically emergent and data-driven; following the formulation of research questions, data collection, analysis and interpretation typically overlap (Heigham & Croker 2009). Qualitative researchers will often move between all three, responding to openings that emerge until any new information that is gathered does not add to the understanding of a phenomenon, a point referred to as ‘data saturation’ (Heigham & Croker 2009: 10). Although this flexibility may not be compatible with the linear and systematic nature of quantitative research, it enables qualitative researchers to capture a rich and in-depth understanding of participants’ unique understandings of the world (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018).

Whereas quantitative methodology has typically been perceived as inherent to rigorous and objective investigation, qualitative research has been critiqued in literature for several reasons, including its validity (Glassner & Mareno 2013). Originating from the positivist paradigm, the

concept of validity traditionally refers to the degree to which conclusions drawn from research deliver an accurate or precise account of what happened (Jupp 2006). The validity of quantitative research often involves assessing the features of a study, including the extent to which the findings support a claim about cause and effect (internal validity) and the generalisability of the findings (external validity) (Perry 2011). Quantitative researchers often seek to enhance the internal validity of their study by considering aspects of their research design, such as the random selection of participants in order to eliminate sampling bias (Winter 2000). Research is considered valid if it is accepted as legitimate by people with an interest in research findings (Yardley 2015). However, the qualitative approach is often rooted in constructivism, which argues that there are multiple perspectives of reality, so there is a challenge in identifying which is credible and 'correct' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). Therefore, within the context of the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the qualitative approach, the traditional positivist criteria of validity are replaced by terms such as "trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, confirmability" (Denzin & Lincoln 2011: 13). These criteria are often seen to be more flexible than the quantitative criteria for validity (Tracy 2010).

It has been argued that the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative research can be enhanced through the use of multiple perspectives and methodologies when studying a phenomenon, referred to as *triangulation* (Denzin 1978; Braun & Clarke 2013; Yardley 2015). This can include the use of different methods for gathering data, such as observations and interviews, and different sampling strategies (Perry 2011). If the outcomes of the different methods correspond with each other, the researcher's confidence in the findings can increase (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). Denzin (1978) argues that approaching a phenomenon from different angles in this way provides a holistic, detailed account that is credible. Thus, researchers from a range of research paradigms value the use of different methodologies and perspectives as it "deepens understanding and encourages consistent (re) interpretation" (Tracey 2010: 843).

Assessment of external validity in quantitative research places importance on generalisation, which refers to the extent to which conclusions drawn from a study can be generalised to other contexts or people (Jupp 2006). However, as qualitative researchers often reject the notion of a single, objective reality, generalisation is not a central concern. Furthermore, statistical generalisations in quantitative research involve random samples that are considered representative of a population, whereas qualitative research seeks only to produce an account of a phenomenon that is context-dependent and culturally situated (Tracy 2010). However, qualitative research *can* generate knowledge that can be relevant to other contexts, often referred to as transferability (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). The trustworthiness,

credibility, and transferability of the qualitative methods undertaken in this study will be explored in section 4.3.5, following a discussion of the research design.

This discussion of qualitative and quantitative research has highlighted some of the differences between the two paradigms. However, it is important to note that the 'traditional' polarisation of the qualitative and quantitative approaches has been criticised in recent years (Perry 2011). For example, Allwood (2012) argues that the distinction is unclear and ambiguous as the two approaches share many common features, such as the aim to explain and describe aspects of reality. Similarly, Larsen-Freeman & Long (2014) suggest that there is nothing inherent in either paradigm to prevent its practice in the alternative approach. Thus, they propose that the paradigms be seen as two ends of a continuum based on the methods of data collection and degrees of subjectivity (Larsen-Freeman & Long 2014).

4.2.3 A reflexive approach

Researchers within the positivist paradigm perceive themselves as standing apart from the phenomena that they are investigating: "their own values are not involved in this objective inquiry" (Edge & Richards 1998: 336). In contrast, researchers that take a constructivist stance in their study aim to explore the personal and social worlds of participants (and their perspectives and interpretations of it) by positioning themselves closely to the participants in order to understand their experiences as they do (Croker 2009). By immersing themselves in the participant's community, constructivist researchers are often participants in the settings that they investigate, enabling them to simultaneously maintain an emic (insider perspective) and etic (researcher perspective) position (Heigham & Sakui 2009). Constructivism recognises that a reflexive approach is necessary to explore how the values and beliefs of the researcher influence the choices they make in what to research, how to go about researching it and how to present the findings (Scotland 2012).

Reflexivity refers to the careful consideration and continual critical self-evaluation of the role, position and perspectives of the researcher (Ormston et al. 2014). As constructivism takes a relativist epistemological position, researchers need to understand "the role of the self in the creation of knowledge" and carefully "monitor the impact of their biases, beliefs, and personal experiences on their research" (Berger 2015: 220). Endeavouring not to allow their biases and assumptions to shape the process of data collection and making persistent efforts not to impose their beliefs and understandings on the data is known as *bracketing* (Ahern 1999). Exposing a researcher's beliefs, values and positioning through reflexive bracketing does not discredit scientific knowledge, but rather checks and strengthens it (Bourdieu 2004). The researcher's positioning includes many personal characteristics, including age, gender, race, nationality, linguistic preferences, immigration status, and personal and professional experiences (Finlay

2002). It is important to explore how these characteristics can influence the status and power dynamics between a researcher and participants throughout the research process (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). Furthermore, as my methodological approaches and interpretations are influenced by my positioning in this study, it is necessary to self-scrutinise my personal and professional background in order to define myself as a researcher in this study.

4.2.3.1 My own linguistic, ethnic, and professional positionality

Although reflexivity is crucial in the data collection and analysis stages of research, it is important to probe the influences on my thinking, motivations and interests at the beginning of the study in order to identify any factors that might have skewed the research in particular directions (Finlay 2002). This is particularly important for qualitative researchers, as they must enter the process with an open attitude (van Manen 1990). However, as Denscombe (2017: 89) points out, research "is not a voyage of discovery which starts with a clean sheet" but a process that is loaded with presuppositions, assumptions and preunderstandings, which will be explored in this section.

Although my English Language Studies (BA) course involved studying many aspects of language, I am conscious that I have not experienced what it means to learn more than one language fluently or the need to acquire one in order to access a curriculum. As explored in chapters 2 and 3, in other contexts, multilingualism may increase a person's linguistic capital, which in turn can increase the power of their position in society (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990; see section 3.2.1.1). However, in the education system in England that I progressed through as an English L1 speaker, monolingualism is perceived as the 'norm' (Safford & Drury 2013). Therefore, I am aware that I had a privileged position as a First Language English (FLE) student as my linguistic competence provided me with access to the curriculum that many students with EAL strive for. Furthermore, in the north-eastern market town in which I experienced my own primary and secondary education, there was a distinct lack of diversity in classrooms, so it was rare for me to observe a fellow student learning through EAL. This lack of EAL experience in my own schooling had the potential to inflict a 'monolingual mindset', which could have enabled me to perceive multilingualism as a deficit position (Safford & Drury 2013). Therefore, the reflexive process maintained throughout the research process helped me to consciously avoid making choices that were "loaded with ideological and cultural assumptions" (Jarviluoma, Pirkko & Vilkko 2003: 33).

Following completion of my A Levels at sixth form, I lived and worked in Italy for two years in the travel industry and I attempted to learn conversational Italian through daily interactions with L1 Italian speakers. This was an extremely humbling experience as I found the language

learning process difficult. Furthermore, even though there were opportunities to practise spoken language with L1 Italian speakers in social contexts, the majority of people I came into contact with could speak English as well as Italian. This often felt like a 'safety net' and that the acquisition of Italian was not necessary for me to integrate into the speech community. Through this experience, I became more aware of the dominance of English as a global language (Jenkins 2015) and its symbolic value as a desirable language in the 'linguistic marketplace' (Bourdieu 1977a: 648). From a poststructuralist point of view, it can be argued that I was in a privileged position as I had increased linguistic capital as an English speaker (Bourdieu 1991). Therefore, I may have perceived investment in the target language (Italian) as unnecessary (Norton Pierce 1995). Reflecting on this experience prior to data collection, I considered whether it may contrast with the experiences of students with EAL in the UK education system as they may not have the 'safety net' of being able to use their first language in the process of learning English. Therefore, it was an area that I aimed to explore with the students with EAL that took part in the research. However, I was mindful of potential assumptions I may have been making about their experiences so aimed to follow Kouritzin's (2000: 29) advice "to follow rather than lead, to listen rather than query, to hold back rather than probe".

Although acknowledging my linguistic privilege as a FLE speaker was particularly important in the reflexive process in this study, it was also crucial that I scrutinised other aspects of my positioning and identity that are relevant to this field of research. Identifying as a white British person, I was always conscious of the responsibility I had of interpreting the voices of the students with EAL that come from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, throughout the data collection process, I often acknowledged and expressed my unfamiliarity with their experiences, intending to deconstruct my authority as a researcher and place them in the "expert position" (Berger 2015: 227). The aim was to help the students feel empowered and respected so that they felt comfortable talking about their experiences in focus groups (Murray 2009; see section 4.3.3.4). Pillow (2003: 179) argues that reflexivity is used in this way to "let the data, the subjects, speak for themselves". However, it was still my responsibility as the researcher to interpret, analyse, and present the data. The weight of this responsibility felt increasingly heavier in the summer of 2020 when I had completed the data collection stage and was in the thematic analysis phase of the thesis (see section 4.3.4). Following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, USA, on 25th May 2020 and subsequent 'Black Lives Matter' protests and riots across America and the rest of the world (CNN 2020), I reflected further on my positioning. Having no experience of what it is like to be part of a minority ethnic group and having never been the victim of racially motivated discrimination, I was concerned about my ability to identify with the students that were part of this study and

whether I would only have an 'outsider' perspective. Therefore, I questioned my right and ability to interpret, represent and know their reality in a valid way (Pillow 2003). Although challenging and uncomfortable at times, this period of reflection allowed me to come to terms with my privilege and explore how my positioning could have both assisted and hindered the research process and constructions of meaning (Berger 2015).

In the process of examining the existing literature in the field at the beginning of this study, the direction of the thesis steered towards investigating the experiences of students with EAL in rural schools with small populations, referred to as 'low-incidence' contexts by Murakami (2008). Although this was identified as a gap in the research, it may be that my own preunderstandings and assumptions navigated the direction of the study. In contrast to the wide-ranging practical experience in EAL education of other doctoral researchers such as Sharples (2016) and Reece (2018), my epistemological position is rooted in my own experiences of teaching in a rural area with low levels of EAL. In the 2017/18 academic year, I took the 'traditional' route into teaching via a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) through university. Although my particular course focused on Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) (i.e., further education), I was given a year-long placement in a secondary school in North Yorkshire, which was interwoven with training through lectures and seminars at university. Following completion, my own perspective regarding EAL education echoed those of many of the teachers described in the literature review. In the programme's university lectures, there was no time allocated to EAL education, despite the opportunities where the subject could have arisen, such as training in the Prevent strategy and the Fundamental British Values (DfE. 2015b), or discussions of barriers to learning for students. The placement school I taught in during my training is situated in a rural area and had a very small population of students identified as having EAL, referred to in this study as a 'low-incidence' context. This meant that there was no one to oversee the provision for EAL and it rarely seemed to arise as an issue or concern; the students with EAL were seemingly settled in and assimilated in a straightforward manner (although this perception is a central concern of this thesis). Certainly, throughout my teacher training experiences, EAL in the education system in England seemed to be the 'invisible' concern that Leung (2001) notes. Therefore, similar to NQTs' reports in previous studies (Hall & Cajkler 2008; Cajkler & Hall 2009; Cajkler & Hall 2012; see section 2.3.5), I finished my teacher training year with a lack of confidence in assessment and practical teaching strategies for students with EAL. These professional experiences gave me my own unique interpretations of reality regarding EAL education that was supported in the literature that specifically explored 'low-incidence' contexts (e.g., Cline et al. 2002, Murakami 2008 and Bailey & Marsden 2017) and provided a starting point for this study.

It can be considered both an advantage and a disadvantage that I have my own professional experiences of being a teacher in a rural school with a small EAL cohort. For example, Berger (2015) notes that participants may be more willing to share their opinions and experiences if they perceive the researcher to be sympathetic to their situation. Prior to data collection, it was my perspective that I might have shared commonalities with the teachers of interest in this study in that I lacked confidence and experience in EAL education. This affected the power relationship between myself and the teacher participants (see sections 4.3.2.2.2 and 4.3.3.3) as my sympathy toward the challenges they face may have helped them to feel more open to sharing their understandings. Additionally, it may mean they would not have perceived me as an 'expert' due to my lack of practical experience, which may have helped to reduce power differentials between us (Finlay 2002). However, the reflexive process enabled me to see that I had to carefully guard against assuming that we shared the same understandings and saw the phenomenon in the same way (Finlay 2002). Becoming aware of these presuppositions provided me with a consciousness of not imposing them on the teacher participants in the study or influencing their responses.

This section on reflexivity has demonstrated that the degree to which a researcher shares the experiences of their participants has many benefits and challenges. My positioning as a researcher in this study has been influenced by my personal and professional experiences of EAL education, as well as other aspects of my identity, such as my linguistic and background. It is inevitable that these experiences affected the ways in which I conducted the research and formed a lens for filtering the information gathered from the study, thus shaping the findings and conclusions of the research (Kacen & Chaitin 2006). The process of reflexivity brought these issues into my consciousness early on in the research process and they were monitored carefully by keeping a 'self-supervision' journal, as advised by Ahern (1999). This involved making notes about my background and positioning throughout the research process and gave me an ongoing self-awareness of potential bias and presuppositions that could influence my interpretations of the reality of the participants that I was trying to make sense of (Berger 2015). Maintaining this process throughout the project enhances the integrity, trustworthiness, and credibility of the research (Finlay 2002).

4.3 Research design

The discussion in the previous section on research stance demonstrated how the process of research flows from a researcher's philosophical assumptions to the interpretive framework, and on to the methodological approach to studying a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth 2018). The decisions that the researcher makes in this process depend on the aims of the study and research questions.

A key aim of this study was to empower students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts by giving them a 'voice', using a qualitative approach in order to explore their personal understandings of their experiences and interpretations of reality in detail (Creswell & Poth 2018). A quantitative approach to this study may not have given me the tools as a researcher to explore the multifaceted, complex aspects of the participants' identities that are constantly reconstructed and in motion (Norton & Toohey 2011). As noted previously, rather than being in opposition, quantitative and qualitative research can complement each other by exploring the same phenomenon from different ontological and epistemological perspectives. Therefore, it is important to recognise the role that quantitative research has played in this thesis: although the study has taken a qualitative approach to the methodology, that is not to say that it has not been influenced or triggered by quantitative research, such as reports on the increasing number of students with EAL in schools in England (DfE 2018b), or the statistical analyses of the examination results of students with EAL (see section 2.3.2.1). These statistics are a valuable contribution to our understanding of students with EAL in the education system in England and can be used as a 'starting point' for qualitative research in the field. Our knowledge of EAL education can then be developed by exploring the perspectives of the students with EAL on their social experiences and processes of learning, which can provide a detailed, holistic understanding.

The following section will describe the range of qualitative methods that were undertaken in the study to discover new insights about students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts. In order to understand the students' and their teachers' interpretations of their social world, a qualitative approach was used that involved longitudinal immersion in their shared community. Adopting a case study approach to the context of two secondary schools with low populations of students with EAL, the different perspectives on EAL education in these contexts were gathered from the students themselves, their teachers, senior leadership staff, and a consultant on the council's EAL service team. A range of methods were used to explore these perspectives, including diary recordings, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. The research process, including sampling and data collection, will be described in detail after an exploration of case study.

4.3.1 Case study

At any stage of a research project, there are judgments that researchers need to make and one of the biggest decisions to be made concerns the research strategy. This refers to the plan of action that is used to achieve the specific aims of a study (Denscombe 2017). As the research questions show, this project aimed to explore how students with EAL and their teachers perceive their everyday school experiences. Guided by a qualitative methodology rooted in

constructivism, the overarching strategy for achieving this aim was a case study and the justifications for this decision will be outlined in the following section.

In educational research, quantitative research has been a popular method for gathering evidence that can have universal applications in terms of policies and provision (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier 2012). However, the quantitative approach has been criticised for ignoring the complexities and diversity of education settings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). Therefore, Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier (2012: 5-6) argue that case study is "a possible champion that might be able to deepen understanding in real contexts rather than simply providing decontextualized 'evidence'". Indeed, the central aim of a case study is to capture an in-depth, detailed account of a particular phenomenon (Denscombe 2017). The 'case' that is explored is a particular instance in its context, so it is usually studied within its natural, real-life social setting (Yin 2011). Close attention is paid to the social processes and relationships within the social setting and how they are interlinked together (Denscombe 2017). Data can be gathered in the setting through a range of qualitative methods, including observations, interviews, and documents, and from multiple perspectives (Creswell & Poth 2018). The data is then triangulated in order to generate a holistic view, capturing the case in its entirety (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier 2012). This research strategy is therefore an approach that is well-suited to the aims of exploring the case of students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts.

4.3.2 Case selection

According to Merriam & Tisdell (2015), there are two levels of sampling when undertaking a case study. Firstly, the case (e.g., an institution) must be selected based on predetermined criteria. Secondly, the sample of participants *within* the case must be selected using a specific sampling technique. In the initial stages, the process of selecting the 'case' in this study involved refining the research focus through reading relevant literature and identifying a gap in the field. As the direction of the project steered towards exploring the experiences of students with EAL in schools with small EAL cohorts (i.e., 'low-incidence' contexts), there was the challenge of identifying and approaching suitable schools and participants to take part. The following section will outline this process, which initially involved recruiting the schools, then selecting the sample of students with EAL and teachers that would participate, followed by a piloting stage.

4.3.2.1 Setting and school recruitment

The literature review identified a gap in knowledge regarding the experiences of students with EAL in schools with small EAL cohorts- i.e., 'low-incidence' contexts (Murakami 2008). Therefore, the county of North Yorkshire was particularly selected for the study as there is a thin distribution of EAL students across the region (Murakami 2008); the January 2019

identified that students with EAL made up approximately 4.7% of the county's school population overall (North Yorkshire Education Services 2019). Therefore, students with EAL in this region are generally isolated: many classes have no students with EAL at all and some have only one or two. Furthermore, the research is set in the Yorkshire and Humber region, which, as identified in previous quantitative research, statistically has the most persistent and largest attainment gap in GCSEs between students with EAL and FLE students (Hollingworth & Mansaray 2012; Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015; see section 2.3.2.1). This study aimed to explore the challenges associated with EAL education in this academic context and the factors that may be influencing the attainment gap.

The county is home to a British Army garrison, which has a long history of recruiting from Commonwealth countries, including the Nepalese Gurkhas and Fijian soldiers (Ware 2012). Therefore, the small number of students with EAL in some schools have typically been children of parents that migrated to the area as part of the military. However, classrooms have been diversifying further as the region has also recently experienced an increase in migrants from eastern European countries (e.g., Poland and Romania) and, since 2016, 125 students have also arrived in schools across the county under the Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS).

Prior to data collection, the North Yorkshire council had an EAL and GRT (Gypsy, Roma and Traveller) service that was made up of a team of specialist consultants that worked with schools to improve the teaching and provision for EAL students. At the school recruitment stage of this project, I contacted that team in order to gain insights into the challenges that schools faced in the area and identify 'low-incidence' school contexts to take part in the study. Based on the research questions, the criteria for the schools as case studies were their location and a small EAL cohort in the school population. Following a discussion with a consultant on the EAL and GRT service team, I identified two schools as suitable settings for this research project to take place. A brief background of the schools will be provided below, and further detailed contextual information will be outlined in Chapter 5.

4.3.2.1.1 The schools

The first school, here referred to by the pseudonym *Northbridge Academy*, is situated in a small town and has approximately 1325 students overall. The school reported that they had 29 students recorded as EAL (just over 2% of the overall school population). The backgrounds of this EAL cohort are mixed; as the school is situated near to the army garrison, the majority of the cohort are Nepalese 'forces' students. The parents of some of the other students with EAL migrated for employment and their countries of origin include Poland, Romania and the

Philippines. There were also two Syrian refugee students from the same family that came to the area in 'forced migration circumstances' via Jordan.

The second of the schools, here referred to by the pseudonym *Southgate School*, has approximately 520 students overall. They reported that they had 31 students identified as having EAL on their records (just under 6%). Due to its closer proximity to the garrison, the school has very strong links to the Armed Forces and the majority of the EAL cohort are 'forces' students whose parents migrated as part of the military. Most of these students are Fijian, although there were some whose countries of origin are Nepal, as well as other Commonwealth countries, such as Guyana and Belize. At the time of data collection, the rest of the EAL cohort at the school was made up of students with EAL whose parents migrated for other reasons from countries such as Romania, Poland, and Thailand.

Two schools seemed appropriate for a case study approach for several reasons. Firstly, this provided the opportunity to make institutional comparisons between the two schools in their EAL provision and support. Secondly, although they were both secondary schools in the same county, they had differences in terms of the size and demographic of their school populations. This enabled me, as a researcher, to make comparisons across the two cases by exploring the similar and different ways in which the students and teachers perceived their experiences in their specific contexts. Furthermore, I was already familiar with Northbridge Academy it was the secondary school in which I carried out my year-long placement for my PGCE in the 2017/18 academic year, so it was also beneficial to explore Southgate School as a different institutional context that could initially be seen as a 'blank slate'.

4.3.2.1.2 Negotiating access

The process of gaining and maintaining access to a field of research in a case study always requires thoughtfulness, professionalism, and sensitivity (Heigham & Croker 2009). However, negotiating access to a school population requires additional caution and vigilance due to their vulnerable nature as participants under the age of 18. Gaining access to Northbridge Academy and Southgate School involved contacting the deputy headteachers (referred to as 'gatekeepers') via email and providing a detailed research proposal that outlined the study, including the background, aims and objectives, indicative methodology, implications, and ethical considerations (see Appendix 1). A face-to-face meeting was then arranged with each gatekeeper in order to elaborate on the proposal and discuss any issues, which led to confirmation of participation from both schools. This process involved building a strong rapport with the gatekeepers and participants at the sites, as well as careful consideration of ethical issues (see section 4.3.6). In anticipation of hesitation or concern, care was taken to make sure that the research proposal and meetings provided clear information about what the

research involved for all staff and students at the schools so that they felt comfortable in taking part. However, as much as a researcher may be able to justify and provide a rationale for their research, an institution's participation is strongly influenced by the positioning of the researcher and their relationship with the site (Flick 2007). As I already knew many members of staff at Northbridge Academy, a level of trust had already been built, to an extent, as noted by the deputy headteacher in an interview at the end of data collection:

> *"T2: we knew you because you were a student here and that was a key thing. We knew you, not we trusted you and we liked you, but those were key things. Someone coming in cold, so to speak, would probably have to do more to convince us, but you'd built your relationships here. Everyone valued you."*
>
> *(Deputy headteacher, Northbridge, ep3)*

In addition to trust, my familiarity with the school was beneficial in terms of practical considerations, such as the timings of the school day and orientating myself around the site throughout the data collection process. In contrast, I was initially a stranger to the staff at Southgate School, so the relationship was new, and a rapport needed to be built over time so that I could be positioned as a trustworthy and competent researcher.

4.3.2.2 Participant sampling

In comparison to quantitative approaches in educational research that have aimed to capture wide-ranging statistical representations of students, relatively few participants are needed in a case study as the aim is to generate in-depth data rather than breadth. However, as Simons (2009) notes, a range of perspectives in a case study is invaluable as it can provide a holistic, all-inclusive overview of the case. Therefore, this study aimed to capture the voices and interpretations of the students with EAL, as well as a range of staff members at the schools and a member of the council's EAL service that were all stakeholders in the education of the students.

4.3.2.2.1 Students with EAL

There were two dimensions to the participant sampling process; the sampling of students with EAL and the sampling of staff. The former related to the first research question:

1. How do students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts perceive their school experiences in the UK in terms of:
    - Language, accessing the curriculum, and support?
    - Opportunities to develop and express their developing and changing identities?

In order to address this question, the study used a purposive sampling technique, which is commonly used in applied linguistics research and is concerned with the unique characteristics

of a sample (Perry 2011). The aim was to gain a sample of approximately 10 students with EAL in each of the two participating schools. The size of the sample was based on practicalities and concerns of manageability of the data. To achieve this sample of participants, criterion sampling was adopted, in which participants are selected based on predetermined criteria (Dörnyei 2007). Contacts at the schools were given the criteria for the selection of the student participants: firstly, the students would be classified on school records as having EAL; secondly, the students would be selected from year groups 8 to 10, as this meant that the study would have little interference with their GCSE studies and they were not selected from a year group in which all students are 'new' to the school (i.e. year 7); thirdly, the students would be from a range of cultural, linguistic and migration backgrounds that reflected their EAL cohorts. The English proficiency levels of the students were deemed important in the initial stages of the research; from a practical perspective, it was decided that students that were recent arrivals and 'new to English' were not suitable due to concerns that they may have struggled to express themselves and articulate the complex and abstract concepts that would be discussed in the focus groups. However, initial meetings with the 'gatekeepers' at the schools revealed that they did not record their EAL students' levels of English proficiency, so this could not be used as a criterion for the sampling process. Therefore, the schools were asked to select students to take part that had 'sufficient' levels of English, based on their own judgement. The limitations of this sampling technique and criteria will be discussed in Chapter 7. Once selected, the student participants were asked by staff if they wished to take part and the schools were given parental consent forms tailored to each school (see Appendix 2). A total of 8 students at Northbridge Academy and 9 students at Southgate School[4] took part in the study. *Table One* summarises the background information of the student participants at the two schools.

[4] 2 student participants at Northbridge and 1 student participant at Southgate opted to withdraw themselves from the study after the piloting phase

Table One: Sample of EAL student participants

School	Name (pseudonym)	Year group	Gender	Languages spoken in addition to English	Forces Student?	Age at time of research	Age of arrival in UK	Arrived from	Parents' countries of origin
Northbridge Academy	Mahmood	8	M	Arabic	N	12	10	Jordan	Syria
	Dominik	8	M	Polish	N	12	Born in UK	N/A	Poland
	Jaysha	9	M	Nepali	Y	13	Born in UK	N/A	Nepal
	Mi-Sun	9	F	Korean	N	13	11	South Korea	South Korea
	Tatiana	9	F	Romanian, Greek & French	N	13	11	Romania	Romania
	Yojana	10	F	Nepali	Y	14	10	Germany	Nepal
	Rohan	10	M	Nepali	Y	14	Born in UK	N/A	Nepal
	Charlotte	10	F	Tagalog, Korean, Japanese, & Mandarin	N	15	15	South Korea	Philippines
Southgate School	Nissam	8	M	Nepali	Y	12	Born in UK	Nepal	Nepal
	Vailea	8	F	Fijian	Y	12	8	Germany	Fiji
	Ike	8	M	Fijian	Y	12	2	Fiji	Fiji
	Angelica	8	F	Caribbean Creole English	Y	12	3	Belize	Belize
	Semesa	9	M	Fijian	Y	13	10	Germany	Fiji
	Maria	9	F	Fijian	Y	13	2	Germany	Fiji
	Jimmy	9	M	Fijian	Y	13	8	Fiji	Fiji
	May	9	F	Thai	N	13	8	Thailand	Thailand
	Vanita	10	F	Nepali & Indian	Y	14	11	Nepal	Nepal

4.3.2.2.2 Staff and teachers

The second dimension of the participant sampling process addressed the second research question:

2. How do teachers and other staff members perceive their experiences of teaching and supporting these students with EAL?

A purposive sampling technique was also used to acquire the total of 18 members of staff that were interviewed as part of the study. Whilst the student participant samples were selected prior to the piloting phase, the sampling of teachers for interviews was a continuous process following immersion in the field throughout data collection. Although the students with EAL interacted with a wide range of staff members in the schools, I mainly approached teachers for interviews following observations of their classes, which involved one or more of the EAL student participants. Teachers from a range of subject areas were asked to take part in order to gain multiple perspectives and thus a detailed picture of the educational experiences of the students with EAL. This included teachers from each of the core subject areas (i.e., English, maths and science) at each school as these lessons constituted the majority of the students' timetables. I also interviewed history teachers at each school due to issues that had arisen in the literature review regarding the reformation of the history curriculum in 2014 (see section 2.3.2.2). Senior teachers (i.e., assistant and deputy headteachers) were also interviewed in order to explore their insights into the provision and procedures for EAL education at each school. Although the schools did not have designated EAL coordinators, initial conversations with gatekeepers showed that the Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) at both schools partly oversaw the provision for the EAL students, so they were also approached for interviews. The home and school liaison officer was also interviewed at Northbridge School as they had been heavily involved in supporting the two Syrian refugee students. As both schools had previously utilised the North Yorkshire EAL and GRT Service in supporting their students with EAL, a consultant from the team was also interviewed for the study in order to gain their perspective on the complex cases. *Table Two* summarises the background information of the members of staff that participated in semi-structured interviews.

Table Two: Sample of staff participants

School	No.	Job role	Years of teaching
	1	North Yorkshire EAL & GRT service consultant	
Northbridge Academy	2	Deputy headteacher	Unknown
	3	Special Educational Needs Coordinator & MFL teacher	26
	4	Home and school liaison officer	N/A
	5	Subject lead and English teacher	10
	6	Assistant headteacher	15
	7	Subject lead and science teacher	14
	8	English teacher	16
	9	Maths teacher	8
	10	Subject lead and history teacher	25
Southgate School	11	Assistant SENCo and subject lead of English and MFL	6
	12	Assistant headteacher and English teacher	25
	13	Subject lead and science teacher	25
	14	Literacy coordinator and English teacher	7
	15	Senior teacher and subject lead of music	18
	16	MFL teacher	19
	17	Vice principal and maths teacher	18
	18	History and English teacher	1

4.3.2.2.3 Research involving children and adolescents

When researching children and adolescents, especially those from migrant backgrounds, there are unique issues and concerns that need to be considered throughout the whole process (Eder & Fingerson 2002). This involves careful ethical considerations, which are outlined in section 4.3.6, as well as examining power dynamics between adults and youth. Mayall (1999), for instance, argues that researchers must recognise the social status that children hold in society; he claims that children should be regarded as a 'minority group' as they are heavily controlled and subordinated by adults (Mayall 2000). Hood, Mayall & Oliver (1999) therefore note that children have traditionally been 'researched' and never the 'researchers', due to their position in society as disadvantaged and disempowered.

However, contemporary research has recognised the value of respecting the autonomy and competence of children and adolescents as research participants (de Britos 2020). Indeed, under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children have the "right to freedom of expression" and the "right to express [their] views freely in all matters

affecting the child" (UNCRC 1989: 5). Still, the literature review identified that there is a paucity of research within the field of EAL education that has allowed students with EAL to express their own views of their experiences, particularly in 'low-incidence' contexts. In recognition of this, careful methodological choices were made in order to understand the world of the adolescent participants "through their own eyes rather than the lens of the adult", which are discussed throughout section 4.3.3 (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018: 528).

4.3.2.3 Piloting

A pilot study is an ideal opportunity for a researcher to develop, test and refine their methodology for data collection (Murray 2009). A week of piloting was conducted in each of the schools so that I could orientate myself with the settings, meet the student participants, and identify teachers and staff that could take part in the research. At the beginning of piloting, a brief meeting was held with the students during which a questionnaire was conducted in order to secure the background information presented in *Table One* and *Table Two*. The meeting also involved explaining the study and ethical considerations to the student participants verbally as well as through an information sheet (see Appendix 3), followed by the opportunity for them to ask any questions.

A timetable was devised for observing the EAL student participants and their teachers in lessons in order to pilot the observation schedule (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). As I had previously been a member of staff at Northbridge Academy, I was given access to the students' individual timetables on the registration system and allowed to create the observation timetable myself. In contrast, the SENCo created the timetable at Southgate School, although they regularly asked for my guidance in the process. From these observations and field notes, interview and focus group questions were generated for the data collection stage. The timetables for classroom observations in data collection were also refined following piloting; for example, the decision was made not to observe the students in their PE lessons as they had very little linguistic interaction with their teachers and peers. Over the piloting phase, I worked on familiarising and building a trusting relationship with the students and staff at the schools for the data collection stage. Researchers stress the importance of creating a strong rapport like this with participants based on mutual trust and respect so that they feel comfortable talking about their lives (Murray 2009; Kouritzin 2000). A further benefit of the piloting stage was that I was able to observe the students in the summer term before they transitioned to the next year in the autumn term. This meant that any changes in provision and support could be observed, such as the presence of Teacher Assistants.

4.3.3 Data collection

As well as a range of participant perspectives, this study adopted a range of qualitative methods in order to obtain a rich and detailed picture of the experiences of the EAL students in their secondary school contexts. The constructivist approach taken in this research recognises that the participants' interpretations of these experiences change over time (Croker 2009). Therefore, a recursive approach was adopted, involving three two-week episodes of data collection in each school across a six-month period from September 2019 to February 2020 (see *Table Three*). This approach aided exploration of micro-level changes in the individual students (Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls 2014), including the complexities and timespan of the processes of language development and identity construction. It was also important to explore potential adaptations of teaching and learning over time as teachers got to know their students in more depth across the school year. During the intervals between the research episodes, both the EAL student participants and the researcher were able to have a period of reflection (Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls 2014). Focus group recordings were transcribed and analysed during these intervals, which developed lines of enquiry to be explored in focus groups in the following data collection phase. This reflects the emergent nature of the qualitative research process and demonstrates how the research was kept open so that it could respond flexibly to new details that appeared during the process of investigation (Dörnyei 2007).

Table Three: Episodes of data collection

Episode	Site	Methods of data collection
1	Northbridge Academy (2 weeks, 16th – 27th September 2019)	Classroom observations (34 lessons)
		Focus Group 1
		Focus Group 2
		Interviews x 5
	Southgate School (2 weeks, 30th September – 11th October 2019)	Classroom observations (39 lessons)
		Focus Group 1
		Focus Group 2
		Interviews x 2
2	Northbridge Academy (2 weeks, 4th – 15th November 2019)	Classroom observations (42 lessons)
		Focus Group 1
		Focus Group 2
		Interviews x 4
	EAL & GRT Service	Interview
	Southgate School (2 weeks, 18th – 29th November 2019)	Classroom observations (41 lessons)
		Focus Group 1
		Focus Group 2
		Interviews x 2
3	Northbridge Academy (2 weeks, 13th – 24th January 2020)	Classroom observations (35 lessons)
		Focus Group 1
		Focus Group 2
		Interview x 1
	Southgate School (2 weeks, 27th January – 7th February 2020)	Classroom observations (34 lessons)
		Focus Group 1
		Focus Group 2
		Interviews x 4

4.3.3.1 Classroom observations

In case studies, there is a belief that meaning is socially constructed, so the focus is often on the ordinary, everyday realities of the participants in their natural setting (Croker 2009). The everyday reality for the student participants in this study was the context of the classroom in school as this is where they spent the majority of their day (at least during term time). Observations in this context allowed for a "comprehensive 'picture' of the site", which Simons (2009: 55) suggests cannot be obtained from interacting with participants in interviews and focus groups alone. Observing lessons also enabled collection of detailed information about the participants' learning experiences at close range, including interactions, activities, and language use (Mackey & Gass 2015). Furthermore, recalling moments of observation in classes aided the flow of conversation with students and staff members that were shy or struggled to recollect their experiences in focus groups and interviews.

Table Three and the example timetables in Appendix 4 outline the classroom observations that were conducted across the multiple episodes at each school. A total of 111 and 114 lessons

were observed at Northbridge Academy and Southgate School respectively. Observation included mainstream lessons, such as the core subject areas (i.e., English, maths and science), humanities (e.g., history), Modern Foreign Languages (e.g., French) and arts (e.g., music). At Northbridge Academy, their Syrian refugee student participant, Mahmood, was being partially withdrawn from mainstream classes for two lessons a week to work in the 'learning support' department at the school, which were also observed. I edited the observation timetables in the intervals between data collection episodes to ensure that the EAL student participants were observed in a wide variety of their lessons. Following reflection in these breaks in data collection, I decided to concentrate the observations more on certain participants; for example, I noticed that extra provision was put in place and teachers needed to adapt their teaching more for students that had lower levels of English proficiency, in contrast to those that were born in the UK and had bilingual proficiency. Therefore, the timetables changed in order to observe and explore the changes made for the former, reflecting the emergent, fluid nature of both the context and of qualitative research.

Fieldnotes were taken during classroom observation using a journal. The notes were both description and reflective commentary, and related to several areas of interest, including student understanding, participation and interaction, EAL-related pedagogical strategies, use of L1 and any opportunities whereby students with EAL could express their social and cultural identities. For example:

> *"T [teacher] had to go through task with M [Mahmood] individually and teach past tense rules and irregular verbs whilst class did other task"*
>
> *"Reading poem by Wilfred Owen- difficult language for even FLE students to grasp"*
>
> *"Y [Yubina] doesn't contribute to class discussion- shy? Silent period?"*

The total number of students in the class was also noted and the teachers were asked how many of these were recorded as students with EAL. The class set and where the EAL student participant sat in the classroom were also noted. The work and exercise books of the students (both EAL and FLE) were examined, with photographs being taken when appropriate and approved by the students and their teachers (see Appendices 12 and 13). This observation allowed for direct evidence to be collected about processes in the classroom, providing an objective account of events, in contrast to second-hand self-reported data (Dörnyei 2007). However, as Dörnyei (2007: 185) argues, "recording a phenomenon does not necessarily lead to understanding the reasons why it has happened". Therefore, the fieldnotes gathered in classroom observations were often discussed in interviews and focus groups in order to explore the participants' interpretations of an event; for example, some of the male student participants at Southgate School were observed speaking to each other in Fijian in a lesson,

which prompted the teacher to send them out of the class. Later, in their focus group, the participants explained that this was because their teacher knew they were using expletives in their L1 (see section 5.2.1.2 of the findings). Thus, the aim of the research was to gain a holistic and detailed overview of the case study by combining data gathered from the range of methods, referred to as method triangulation (Denzin 1978).

When immersing oneself into a field of research for a case study, it is important to acknowledge how the context may be changed by a researcher's presence. Adopting a reflexive approach, careful consideration of my positioning as the researcher in the classroom was taken throughout the process of data collection (Berger 2015). My role as a researcher shifted constantly throughout the process from simply observing the lessons from the back of the classroom (observer) to actively participating in the classroom activities alongside the students with EAL (participant observer) (Paltridge & Phakiti 2015). The role of participant observer was often assigned to me by the classroom teachers, who often perceived of me as a Teacher Assistant that was there to help the students with EAL. Some teachers also seemed to perceive of me as an 'expert' in EAL education, asking for advice on strategies and support for the students with EAL I was observing. This may be due to unfamiliarity with the presence of a researcher in the classroom, or their perceptions of my role and positioning in the setting. It was often a challenge to balance these roles as there was a concern over the effects on the power dynamics between myself and the participants (Eder & Fingerson 2002). However, the ongoing shifting of my position was also beneficial as I was able to gain both an insider's (emic) and objective outsider's (etic) perspective of the phenomenon being observed (Creswell & Poth 2018).

It is also important, though, to recognise that the positioning of the researcher can also affect the data that is collected during classroom observation. The Observer's Paradox recognises that being observed may alter the context that is under study and cause participants to act in a way that they perceive as socially desirable (Bloomer 2010). This was evident in one of the student participants at Southgate School, Ike, who commented in a Religious Studies lesson in episode one to his teacher that he had to be "good" as I was observing the class. Although this may have affected the trustworthiness and credibility of classroom observation as a method, the recursive and longitudinal nature of the data collection process helped to counterbalance this in two ways; firstly, the teachers and students became accustomed to observation, which decreased reaction to my presence as an observer (Borg 2015). Secondly, a rapport with the participants was made stronger over time, which aided my positioning as a trustworthy researcher. These issues will be discussed in more depth in relation to methodological limitations in Chapter 7.

4.3.3.2 Diary recordings

Narrative inquiry is a broad field of research that encompasses a range of methodological approaches and theoretical assumptions (Barkhuizen 2013). In applied linguistics, researchers have made use of a variety of methods of narrative inquiry, including autobiographies, diary studies and memoirs, in an effort to explore the processes involved in second language acquisition (SLA) (Murray 2009). In particular, diaries have been used in research in TESOL with both teachers and learners (for example, Numrich 1996; Peck 1996; Sataporn & Lamb 2005; Bailey 2015; Ma & Oxford 2014) and to explore many aspects of SLA, including identity (Benson, Chik and Lam 2003; Murphey, Jin and Li-Chi 2004; Norton 2000), language loss (Kouritzin 1999) and motivation (Norton Pierce 1995). The diaries used in these studies revealed insider views of the participants' experiences that are idiosyncratic, introspective, and detailed, portraying the language learners as fluid and multidimensional (Pavlenko 2007). This deepened understanding and helped to advance theories in the study of language learning. As a methodological aim in this qualitative case study was to use triangulation of a range of methods in order to generate a rich, comprehensive picture of the case, diaries were adopted as a method to use with the student participant samples at each school.

At the beginning of episode one of the data collection process, the student participants were gathered as a group at each school. The research was explained to the students again and they were each given a diary, which contained guidance on how to use them (see Appendix 5). In their diaries, the students were asked to reflect on their experiences both inside and outside of the classroom, recording their use of English and their first language, any notable learning practices, and opportunities to express their social and cultural identity. I stressed to the students that I would not read their diaries myself as they would not be part of data collection; instead, due to the recursive and longitudinal nature of the research, the aim was to provide the students with a chance to record their experiences as they happened, rather than retrospectively, so that details of their experiences would not be forgotten over time (Braun & Clarke 2013). The students were then encouraged to bring the diaries to the focus group sessions where they could aid their responses and facilitate interaction.

As their recordings would not be used as primary data in the study, the use of diaries was intended to complement the focus group method, which had advantages and disadvantages. Although their use has been a success in previous research in TESOL with adult learners, many of the student participants in this study simply did not engage with the activity of writing in their diary. Reflecting on their use, it may be that recording their experiences in a diary over an extended period of time alongside their learning at school required a level of commitment that was too demanding for many of the students. Although some of the participants commented that they had used the diaries to write down their memories of their experiences

in their countries of origin, they often forgot to bring them to their focus groups to discuss what they had recorded.

There was one student participant, however, that fully engaged with the method: Yojana, a Nepalese student at Northbridge, was a shy and nervous participant that found it difficult to contribute and interact in the focus group in episode one. Subsequently, she often recorded her experiences in her diary through immediate retrospection, including interactions where she had used her L1 with her peers and an occasion where she had shared her culture with her friends by bringing traditional Nepalese food into school for them to try. Yojana would then ask me to read out her diary entries in her second and third focus groups, which often prompted further discussion with her peers. As focus group interaction "privileges the articulate", Yojana's diary gave her a voice and provided insights into her interpretations of her reality that could not be gained from classroom observation (Simons: 2009: 55).

4.3.3.3 Interviews with staff

As previously noted, classroom observations alone are rarely sufficiently robust as a source of evidence for exploring the beliefs, interpretations, and values of teachers in educational research (Borg 2015). Therefore, combining the observations with interviews yielded in-depth data that aimed to uncover the points of view of the teachers and staff at the schools. A total of 18 members of staff were interviewed (see *Table Three*): nine at Northbridge Academy, eight at Southgate School, and one EAL & GRT consultant from the North Yorkshire council. The interviews were conducted in classrooms or offices at the schools and lasted between 25-60 minutes. As qualitative research is an emergent process, recordings of the interviews were transcribed and analysed during intervals between data collection episodes in order to respond to details in the data (Heigham & Sakui 2009). All of the interviews were conducted individually, except in one case at Southgate School where the assistant SENCo (T11) and assistant headteacher (T12) were interviewed together due to their time constraints in the third episode of data collection.

A review of the literature and the piloting stage yielded questions for the interviews that were divided into themes: background information, arrival, in the classroom, literacy, use of first language(s) and language learning, outside the classroom, training, and leadership staff questions (see Appendix 6). Firstly, the teacher participants' backgrounds were explored, such as their role, subject specialism, and years of teaching. Although these straightforward questions at the beginning of the interviews were designed to gain contextual information, they also served to put the participants at ease so that they were comfortable when more searching questions were posed (Kvale 2008). EAL education was then discussed thoroughly through the pre-prepared set of guiding questions that could encourage the interviewees to

elaborate and explore issues that were important to them (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). In this semi-structured approach, I was able to provide the direction and guidance but also follow up on developments and steer the interview in the direction of interesting topics that arose (Kvale 2008). Pertaining to the open nature of the qualitative approach, the list of questions was regularly developed over the course of data collection as new directions surfaced from the data gathered (Dörnyei 2007). For example, when examining a student participant's exercise book in a maths lesson, it was noted that a sentence she had written with grammatical errors had not been corrected by the teacher. Therefore, the following questions were added when interviewing teachers in order to explore their interpretations of this:

> *"Have you/would you correct a student's SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) in their exercise book? How confident would you feel in doing this?"*
>
> (Appendix 6, Teacher Interview Questions)

The questions for the interview with the EAL consultant were also drawn from the literature, as well as data gathered from the interviews with teachers and classroom observations. This list of questions focused on their role, the challenges they had faced and the contexts in which they worked (see Appendix 7). As a stakeholder that had worked with students with EAL in both schools, including some of the participants, the aim was to explore their perspective and interpretations to add to the holistic, detailed overview of the case.

As the interviews were a social interaction and needed to be conducted carefully and sensitively, my role and positioning needed to be explored using a reflexive approach (Berger 2015). As discussed earlier, there was a recognisable difference in the relationships I had with the staff at each of the schools; as a stranger initially to the teachers at Southgate School, there was an ongoing process of developing my role as an 'outsider' to someone that the teachers felt that they could trust. The qualitative approach recognises this process, and the longitudinal nature of the study was beneficial as the staff became familiar with my presence and a rapport was built over time (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). At Northbridge Academy, a rapport with many staff members existed before the study as I had spent a year there in the English department for my PGCE training. Nevertheless, there was still ongoing maintenance of these positive relationships over the course of the research so that the study felt comfortable and non-threatening for the staff at both schools (Braun & Clarke 2013).

In the interview method, Kvale (2008) argues that the interviewer is the research instrument and the quality of the knowledge gained from an interview depends on the interaction skills and subject knowledge of the interviewer. These skills involve creating an atmosphere in which a participant feels safe and comfortable to speak freely (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). Braun & Clarke (2013) argue that the key to successful interviewing is avoiding being

judgmental and showing interest in what the participant says. However, social desirability bias is an issue that must be recognised when conducting interviews in research; it may be that the teachers entered the interviews with preconceived ideas of preferred responses to questions regarding EAL education, or responses that match what the participants suspect is the researcher's point of view (Denscombe 2017). Socially desirable responses may have been more prevalent at Southgate School as some of the teachers seemed to perceive of me as an 'expert' in EAL education (Braun & Clarke 2013). Some teachers also took part in interviews with inspectors as part of an Ofsted inspection just before the second episode of data collection, which may have intensified any feelings of being 'evaluated' in interviews for the study. Dörnyei (2007) argues that there are limits to how much a researcher can overcome desirability bias and achieving neutrality is difficult. One technique that was used to minimise this issue was to stress that the teachers are experts on *their* experiences of EAL education and the study aimed to explore their understandings and interpretations of them (Heigham & Sakui 2009). Another strategy for avoiding desirability bias was personal disclosure, by revealing details of my own professional background in teaching (albeit a year of teacher training) to the participants (Braun & Clarke 2013). This often seemed to put the teachers at ease as I attempted to position myself as a trusted member of their social group with shared knowledge and experiences (Berger 2015).

4.3.3.4 Focus groups with students with EAL

Adopting a constructivist approach, this case study aimed to understand the realities and experiences of students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts from the "participant's frame of reference" (Kamil, Langer and Shanahan 1985: 7). Therefore, listening to the voices of these students was central to this thesis. As identified earlier, researching children and adolescents involves careful consideration of methodological choices. As Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018) note, children differ from adults in many ways, including cognitive and linguistic development, life experiences, ability to recall, and attention span. There may also be a power imbalance between the researcher and the young participants due to the social status of children in society and within the school context (Mayall 1999).

For these reasons, focus groups were chosen as a method to use with the student participants, rather than individual interviews, as a peer group setting can minimise the power differential between the researcher and participants to some degree (Eder & Fingerson 2002). The student participants were divided into two groups at each school based on their year groups. This decision was made in collaboration with staff at the schools and was based on their lesson timetables, as well as the view that they were likely to feel more comfortable with peers from their own year group; as Braun & Clarke (2013) point out, focus groups made up of strangers may generate uncertainty that inhibits discussion. As shown in *Table Four*, two focus groups

were conducted at each school in each episode of data collection (six in total at each school). As discussed previously, this recursive structure enabled a period of reflection between the focus groups, in which the students were encouraged to write in their diaries. Reconvening the focus groups several times captured the thoughts and feelings of the participants as they developed over the intervals.

The focus group setting can be described as more 'naturalistic' than individual interviews as they are closer to everyday conversation (Wilkinson 2015). The group context of this method can be useful for providing an open, supportive environment for participants to discuss sensitive issues, and interactions between the student participants can generate elaborated and detailed accounts of their experiences (Wilkinson 2015). Furthermore, speaking with other students that share similarities with themselves may have been less intimidating than speaking to a researcher individually (Liamputtong 2007). Throughout the focus groups, I adopted the role of moderator as the aim was to initiate topics of discussion amongst the students (Braun & Clarke 2013). A set of guiding questions were primarily generated from the literature review and piloting stage that were divided into themes: arrival and migration experiences, learning English, identity/nationality, use of English and use of L1, literacy in L1, school experiences, previous education experiences, and classroom and learning experiences (see Appendix 8). Effort was made to ensure the language in the questions was clear, age-appropriate, and straightforward to aid discussion (Danby, Ewing & Thorpe 2011). The list of questions was added to or edited throughout the data collection process as new lines of enquiry developed from the data. For example, at Southgate School, National Fiji Day was celebrated during episode one, which involved some of the participants speaking to the whole school in assemblies about their culture. Therefore, the following questions were added for the subsequent focus groups in order to explore the participants' perspectives and experiences of the day:

> *"How do you feel about the celebration for National Fiji Day in school? How do you think the assembly went? How did you feel about presenting your cultural identity to the rest of the school?"*
>
> (Student Focus Group Questions, Appendix 8)

At Northbridge, classroom observations revealed that Mi-Sun was the only student participant to use her L1 (Korean) in her written work in lessons. She was therefore asked about her experiences of this in a focus group, which also helped to reveal the perspectives of other participants on the use of L1 in the school context.

In the period of reflection following the second episode of data collection, the data from the focus groups was examined and there was a concern that the format was not revealing the students' perceptions of their language and identity in enough detail. Although the guiding

questions were prompting interesting discussions, the students sometimes found it a challenge to remember their experiences or elaborate when questioned further. It may have been that the student participants were simply unfamiliar with self-reporting and performing in-depth reflection on their learning and educational experiences. These concerns were expressed in a conversation with both the SENCO and assistant headteacher at Southgate School that knew the students well and potential resolutions were discussed. In collaboration, the decision was made to adjust the structure of the final focus groups in the third episode of data collection. Previously, the students had been asked about their own experiences; in the third focus group, they were each given a worksheet (see Appendix 9) which asked them to imagine a new student would be joining the school that does not speak any English and write down any advice they would give them in relation to several issues, including using their first language and learning in the classroom. They were also asked to write down their thoughts about what the school could do to support such students and their thoughts on the task were then discussed as a group. Examples of completed worksheets were collected and can be seen in Appendix 10. Combining the focus group discussion with this task was extremely effective in eliciting the students' perspectives of their own experiences as it was a subtle method for uncovering implicit attitudes and values regarding language and identity (Bohner & Dickel 2011). It may be that the task of imagining potential provision for another student with EAL reduced the artificiality of the focus group by giving more context to the research, which may have felt less intrusive for the participants themselves (Eder & Fingerson 2002). The added time to think whilst writing on a worksheet also made the focus group situation more like a classroom activity and therefore more familiar to the students (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). The aim was to empower the participants and change their role within the research to collaborators by enabling them to voice their thoughts and opinions on current and potential EAL provision and pedagogy (Nunan & Choi 2011). Similarly, the staff that aided the development of the focus group changes acted as co-researchers by contributing to the decisions that informed the study (Riley & Reason 2015).

Although 'people management' is a common task for researchers that use the focus group method, this was more challenging considering the age of the participants (Wilkinson 2015). Often, the dominating and talkative students had to be discouraged at times in order to allow the shy participants to speak. Instances of disagreements also had to be handled with care in order to minimise stress in the participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). It can be argued that my prior experience of teaching and managing secondary school students was a crucial benefit to this part of data collection. However, it was an ongoing challenge to balance the roles of moderator and researcher without positioning myself as a teacher that was 'in-charge' of the students in the focus groups. This potentially impacted on the power dynamics,

which could have then affected the students' perceptions of my trustworthiness (Eder & Fingerson 2002). Attempts were therefore made to try to avoid association with the 'classroom teacher' by allowing the participants to perform behaviours they would not normally be allowed to do in other school contexts, such as swearing or interrupting. Power inequalities were also addressed by reiterating to the students that I lacked the knowledge that the students possessed, and the study aimed to learn from their experiences and understandings (Solberg 2014).

4.3.4 Thematic data analysis

The classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups collectively generated rich data that was analysed using thematic analysis (TA). Braun & Clarke (2013) define TA as a method for analysing qualitative data by identifying patterns and themes in relation to the research question(s). It has been described as an accessible method that offers flexibility to the researcher as it is considered independent of theory, so can be applied to a range of epistemological stances (Howitt 2016). Although TA is a recognised method widely used in qualitative research, it is only recently that a rigorous and systematic approach has been formulated (Braun & Clarke 2006; 2013; Clarke, Braun & Hayfield 2015).

The approach to TA of the data was a combination of a deductive process and an inductive process (Braun & Clarke 2006). Through the deductive approach, the data was viewed through a theoretical lens that was informed by the literature review (Chapter 2) and theoretical frameworks (Chapter 3) and provided themes for interpretation (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield 2015). The inductive approach involved deriving themes from the data itself, rather than existing concepts (Braun & Clarke 2012). This blended process facilitated investigation of the research questions whilst being kept open to new details emerging from the data (Torkmani 2012). The TA process followed the six phases recommended by Braun & Clarke (2006: 35): familiarisation; coding; 'searching' for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and writing the report.

Familiarisation. The recordings were transcribed during intervals between data collection episodes. As Miles & Huberman (1994) note, it is beneficial to begin this process as soon as the first data is collected, rather than when data collection is complete, to enable 'progressive focusing' on key issues that arise. Although transcription was a time-consuming process, immersion in the data meant that I familiarised myself with it in detail. The transcriptions were read and re-read in order to absorb the data, making notes on insights and observations throughout (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield 2015). This helped to develop 'analytic sensibility', a skill that involves interpreting data through a particular theoretical lens and producing

"insights into the meaning of the data that go beyond the obvious or surface-level content" (Braun and Clarke 2013: 201).

Coding. The transcribed data was then re-read in order to identify and label aspects that related to the research questions. This was the first step in identifying patterns in the data as similarities were grouped together. There are many options for researchers to practically manage this phase of TA, including making notes on hard copies of transcriptions or collating data using a Microsoft Word document for each code (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield 2015). Alternatively, specialist software for qualitative data analysis can be used for the coding process which saves the researcher a lot of time (Silver & Fielding 2008). These options were all considered and, perhaps unconventionally, the decision was made to use Microsoft PowerPoint for thematic analysis. This involved a relatively straightforward process of merging and moving excerpts of the transcriptions from one slide to another under coded headings. The codes were short phrases that captured the relevance of that particular part of the data, such as 'lack of information', 'teacher assistants', and 'cultural identity'. Two sets of slides were created: one for the data generated from the student focus group transcriptions that related to the first research question, and one for the data generated from staff interview transcriptions that related to the second research question.

'Searching' for themes. After coding the data, the next phase involved identifying patterns (i.e. themes) across the dataset. According to Clarke, Braun and Hayfield (2015: 236), a theme "*both* identifies a coherent aspect of the data *and* tells you something about it". Overarching themes were identified that captured a concept that underpinned several sub-themes. As there is no clear distinction between a theme and a code, some codes were 'promoted' to sub-themes, such as 'information on arrival'.

Reviewing themes. Braun and Clarke (2013: 233) refer to this phase as 'quality control' as the researcher checks and determines whether the themes fit and 'ring true'. This involved going back to the coded data and the whole transcribed dataset to make sure each theme captured the meanings in relation to the research questions. The themes were changed several times until it was certain that they were concise and reflected a coherent aspect of the data (Braun and Clarke 2013).

Defining and naming themes. Once the themes had been identified and reviewed, the ongoing analytical process moved to elaborating on each theme by writing definitions for each one. This step helped me, as the researcher, to develop the interpretive commentary and overall narrative of the data (Clarke, Braun and Hayfield 2015).

Writing the report. The final stage of thematic analysis involved the complex task of telling the story of the data "in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your

analysis" (Braun and Clarke 2006). Clarke, Braun and Hayfield (2015) note that the processes of analysis and writing are not distinctly separate in TA; rather, writing involved editing and combining existing analytic writing that began early on in the data collection process with new writing.

Although this research generated a considerable amount of qualitative data (as is typical of a case study) that was not easy to analyse, the six phases of TA were an accessible and straightforward process to follow. As an analytical method, TA has the advantage of being relatively easy and quick to learn for early career researchers such as myself (Braun and Clarke 2013). The comprehensive and systematic form of data analysis also enhances the trustworthiness and credibility of the research project (Ormston et al. 2014). However, TA has been criticised by some qualitative researchers as lacking the substance of other approaches that are driven by theory, such as Grounded Theory (GT). As an extremely popular approach to data analysis in qualitative research, GT is concerned with the construction of a theory from data (Charmaz 2014). The procedure in GT is similar to TA in terms of coding and is useful for researchers that are interested in social psychological processes, rather than individual experiences (Braun and Clarke 2013). In a GT study, participants have all experienced the process that is the focus, and the intention is that the theory will help to explain it (Creswell and Poth 2018). However, it is extremely difficult or even impossible to complete a full GT analysis in a small project such as this one. As a case study of a relatively small sample of students with EAL and their teachers in two secondary schools, TA was an appropriate method for identifying patterns in the data that also recognised the individual and unique experiences of the participants. Furthermore, instead of generating a new theory grounded in the data, there are useful pre-existing theoretical frameworks that were outlined in the literature review that will be adopted in order to analyse the themes that were identified through TA in depth. This goes beyond what Pavlenko (2007: 167) refers to as "a list-making activity" and clarifies the themes and pinpoints the links between them.

4.3.5 Trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability

The case study research strategy that has been outlined in this chapter involved intensive exploration and analysis of the multiple participants' perspectives in order to generate a rich, detailed portrayal of the case. Sampling students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts provided a voice for an under researched group and exploring their teachers' perspectives provided further insight into the challenges they face. As identified in section 4.2.2, the strength of qualitative research such as this is often judged on the criteria of trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability.

The trustworthiness and credibility of this case study were enhanced using the practice of triangulation, as several qualitative methods and sources of data were used to examine the same phenomenon (Braun & Clarke 2013). Rather than providing an account of an objective 'truth', the use of triangulation has provided a broad, detailed, and holistic view of the multiple realities of the students with EAL and their teachers (Yardley 2015). In this sense, triangulation reveals the complexity of their experiences and the different ways of interpreting them.

Taking a relativist epistemological position, the study argues that the reality of the students and their teachers is subject to perspective and interpretation (Braun & Clarke 2013). Therefore, the Thematic Analysis method used has been "informed by the unique standpoint of the researcher" and their involvement with the data (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield 2015: 223). Thus, it is important to note that other researchers may have established different interpretations and understandings of the data (Reece 2018). Recognising my positioning as the main instrument in collecting, interpreting, and reporting the data, a process of reflexivity has been consistently preserved and explicitly addressed throughout the research, which should strengthen its credibility (Bourdieu 2004). In addition, although it has been argued that the researcher's uncontrolled intervention and personal involvement with the participants in a case study affects the credibility of the findings, rather than seeing the this as an issue, Simons (2009: 24) views the researcher's positioning "as essential in understanding and interpreting the case".

Nevertheless, the practice of 'member checking' was undertaken, that is, the process of checking analysis with the participants (Braun & Clarke 2013). This involved presenting a draft of the findings chapter to each member of staff that was interviewed as part of the project and asking them to comment on the authenticity and accuracy of what had been produced. It was felt that this process respected the contributions of the participants and avoided misrepresenting their views. In addition, it enabled assessment of how their interpretations aligned with the representation of their experiences, which enhanced the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings.

Although Denscombe (2017: 56) argues that the aim of a case study is "to illuminate the general by looking at the particular", the degree to which the samples in the study are representative is not a primary concern due to the qualitative nature and constructivist approach taken. Despite the fact that generalisability is often deemed useful by policymakers in education, the design of this project instead aimed to establish the value of exploring 'low-incidence' contexts and focused on understanding, interpreting, and describing the experiences of the sample of students with EAL and their teachers, which has produced highly

contextualised data. Although this has highlighted the challenges facing these participants and can inform practice in other 'low-incidence' contexts, I do not view my positioning as a researcher as an 'expert' or 'change agent' (Blaxter 2010: 62). Based on the constructivist view that our understanding of reality is fluid due to its context, time, and individually bound nature (Croker 2009), the study strives to provide additional understandings of reality, not prescribe the best ways to support students with EAL. Nevertheless, there are aspects of the findings that may be transferable to other 'low-incidence' contexts and such implications for practice and pedagogy will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

4.3.6 Ethical considerations

Throughout the entire research process, extensive consideration of ethical issues was maintained in order to uphold and respect the dignity of all participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). As the research involved adolescents that are a classed as a vulnerable group, the project carried high ethical risk, so particular procedures needed to be followed, which will be outlined below.

4.3.6.1 Ethical approval

Prior to the commencement of the research, ethical approval for the study was sought and granted by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee at Northumbria University. As the research took place in school settings and involved vulnerable adolescent participants, I was required to undertake a DBS check. Whilst Northbridge Academy accepted a DBS check I had previously sought that was on the update service, Southgate School requested and kindly paid for a new DBS check to be processed in order for me to conduct the research in the school.

4.3.6.2 Informed consent

In research, the principle of informed consent concerns the participant's autonomy and right to freedom (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). This means that all participants must be informed on the nature of the research and their right to withdraw at any stage of the process (Ryen 2016). As part of gaining informed consent, gatekeepers at the two schools were initially provided with information, including a rationale for the research, indicative methodology, implications, and ethical considerations (see section 4.3.2.1.2 above). Following meetings that provided an opportunity for the gatekeepers to ask questions, they consented to the schools' participation in the study. However, it is important to note that informed consent is not something that is gained at the beginning of the research process and then forgotten about, but something that is "continuously negotiated, particularly in qualitative, emergent research" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018: 111). Therefore, the gatekeepers at the schools were regularly updated and informed on all aspects of the project.

All of the staff that were interviewed for the research were given information sheets and signed consent forms that were tailored to each school (see Appendix 11). Before recording of their interviews commenced, the staff were verbally reminded of their right to withdraw from the study and given the opportunity to ask any questions about the research.

For participants under the age of 18, parents/carers have the legal authority to consent to their participation. Therefore, an information sheet about the research and parental consent forms were sent to parents/carers (see Appendix 2[5]). At Northbridge Academy, a member of the admin team that was familiar with the project telephoned the parents/carers of the students in order to answer any questions that they had. At Southgate School, the parents/carers were invited to contact myself or the assistant headteacher if they had any questions about the project. All forms were returned with consent given for the student participants to take part in the project.

This study respected the rights and autonomy of the student participants, which meant careful consideration of their own informed consent. At the beginning of the piloting stage, the student participants were gathered at each school in order to provide them with detailed information about the study. Although parental consent had been obtained, it was necessary to obtain 'assent' from the students themselves (Mertens 2014). Therefore, they were each given an information sheet (see Appendix 3) and the opportunity to ask any questions they had about the research. Ethical considerations were also discussed with the student participants at this stage of the study as well as at the beginning of their first focus groups, including their anonymity, confidentiality and right to withdraw both during and after data collection (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015). At this point, two students at Northbridge Academy and one student at Southgate Academy opted to withdraw from the study.

4.3.6.3 Confidentiality

In research, confidentiality refers to the obligation that researchers have to protect the identity of the settings and participants that take part in the project (Ryen 2016). Adhering to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the potential student participants for the study were identified by members of staff at the school and I did not gain any information about the students until their parent/carer had consented to their participation in the study. In order to maintain confidentiality, the schools and all participants have been given pseudonyms and all data was saved in password protected folders.

[5] The student participants were asked if their parents/carers needed the forms to be translated into another language, but all of them declined.

4.3.6.4 Protection from harm

Being an ethical researcher also includes the responsibility of protecting participants from harm throughout the whole research process (Braun & Clarke 2013). Although this ethical issue needs to be carefully considered in all research, there are particular concerns that need to be taken into account when researching children and adolescents as they are considered to be a vulnerable group (Braun & Clarke 2013). In this study, this included consideration of methods used; for example, Mahmood, a Syrian refugee student at Northbridge Academy, was initially interviewed separately and individually in case any sensitive topics were discussed in relation to his 'forced migration' circumstances. He then took part in a focus group in the third episode of data collection as it was felt that he would benefit from the group context when discussing his thoughts on the task.

The briefing at the beginning of the data collection process also involved setting 'ground rules' with the participants to ensure potentially sensitive details would not be discussed outside of the context of the focus groups (Wilkinson 2015). These ground rules were also set in order to moderate the participants; for example, they were asked not to talk over each other and were encouraged to listen and respect the opinions of other participants. My previous teaching experience was beneficial in this context as I was able to look out for any behavioural indications that the participants were uncomfortable or wished to withdraw from the study (de Britos 2020). In terms of ethical responsibility, these were important steps in trying to ensure that the student participants would not be subjected to any anxiety or stress by taking part in the focus groups (Creswell & Poth 2018).

4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter began by outlining the ontological and epistemological principles that underpinned the methodological design of this study, which lead to an exploration of qualitative research. Adopting this approach within the constructivist paradigm involved a careful process of reflexivity, which included a detailed examination of my beliefs, values and positioning that have been influenced by my personal and professional experiences. This exploration of the research stance outlined the processes that lead to the design of the project. In order to answer the research questions, a case study was undertaken to explore two secondary school sites in North Yorkshire that are considered to be 'low-incidence' contexts due to their small EAL cohorts. Sampling at each site involved two dimensions: student participants with EAL and staff members from a range of roles and subjects. An outline of the piloting procedure described the thorough process of preparing for data collection and refining the tools for data collection. These methods included classroom observations, diary recordings, interviews with staff and focus groups with the student participants with EAL.

Triangulation of the methods and multiple perspectives generated a vast amount of rich, detailed data that was analysed using the six systematic phases of Thematic Analysis. As a qualitative study rooted in constructivism, the criteria of trustworthiness, credibility and transferability were considered, followed by ethical considerations. The next chapter will outline the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction and context

This case study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts, specifically two secondary schools in North Yorkshire. Having adopted a range of qualitative methods, this chapter sets out the findings from thematic analysis of the data. The first section will provide descriptions and contextual information about the schools' policies and procedures gained from classroom observations, informal conversations, and interviews throughout data collection, as well as the council's EAL and GRT service. Section 5.2 will then present the findings from the focus groups with the students with EAL[6] and classroom observations at both schools in relation to the first research question:

1. How do students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts perceive their school experiences in the UK in terms of:
    a. Language, accessing the curriculum, and support?
    b. Opportunities to develop and express their developing and changing identities?

Section 5.3 will then present the findings from the interviews with staff and classroom observations at both schools in relation to the second research question:

2. How do teachers and other staff members perceive their experiences of teaching and supporting these students with EAL?

The subsequent discussion in Chapter 6 will explore these findings in relation to literature within the field and poststructuralist theories of language and identity.

5.1.1 Northbridge Academy

The first school, Northbridge Academy, is a school and sixth form that had approximately 1325 students at the time of data collection in 2019-2020 (see also section 4.3.2.1). An English teacher at the school described it in the following way:

> *"T5: we do have a wide catchment area geographically and we do have students from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, so we do have some areas of social deprivation that are in our catchment area, as well as some students from quite affluent families. North Yorkshire is quite a wealthy county but it's very narrow in terms of ethnic makeup. It's primarily white"*
>
> *(Subject lead and English teacher, Northbridge, ep1)*

[6] The worksheets that the student participants completed in the focus groups in episode three of data collection can be found in Appendix 11.

The school did not have an EAL department or any teachers that specialised in EAL education. The responsibility for overseeing the provision and support for students with EAL was shared amongst senior staff and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Department. Students at the school were identified as having EAL on an entry form filled out by their parents on arrival and enrolment. The school reported that there were 29 students recognised at the school as EAL (just over 2% of the overall school population). With the cohort spread across the school, classes of approximately 30 pupils have just one or two students with EAL (or none at all).

At the time of data collection, the majority of the EAL cohort were Nepalese students that had migrated to the county as their fathers had joined the British army as Gurkhas. Some of these students were born in the UK and some had lived in other countries or other parts of the UK before joining the wider Nepalese social network in North Yorkshire. The rest of the EAL population were from a range of other geographical contexts, such as Poland, Romania, the Philippines, and South Korea (see *Table One*, section 4.3.2.2.1). These students arrived with their families directly from their home countries and settled in the area for employment. Although these students presented challenges for the school, as we shall see, the greatest challenge in terms of EAL was the arrival of two Syrian refugee siblings in 2018. As part of the Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), the family, as well as others, had moved from a refugee camp in Jordan and been placed in North Yorkshire. The brother, Mahmood, had attended primary school when he arrived and was in year 8 at Northbridge when he participated in the study. His sister was in year 11 at the time of data collection and, although she did not participate in the study in 2019, the challenges in supporting her arrival in 2018 were discussed by many of the teachers at Northbridge.

5.1.2 Southgate School

Southgate School, a Local Authority maintained school, is significantly smaller than Northbridge with approximately 520 students at the time of data collection (see also section 4.3.2.1). The vice principal described it in the following way:

> *"T17: You've got your typical sort of estate area with your deprivation and then you've got your army pupils, and everything associated with them. Quite varied but predominantly it is white working class."*
> *(Vice principal and maths teacher, Southgate, ep3)*

Like Northbridge Academy, Southgate School did not have an EAL department or any teachers that specialised in EAL. Prior to my arrival at the school for data collection, the assistant SENCo and subject lead for English and MFL (T11) had recently taken on the responsibility of overseeing the provision and support for students with EAL in the school. Students were also identified as EAL at the school through an entry form filled out by their parents on arrival. At the beginning of data collection, the school reported that they had 31

students identified as having EAL (just under 6%). The cohort were spread across the school so students with EAL were usually the only one in a class of approximately 30, with a maximum of 3 students with EAL in a small number of classes.

Due to its close proximity to the army garrison, over 50% of Southgate's school population were considered a 'forces student' or 'service student' (meaning one or both of their parents were part of the military). This has historically been the key factor in migration to the area and a cause for an increase in students with EAL in the school. Therefore, all but one of the nine students with EAL that participated in the study were 'forces students.' Although the school had four students of Nepalese origin at the time of data collection, the majority of the Nepalese students in the area attended Northbridge Academy. Southgate School had, however, welcomed a large cohort of Fijian students with EAL whose fathers had joined the British army. Some of these students arrived directly from Fiji and some had attended an international school in Germany before arriving in North Yorkshire where there is a wide social network of Fijians. The countries of origin of other service students within the EAL cohort included Belize and Guyana (see *Table Two*, section 4.3.2.2.1). A few other students had migrated for employment or to join family members, arriving from countries including Thailand and Romania. The school had also welcomed Syrian refugees in 2018 as part of the VPRS, but they had subsequently moved to other parts of the UK.

5.1.3 The EAL and GRT Service

The North Yorkshire English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) Service was a team of consultants and teaching assistants that offered language support in schools in the area. As outlined in the methodology chapter, a consultant from the council's EAL and GRT service was contacted in the initial stages of the research. In the past, both Northbridge Academy and Southgate School had bought in the services of the EAL team to help new arrivals by withdrawing them from the mainstream classroom to develop their English language in one-to-one sessions or focused groups. However, in 2019, during the period of data collection, this team was dismantled, and many consultants were made redundant. This included the consultant that was interviewed as part of this research, who reported that only refugee students would subsequently receive funding and services from the remaining EAL team. Issues arising from the dismantlement of the team was a theme that emerged in the interviews with the staff in the two schools, which will be outlined in section 5.3.2.4.

5.2 Research Question 1: How do students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts perceive their school experiences?

This research question pertained to the students' perceptions of their school experiences and was explored through the use of focus groups. As a result of thematic analysis, two overarching themes emerged, from which a number of sub-themes were identified, as shown in *Table Four*. Although these themes overlap and interweave, for the purposes of discussion, they will be presented individually in sections 5.2.1- 5.2.2. Excerpts from the focus group data have been chosen to illustrate the themes and illuminate the findings. The excerpts are labelled with the participant's name (all pseudonyms), followed by their school, the focus group number, and the data collection episode number. 'Res' denotes instances where I have spoken as the researcher.

Table Four: Research question one: overarching themes and sub-themes

Overarching theme: Using language as a tool	
Sub-themes:	"You feel left out": the importance of learning and using English
	Settling in and developing EAL: school and teacher support
	Using their L1 to bond
	Different languages for different contexts
	L1 loss or decay
Overarching theme: Fitting in	
Sub-themes:	Feeling different: being a student with EAL
	Identifying, managing, and celebrating cultural differences
	Nationality and identity
	Being non-white in a predominantly white context

5.2.1 Using language as a tool

The students elucidated the complex and integrated ways in which they used their multiple languages in a range of contexts in their everyday lives. This translanguaging (see section 2.3.1.3 of the literature review) was an important aspect of their experiences both in the school context and at home. The overarching theme of *using language as a tool* was discussed in regard to four different issues: *the importance of learning and using English*; *developing EAL: school and teacher support*; *using their L1 to bond*; *different languages for different contexts* and *L1 loss or decay*.

5.2.1.1 "You feel left out": the importance of learning and using English

All of the students at both schools reported on their experiences of learning and using English as being an integral part of the process of adapting to or being part of the school and

community, as well as for learning. They described the benefits of being able to speak English, such as understanding their teachers in the classroom and speaking with their peers. Some of the students identified a lack of English proficiency as a barrier to forming new friendships when discussing how new students with EAL feel, as Vanita noted:

> *"[A new student with EAL] will basically feel alone 'cos they won't be able to get together with groups 'cos they speak English and you won't be able to speak it"*
>
> *(Vanita, Southgate, FG1, ep2)*

This was echoed by some of the other female students at Southgate but, in contrast, the male Fijian students in the participant group suggested that their initial adaptation to the school context was easier as they could form friendships with their male peers by playing football at break and lunchtime, which they said did not require speaking English. This highlighted their perceptions of gender differences in the use of English to form friendships at school.

Noting the importance of learning English as quickly as possible, all of the student participants at both schools described how they felt the best way to develop their English proficiency was to be 'immersed' in the language and speak it as much as possible, as noted by Charlotte, who identified the monolingual nature of her school context:

> *"Improve your language by practising w/ friends/the internet. Don't talk in your 2nd/ 1st language. English only policy"*
>
> *(Charlotte, Northbridge, excerpt from episode 3 worksheet, Appendix 10)*

At Northbridge, Dominik echoed this perception of 'English only' helping acquisition: born in the UK and brought up speaking both Polish and English, Dominik described how he had been selected as a 'buddy' in his primary school for a new Polish student and chose to speak to them only in English so that they would learn the target language quickly. Mahmood also described learning English by speaking it as much as possible with his peers:

> *"M: keep talking to people so much, keep talking to your friends a lot 'cos every time you get a word wrong you learn something. You learn a new word"*
>
> *(Mahmood, Northbridge, interview, ep1)*

As well as immersion in English, the 13 students that had arrived in the UK and entered in either primary school or secondary school had commented on being partially withdrawn from the mainstream classroom to work with a TA or a consultant from the EAL service when they first arrived[7]. At Northbridge, this included Mi-Sun (Korean), Tatiana (Romanian) and

[7] Some of the Fijian students also reported that they had been withdrawn from the classroom for explicit English lessons in the international school they had attended in Germany before they came to the UK.

Mahmood (Arabic) and at Southgate, this included Semesa (Fijian), Jimmy (Fijian) and May (Thai). All of the students that were withdrawn described how helpful they found the sessions as they would learn what they thought of as 'basic' English, develop their grammatical knowledge or 'catch up' on work from their mainstream lessons. The importance of developing their English in order to learn in the mainstream classroom and access the curriculum was noted by many of the students and observed on several occasions during lesson observations. Most often, this involved worded questions in maths or technical vocabulary in science. However, it is important to note that these were often also barriers to learning for many of the students' non-EAL peers (i.e., FLE pupils). This was especially the case in Southgate School, where many of the FLE student population struggled with literacy. However, an inability to access the curriculum due to language could feel especially overwhelming for the students with EAL, as illustrated by Vanita and Ike's descriptions:

"V: you feel left out
I: it's frustrating"

(Vanita and Ike, Southgate, FG1, ep3)

Despite having been in the UK education system for years and having worked with the EAL service, some of the students at both schools recognised a discrepancy between their spoken and written English. Although many of them felt that learning spoken English was 'easy', the students reported that they found reading and spelling difficult. This suggests an implicit awareness of the differences between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (see section 2.3.1.3 of the literature review). At Northbridge, Mi-Sun, for example, referred to her spelling as "horrendous" and said she was trying her best to improve it. In lesson observations at Southgate, the discrepancy between Semesa and Jimmy's conversational English and academic proficiency was particularly evident as they struggled with their reading and writing across a range of subjects. Semesa, aged 13 at the time of data collection, reported that he had the reading age of a nine-year-old as he had struggled to learn English and "never caught up".

Altogether, and unsurprisingly, FG discussions with the students had highlighted their perceptions of the importance of learning English and being immersed in the language for accessing the curriculum, as well as using it as a tool for interacting with staff and peers at school.

5.2.1.2 Settling in and developing EAL: school and teacher support

This theme emerged from the participants' descriptions of the support they received from the staff and teachers to develop their English. Recollections of their experiences varied; as previously noted, some of the participants were born in the UK, some had arrived in the UK

at an early age and attended a primary school, and some had arrived at secondary school age with little or no English. The latter described their arrival at the school as a challenging and sometimes overwhelming experience. Some students at both schools described the buddy systems the schools had used to help them adapt when they first arrived. Sometimes the schools based their buddy selection process on a shared first language, which was not always a success; Tatiana described how she was paired up with another student with EAL that spoke Romanian at Northbridge:

> *"T: he didn't speak Romanian with me at all. I didn't even know what's happening or where we're going […] he was supposed to help me. He didn't, he just left me to it. He was so upset when I came in […] not upset he was like annoyed that he had to take me round and stuff"*
>
> *(Tatiana, Northbridge, FG2, ep3)*

It may be that Tatiana's buddy chose not to speak Romanian with her due to a fear of being perceived as different to the English language monolingual norm at school. Thus, most of the participants commented that the schools needed to carefully select appropriate 'buddies' for new students with EAL. At Southgate, Angelica did argue for being paired with another student with EAL because of their shared experiences but said that they did not need to share the same first language. Semesa and Jimmy commented that it is more difficult for the school to find a buddy for students that arrive with a language that no other student in the school speaks, which they suggested would make the student feel "lonely".

Some of the participating students reported that when they arrived at their schools, their lack of English could make them feel anxious and nervous when learning. At both schools, these students reported that this anxiety in the classroom could be relieved slightly with help from their teachers. For example, they suggested that teachers could translate resources into their first language for them and allow them to use translation devices, such as Google Translate (see student worksheets in Appendix 11). Some of the students were entitled to additional support and extra provisions in lessons and assessments due to their EAL status. For example, a Teaching Assistant would read and scribe for Mi-Sun at Northbridge. However, Mi-Sun commented that although the extra help was comforting, she felt that this meant she was cheating.

As identified in section 5.2.1.1, the students that were partially withdrawn from the classroom to develop their English with the EAL service found the sessions extremely beneficial. Although their sessions with the service had come to an end, some of the students at Northbridge were still being partially withdrawn from the classroom to work in 'learning support', a department in the school where staff work with students with additional learning needs either one-to-one or in small groups. In a lesson with a group of six students focusing on literacy, Mahmood had commented that the sessions were helpful as "they help me with

my reading". In contrast, Mi-Sun had expressed frustration at having to improve her English in these sessions using an online tool, describing it as "boring" and "absolute nonsense". Instead, she felt that the biggest improvement to her English had been through reading a book in English in the summer holidays as her mum had "forced" her "to read a chapter every day". These comments highlight how a student's attitude to learning, as well as their parent's attitude to learning English, can sometimes be a key factor in their investment in the target language, a key issue that will be explored in Chapter 6.

5.2.1.3 Using their L1 to bond

The use of their first language (L1) to bond with both their EAL and FLE peers was a common experience for many of the participants. At Northbridge, where the majority of the EAL cohort were Nepalese, Rohan and Yojana described how they would insult each other in Nepali, with Rohan even acknowledging that they chose to use their L1 in this way as it was "something to bond over". Similarly, at Southgate, the Fijian participants also described how they would speak to each other in their L1 in the corridors at school, even with Fijians in other year groups that they did not know very well, as they considered it respectful and part of their culture to show that they were friends.

At Southgate, there were several occasions where the Fijian students were observed speaking to each other in their L1 during classroom observations. In a science lesson, Jimmy was sent out of the classroom by the teacher for disrupting the class by shouting expletives in Fijian to Semesa across the room. Although the teacher was unaware of what Jimmy was saying in his L1, it was clear from their reaction that May, a Thai student with EAL, and some FLE students had understood what Jimmy was shouting. The male Fijian participants later reported that they had taught expletives in their L1 to many of their peers, which they were quite proud of. Similarly, Charlotte, at Northbridge, had taught insults in her Tagalog to her FLE friends as a tool for bonding with them:

> *"C: me and my friends have a specific Tagalog word to describe a person so my friend she would go you're an absolute tanga. Tanga means stupid"*
>
> *(Charlotte, Northbridge, FG1, ep3)*

However, as the only Filipino at Northbridge, Charlotte expressed frustration and envy at not being able to bond with her peers using her L1 like the "lucky" Nepalese students could, describing it as "unfair" that she was "the only Filipino around school". This prompted Rohan, in the FG, to offer to learn Tagalog for her. Charlotte's experience and emotional attachment to her L1 was echoed by other students at both schools that were not part of the Nepalese or Fijian cohorts and therefore did not have the opportunity to speak fluently with a peer in their

L1. In the initial stage of arrival at the schools, not having a shared language with any of their peers made it particularly challenging for these students to bond and make friends.

The discussions in this section highlight the ways in which the students viewed language as a tool for strengthening peer relationships, as well as a marker of solidarity between students that shared a first language (the Nepalese students at Northbridge and the Fijian students at Southgate). However, as section 5.2.2.1 will show, some students expressed frustration at being asked to speak in their L1 by their FLE peers, which highlights the individual differences between the student participants.

5.2.1.4 Different languages for different contexts

The students at both schools described their experiences of using their L1 in the home context and English in the school context. At Northbridge, Dominik, who (as noted above) was born in the UK to Polish parents, described learning English in nursery and Polish at home when he was young. At Southgate, the male Fijian students, Jimmy and Semesa, reported that they would think in Fijian when they were speaking with their parents at home and think in English at school. Vanita echoed this when describing how it made her feel:

> *"V: [it feels] completely different. When you're at school you feel different and when you go home different 'cos you have to speak Nepalese and English"*
>
> *(Vanita, Southgate, FG2, ep1)*

Some of the participants that were proficient in speaking both English and their L1 were aware of their ability to carefully choose which language to use in certain contexts. For example, as discussed in the previous section, many of the Nepalese and Fijian students would use their L1 to bond with their peers. Other benefits of multilingualism and translanguaging were highlighted, too; at Northbridge, Charlotte, who speaks six languages, described an experience with her mum at home where she made a conscious decision to speak English so that she had an 'advantage' in an argument:

> *"C: [my mum] started talking to me in Tagalog for my stepdad to not understand and I tried replying to her in English just so that I had advantage so my stepdad could understand what we're actually talking about and she told me in Tagalog erm why are you not talking in Tagalog to me"*
>
> *(Charlotte, Northbridge, FG1, ep1)*

At home, many of the 'forces' student participants reported that their dads spoke English with them as they had learned through their role in the British army, whereas their mums did not and/or were in the process of learning English. This meant that they would either need to speak in their first language with their mum or they would choose to speak in English in order to help their mothers learn. Rohan and Charlotte described how this was a challenge for their

mums and, as Charlotte notes, the students sometimes evaluated their parents' use of English and saw their role as helping them to learn as they were often more proficient, having learned in the school context:

> *"R: my mum at first she couldn't speak a word of English… she told me this one time she went to Tesco's and she bought food, but she didn't know what they were talking about*
>
> *C: when you're an adult you're having a hard time, like my mom, since she didn't learn any English at all but she does now a bit, but there are some parts where her grammar is like terribly really really bad and we correct her for it, then she gets annoyed because she gets corrected but at the same time we're still doing it for her own good"*
>
> *(Rohan and Charlotte, Northbridge, FG1, ep1)*

In the school context, Mi-Sun was the only participant out of the 17 in both schools that used her L1 in her written schoolwork. During the piloting phase, I observed Mi-Sun writing in her exercise book in Korean in some of her classes, particularly in English lessons. An example of this is in Appendix 12 where Mi-Sun had translated vocabulary that she was unfamiliar with and written the word in Korean. In the focus group, she explained the process she used in the classroom:

> *"M-S: so I basically write all of my notes in Korean, do all my work in Korean, do it as I would do in Korea, then take the book home and translate all of it [using an app] and write all of my notes, rewrite everything in English so Miss can check my book and she can mark it"*
>
> *(Mi-Sun, Northbridge, FG2, ep1)*

Mi-Sun demonstrated an incredibly focused and studious nature, as shown above in how she completed her schoolwork. She put this down to her previous educational experiences in South Korea. In classroom observations, her FLE peers were fascinated by her work and her English teacher often referred to her work ethic as an example to the rest of the class (see section 5.3.1.3). Mi-Sun was aware that this was not a typical or conventional process of doing her schoolwork, but said it was the easiest way for her. She noted that she knew an issue with this translation process was that it did not help her to put punctuation into her work, so commented that this was something she knew she needed to work on. Mi-Sun also suggested that her mum did not know about this process of doing her work and instead would tell her to "learn English properly". Although Mi-Sun was certainly unique in the way she would use her L1 in the classroom, Tatiana, a Romanian student at Northbridge, suggested that teachers should not discourage its use:

> *"T: the teacher should help you involve your language, not just stop you from trying"*
>
> *(Tatiana, Northbridge, FG2, ep1)*

Importantly, no other students described ever having used their L1 to support their learning, nor expressed a desire to do so, as they did not associate it with the classroom context or accessing the curriculum. In fact, the question of using their L1 to learn at school seemed to surprise many of the students, as if the idea had never occurred to them. This may reflect their perceptions of a status hierarchy of languages.

Thus, all of the students at both schools identified the different contexts in which they chose to use either English or their L1 for different aims, whether that be to speak in their L1 with their parents at home, help to teach their mums English, or, in Mi-Sun's case, to use her L1 to access the curriculum. Their descriptions captured the complexities of their translanguaging practices in their everyday lives.

5.2.1.5 L1 loss or decay

All of the participants described their experiences of struggling to maintain their first language whilst simultaneously facing the challenge of learning and using English at school. Whilst all of the students reported using their L1, they differed in the amount and ways in which they used it. Some of the students conveyed an emotional attachment to their L1 and a desire to maintain it as they associated it with their family and culture. This was especially the case for the Fijian participants at Southgate that were part of a large social network in the area. Their motivation to maintain their L1 was largely driven by their parents' attitudes to language; whilst they were keen for their children to learn English in order to socialise and learn at school, the parents encouraged maintenance of Fijian at home:

> *"S: [our parents] said learn Fijian first […] 'cos they speak it themselves. They hate speaking English*
>
> *M: well most people now that move to other countries their kids are forgetting their Fijian language so [our parents] find it important for us to know it and understand it"*
>
> *(Semesa and Maria, Southgate, FG2, ep3)*

Despite their parents' encouragement, almost all of the participants reported that they felt their proficiency in their L1 was underdeveloped. A few students said that this sometimes became apparent when they spoke to friends or family from theirs or their parent's country of origin. The following exchange emerged from Yojana's use of her diary; as a shy and reserved participant, she would often write about her experiences and then allow me to read them to generate discussion with Charlotte and Rohan in their focus group. Here, we discussed their use of Nepalese:

> *"Res: [reading from Yojana's diary] so Rohan came over to help me tune my guitar. He told me he is not good at talking in Nepalese and then talked in Nepalese fluently with my parents [to Rohan] so you said*

you can't actually talk Nepalese and then spoke fluently in Nepalese with Yojana's parents

R: *yeah 'cos she can't actually form sentences in Nepali she just understands it but I know my Nepali isn't good*

Y: *shut up (laughs)*

R: *no for real I've been told 'cos I've been talking to some people in Nepal and I'd say something and they'd be like huh"*

(Yojana and Rohan, Northbridge, FG1, ep3)

Whereas the students would sometimes correct their parents' use of English, as noted in the previous section, the participants reported that their parents or other family members would correct their use of their L1 if they 'tripped over' words or struggled to finish a sentence. Some of the students said that their parents would speak to them in their L1 and they would respond in English as they understood the language but sometimes struggled to speak it themselves. Angelica, for example, described her efforts to speak Caribbean Creole English with her family:

"A: *I try and talk Creole. I try, I try. I'm still trying to build up the accent because it's more of an accent than the words are different that it's modelled around and I try and my mum's pronouncing it and trying to correct me but I'm still repeating the same so I usually just speak English while my family speaks Creole"*

(Angelica, Southgate, FG1, ep1)

As well as their spoken language, almost all of the participants described a loss or decay in their L1 literacy. At Northbridge, Mahmood, for example, reported that he never writes in Arabic anymore and Dominik said that his mum never wanted him to learn to write in Polish, as she saw it as a "waste of time". Mi-Sun was an exception to this as she was the only student to write in her L1 in school, as described previously. Although the rest of the students found it difficult to maintain their L1, some of them described the benefits of multilingualism for their future prospects and their language learning skills:

"M-S: *it looks amazing on your college application*

T: *yeah when you learn a new language it just opens up multiple doors and you learn other languages easier"*

(Mi-Sun and Tatiana, Northbridge, FG2, ep3)

Despite their efforts, as well as the attitudes of many of their parents and their own awareness of the benefits of speaking more than one language, all of the students at both schools identified difficulty in maintaining and developing their first language.

5.2.2 Fitting in

The second overarching theme to emerge in relation to the experiences of the student participants was the ongoing issue of '*fitting in*' with their peers and in the school community. This was discussed in relation to a range of issues: *feeling different: being a student with EAL*;

identifying, managing, and celebrating cultural differences; *nationality and identity* and *being 'non-white' in a predominantly white context*.

5.2.2.1 Feeling different: being a student with EAL

All of the students perceived themselves as 'different' to their peers due to being able to speak more than one language and having EAL, which affected the extent to which they felt they 'fitted in' at school. As multilingualism was not the norm in these educational contexts, some of the students felt this made them 'stand out' when they first arrived; revealing their FLE peers' deficit perceptions of multilingualism, Charlotte described being "mocked" for speaking a different language in her first week at Northbridge, an issue that Ike also identified at Southgate:

> *"I: some people get picked on for their language until they settle in after a couple of weeks and people start talking to them"*
>
> *(Ike, Southgate, FG1, ep3)*

Several female students also described feeling self-conscious over their use of EAL when they first started at the schools. Having arrived from Thailand to Southgate with no English, May commented that withdrawal to work with the EAL service "instead of in class disturbing other people" was especially positive as she reported feeling "embarrassed" over speaking both English and her L1 in the mainstream classroom. She demonstrated a silent period at first:

> *"M: I didn't want other people to hear me speaking Thai or speaking English because people would be like what did you say and I was so shy it was like I didn't know what to say. It was just like keep quiet"*
>
> *(May, Southgate, FG2, ep1)*

This seems that May was consciously choosing to hide her multilingualism or use of EAL in the classroom. Similarly, Yojana, a Nepalese student at Northbridge, expressed anxiety about speaking English in the classroom and choosing to stay silent, which contrasted with her comfort in speaking it with her friends:

> *"Y: I don't talk much because I feel like I might say something wrong […] it's weird cos I speak English all the time to my friends but when I'm in class and stuff I get really nervous"*
>
> *(Yojana, Northbridge, FG1, ep3)*

Although it is not unusual for shy students to avoid speaking in class, these comments from May and Yojana suggest that they made linguistic and social adjustments as a survival reaction in order to hide their multilingualism or use of EAL in front of people (i.e., their peers and teachers) that may have evaluated them negatively.

A sense of feeling 'different' had also manifested in the students' experiences of being asked to speak their L1 by their FLE peers. Although section 5.2.1.2 showed that Semesa and Jimmy

enjoyed the opportunity to share Fijian expletives with their peers, other students at Southgate expressed frustration and felt patronised by their peers' interest in their L1; Ike reported that he felt they were trying to "take advantage" of him by asking him to speak Fijian and May said that requests for her to speak Thai made her feel "annoyed". Vanita also echoed frustration at this positioning:

> *"V: I have to speak in Nepalese for them and they're like oh that's so adorable. Like how come that's adorable"*
>
> *(Vanita, Southgate, FG2, ep1)*

At Northbridge, Dominik also questioned his peers' curiosity and perhaps demonstrated a desire to exclude his peers from his language and culture:

> *"D: they're like say this and I'm like I don't wanna say that because like why do you need to know how to say that, you're not even Polish, you're never going to use it in your life"*
>
> *(Dominik, Northbridge, FG2, ep2)*

Overall, there was a consensus amongst all of the participants at both schools that their multilingualism and use of EAL made them feel 'different' in their school contexts. Although their peers were often curious about their first languages, some of the students described how FLE students did not understand the challenges they face as students with EAL. Therefore, at Southgate, Vanita and Angelica felt that educating FLE students on multilingualism and having EAL might help their peers to be more empathetic and understanding:

> *"V: they should know about how this student from another country feels 'cos they'll think they can speak English but they can't so they won't know what they're feeling inside*
>
> *A: […] you know how we come here and we're the new people and we don't really understand? What if British kids go over to another country and they're put in the same position and they don't understand? They can finally understand how we feel about it"*
>
> *(Vanita and Angelica, Southgate, FG1, ep3)*

Similarly, Charlotte, wrote on her worksheet in her third focus group that students need to respect "the inability of a person who cannot speak a certain language" (see Appendix 10).

5.2.2.2 Identifying, managing, and celebrating cultural differences

As noted earlier (see section 5.2.1.3), a key aspect of the participating students' experiences was the challenge of navigating the linguistic differences between their world at home with their parents and their world at school, which was often a delicate balancing act. Additionally, all of the participating students at both schools discussed navigating cultural differences between themselves and their peers that affected the process of fitting in. Clearly, these perceptions differed from student to student depending on theirs or their parents' cultural background.

Some of the Nepalese students discussed ways in which they differed from their parents in their attitudes towards their cultural background; Nissam, for example, described the conflict with his parents as they "pray every day" and wanted him to "follow the culture" and "the rules of it", whereas he saw this as a "waste of time". For Rohan, a Nepalese student at Northbridge who was born in the UK, differences in opinion with his parents regarding their cultural heritage was sometimes a contentious issue:

> *"R: they're really traditional and they expect the best but I grew up obviously in the UK so I'm just like a disgrace to them (laughs) so we argue not all the time but when we do I can't say the stuff I wanna say in their language […] 'cos I don't know it so I'll say it in English, but they also know English so they'll get the point across either way […] they try their best to instil their values in me"*
>
> *(Rohan, Northbridge, FG1, ep1)*

In contrast, all of the Fijian students at Southgate were extremely proud to follow and identify with the cultural and traditional values of Fiji. The students described how their tightknit community in the town regularly gathered for bible readings and Christian celebrations. Maria was especially proud, describing her Fijian background as a "very special culture that we must follow". Gender differences were a particularly important aspect of Fijian culture to Maria; she described the traditional Fijian expectations of her as a female at home, such as "ladies always wear skirts around the house when you have visitors, and we should always be in the kitchen and helping around the house". She described the difficulty in trying to balance these traditions with the academic expectations of her at school:

> *"M: it puts a lot of pressure on you 'cos we have stuff at home and then coming into school you get it […] 'cos I'm a girl I do a lot of housework and I have three siblings as well so I'm also looking after them as well"*
>
> *(Maria, Southgate, FG2, ep2)*

Maria's experiences were echoed by other Fijian students that described their culture at home as different and separate to the culture at school. However, during the first episode of data collection at Southgate, the school celebrated National Fiji Day for the first time due to requests from a group of students (see section 5.3.3.3). The Fijian flag was erected outside of the school, the cohort were encouraged to wear their traditional clothing and the canteen was serving traditional Fijian food for all students. The group that requested the celebration was made up of Fijian and non-Fijian students that performed in two assemblies in front of the whole school, in which they presented facts and anecdotes about Fiji and their culture. The male members of the group, which included participants Jimmy and Semesa, then performed a traditional Fijian war dance. Initially, Semesa had expressed reluctance to perform in the assembly for his school peers as he was concerned about a lack of understanding; he

highlighted how unnerving it can be for students with EAL to share their culture with their peers:

> *"S: no I don't want to celebrate it. It's like black month, I don't wanna celebrate it. I hate it cos what's the point? I would do the dance in front of like loads of Fijians but not in front of British people. They don't understand it"*
>
> *(Semesa, Southgate, FG2, ep1)*

Despite his initial reluctance, Semesa did report afterwards that he enjoyed sharing his background with his FLE peers and he felt it was beneficial to do so as it could help them to understand his culture. Similarly, Angelica, originally from Belize, suggested educating students on other traditions and backgrounds as "they need to be open to the different cultures in the world". However, Ike and Vailea, two Fijian students, identified some negative consequences of sharing their culture with their peers:

> *"I: if they find out something bad about us, they'd probably call us bad names relating to our background*
>
> *V: I feel like it's kind of a good thing that they don't learn about some other cultures 'cos from what I've seen around here they're really honest like if they don't like anything they'll say they don't like it so I don't wanna be like do you want to learn about my country then all of sudden someone's like what is this why do they look like that […] and then stereotype from it"*
>
> *(Ike and Vailea, Southgate, FG1, ep2)*

Despite the potential negative effects, the students at Southgate recognised that their teachers were trying to encourage them to celebrate their culture with the school through assemblies like those for National Fiji Day. However, for students like May, the only Thai student in the school, this was a daunting concept. When asked if she would like to do something similar to the Fijian assemblies, she laughed and said no because "there's nobody else like me". Likewise, Vanita was also reluctant to speak in an assembly, but she was asked to write about her Nepalese culture and the festival of Dashain instead by one of the teachers on the senior leadership team (T13). Her description was then read out by form tutors to all students in form times. Vanita reported that this prompted questions from her peers, which she enjoyed as she said it felt like people were interested in her cultural background.

Although the students at Northbridge did not report any whole-school celebrations of different cultures, such as assemblies, some of the students described ways in which they would proudly share their culture with their friendship groups; for example, Yojana would bring in traditional Nepalese food for her friends to eat with her at break time and Charlotte would tell her friends about the Philippines. However, some of the students were open to more ways in which they could share their cultures with their peers; for example, Jaysha, a Nepalese student, suggested that assemblies could help to "show other students what their culture's like".

The students' descriptions presented the ways in which they navigated the cultural differences between their home and school lives. Identifying themselves as culturally 'different' to their peers at school, the participants differed in their attitudes to highlighting and celebrating this. These mixed feelings about their cultural backgrounds show the challenges that the schools face when exploring ways in which they can help the students to express them.

5.2.2.3 Nationality and identity

Discussions with the students about fitting in also revealed a complex sense of identity in which their nationality was not always straightforward. Some of the participants were unsure of their nationality, whereas others expressed certainty about it. For instance, in a history lesson observation at Southgate, where students were asked to consider what makes them individual, Vailea, originally from Fiji, wrote that she has "different nationalities" with a Samoan father and Australian mother but said that she is "definitely not British". Some of the other students at Southgate spoke of how their language, family, culture, and upbringing all influenced their perceptions of their nationalities:

> *"A: I think my nationality is Belizean. It's just like I was born there, I'm learning how to talk it, my parents are from there, like half of my family's from there so I just believe I'm Belizean nationality*
>
> *I: […] my whole entire family's Fijian*
>
> *M: yeah and probably from our upbringing as well. The way that they teach us because as Fijian we have a very special culture that we must follow"*
>
> *(Angelica, Ike and Maria, Southgate, FG1, ep1)*

As demonstrated in Maria's response above, the Fijian participants (apart from Vailea) were extremely assured and proud to refer to their national identity as Fijian. They were also aware of their reputation within the school and teachers' perceptions of them:

> *"I: I think the teachers don't like me 'cos I get told off*
>
> *M: but most Fijians are cheeky like that. We're known to be really cheeky*
>
> *V: […] I think people recognise me as a Fijian cos I'm very loud and I can joke around"*
>
> *(Ike, Maria and Vailea, Southgate, FG1, ep1)*

Meanwhile, at Northbridge, Rohan described his confusion over his nationality, linking it to culture and traditions:

> *"R: I grew up in the UK so I was born here too so like technically I'm British Nepali but I'm not sure. I don't see myself as British or Nepali to be honest 'cos like I don't really understand the culture that well, then I don't really fit in with the UK people either so like […] I fit in, I'm not like a social outcast or anything but it's just like- Christmas, you know we don't celebrate Christmas"*
>
> *(Rohan, Northbridge, FG1, ep1)*

It seemed here that Rohan's perception of his national identity was affected by cultural differences between himself and his peers, like celebrating Christmas, which affected the extent to which he fit in and felt a sense of belonging at school. Rohan seemed to perceive of a British or Nepali national identity as mutually exclusive choices and did not want to commit himself fully to either. Reflecting on Rohan's words in the FG, Charlotte commented that "you feel like you're in the middle of something" and Rohan said that this made him feel "like you don't belong to a certain community". Later, Rohan and Charlotte reported how they were often questioned by others about their national identity. Rohan identified a lack of ethnic diversity in his local community as a factor in these experiences and felt particularly strongly about what a British identity means:

> *"R: they'll ask you where you're from and so I was born in the UK so when they ask where are you from I'd say like Kent and they'd be like no, where are you really from and I'd be like - Kent […] I think 'cos this area is just white and white equals British so they're like you're not British where are you from and I'm like I am British […] I always have to explain so I've got used to it now so when people ask where are you from I'll be like you mean where are my parents from 'cos I'm from the UK. Like you"*
>
> *(Rohan, Northbridge, FG1, ep3)*

This reveals that the difference between Rohan's perception of his nationality and how others often perceived and challenged his national identity had made him feel defensive and excluded in the past.

Across the sample of participants, the differences in the students' perceptions of their nationalities highlight the complex nature of their identities, which reflects the heterogeneous nature of the EAL cohorts at the schools. These issues will be discussed in depth in chapter 6 in relation to the key theoretical frameworks of language and identity.

5.2.2.4 Being 'non-white' in a predominantly 'white' context

Another factor that affected the process of fitting in for the participating students was their perception that they looked ethnically 'different' to the majority of their peers who were white. At Northbridge, Rohan (Nepalese) and Charlotte (Filipino) identified a lack of ethnic diversity in their local community and the wider context of the UK that they just accepted as the norm:

> *"R: one thing I do wish was like it was more diverse but I can't really say anything 'cos it's the UK*
>
> *C: it's how it is*
>
> *R: it's not a place where it's a paradise for foreigners […] so you can't really expect to go somewhere and be like oh I'm going to meet so many different people. It's ok you will but not racially-wise anyway"*
>
> *(Rohan and Charlotte, Northbridge, FG1, ep1)*

At Southgate, the ethnic make-up of the EAL cohort was predominantly black, with students from Fiji, Guyana, and Belize. However, as these students were spread across the school, there was often only one or two black students in each class. Recognising this lack of ethnic diversity in the classroom, some of the black participants described how the curriculum could sometimes trigger uncomfortable experiences; in English classes, the year 9 students were studying *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, a novel that explores racial inequality and contains many instances of racist expletives. Semesa and Maria described their difficult experiences of being the only black students in these lessons:

> *"S: [in English] we were reading* To Kill a Mockingbird *and it says n***** a lot and as soon as they say n***** everyone looks at me*
>
> *M: yeah everyone does"*
>
> *(Semesa and Maria, Southgate, FG2, ep2)*

A similar incident occurred in a year 8 history lesson observation with Ike and Angelica as they were studying the slave trade, which involved discussions of racist terms that had upset them both as the only black students in the class:

> *"I: everybody was just staring at me*
>
> *A: yeah I was shrinking into my seat […] there's only two of us in our class"*
>
> *(Ike and Angelica, Southgate, FG1, ep2)*

Outside of the classroom, many of the participating students at Southgate reported experiencing racist and xenophobic comments from other students that would also affect their sense of belonging and the extent to which they felt they 'fit in'. May, a Thai student, described how she had consistently been the victim of racist comments related to her ethnicity which made her feel "annoyed" but did not report it to staff at school as she said it was "normal" and she was "used to it". Maria, a black Fijian, also did not report her experiences of racial abuse at school as she felt that teachers "don't do much about it". Some of the students at Northbridge echoed these experiences; Charlotte had experienced bullying but was reluctant to report it to staff as she felt "they don't take it as a serious concern". In addition, the students at Southgate described their fears over the consequences of reporting:

> *"May: we'll probably get more like - I don't know - more bullied. They would call us like snitch and keep on making fun of us if we tell the teacher about it*
>
> *M: some part of us would feel scared to report it as well because of what would happen to them and some part of me would feel bad"*
>
> *(May and Maria, Southgate, FG2, ep2)*

Although Jimmy and Semesa described feeling defensive of their female peers when they experienced racial abuse, it is important to note that I observed both of them making racial comments to their male peers, both black and white, which they described as "banter". This

perhaps shows gender differences in their perceptions of racism but could also be a tool to bond with their male peers in order to fit in.

Thus, amongst all of the participating students that identified themselves as looking 'different' to their peers at school, racism and xenophobia were identified as common experiences. At Northbridge, Rohan attributed this to a lack of diversity in the school and wider community, suggesting his peers "don't really understand cultures and heritages" and "don't see someone different to them" so "they tend to make fun of it". Therefore, Rohan suggested that "British" students need to be "introduced to a more diverse place where [racism] is less likely to happen". This theme has demonstrated that not only do these students with EAL face the challenge of trying to 'fit in' in 'low-incidence' contexts that are English-dominant, the lack of ethnic diversity in their schools and wider communities also impacts their experiences and sense of belonging.

5.2.3 RQ1 summary

Section 5.2 has addressed the data related to the first research question that was generated from classroom observations and focus groups with the student participants. The ways in which the students used language as a tool in a range of contexts was the first overarching theme in the data that was outlined. When discussing the importance of learning English, the students commented on the value of both partial withdrawal from the classroom for sessions with the EAL service and speaking English as much as possible so that they could learn in the mainstream classroom and interact with their peers. Some students also identified other ways in which their schools and teachers had supported them in developing their English, such as through buddy systems, translation of learning resources into their L1, and, at Northbridge, partial withdrawal from lessons to improve their English in the learning support department with a Teacher Assistant. The Fijian students at Southgate and the Nepalese students at Northbridge also outlined their translanguaging practices by describing how they sometimes used their L1 as a tool for bonding with other students that shared their first language. Some students also described bonding with their FLE peers by teaching them expletives or insults in their L1. However, for those students that were not part of the Fijian or Nepalese cohorts at either school, not having a shared language with others made the process of adapting to a new school even more challenging. Many of the students also identified the ways in which they adopted different languages in different contexts: typically, their L1 at home and English at school. However, many reported a decay in their first language even if they had an emotional attachment to it, resulting in their parents regularly correcting their L1 use, whilst they would often correct their parents' use of English.

The second overarching theme in the data regarding the first research question was the ways in which the students described 'fitting in'. In their English-dominant school contexts and wider community, the students described how being a student with EAL made them stand out and generated curiosity from their FLE peers, which was not always welcomed by the participants. The students also outlined their experiences of identifying, managing, and celebrating cultural differences. For the Nepalese students, this included the ways in which navigating the culture and expectations at school whilst simultaneously managing the attitudes of their parents at home was often challenging and demanding. The Fijian students, however, were extremely proud to share and adhere to their traditional cultural values and, even after a little reluctance from Semesa, enjoyed celebrating this in the National Fiji Day assemblies. Students from other cultural backgrounds had mixed feelings about sharing their culture due to the lack of diversity in the schools and the potential reactions of their peers. The students also discussed 'fitting in' in relation to their nationalities; whilst some students strongly related their nationality and identity to their family's culture and country of origin, others felt conflicted and frustrated about how others perceived their identity, such as the extent to which they are 'British'. Some of the students also reported their experiences of being non-white in predominantly white contexts. At Southgate, this included feeling uncomfortable being the only black student in a class when studying aspects of the curriculum, as well as experiences of racism and xenophobia. Worryingly, the students seemed to just accept their disempowered positioning as they did not report these issues to staff at school either because they felt they were not resolved, or they were concerned about the consequences of reporting. Instead, the students believed that their FLE peers would benefit from being educated on diversity, multilingualism, and other cultures as this could instil empathy and understanding, which they felt would help to stop racism and prejudice in the schools.

5.3 Research Question 2: How do teachers and other staff members perceive their experiences of teaching and supporting these students with EAL?

This research question pertained to the teachers' perceptions of the school experiences of the students with EAL and was explored through the use of one-to-one interviews. As the thematic analysis shows, teachers identified a range of issues that are shown in *Table Five* and will be presented in sections 5.3.1-5.3.3. Excerpts from the interview data have been chosen to illustrate the themes, which are labelled with the participant's subject specialism or job role, followed by their school and data collection episode number. Their speech is denoted by 'T' and their participant number and 'Res' denotes instances where I have spoken as the researcher.

Table Five: Research question two: overarching themes and sub-themes

Overarching theme: Language issues	
Sub-themes:	English literacy: the key to the curriculum
	Developing the English of the only student with EAL in the class
	Varied perceptions of EAL and multilingualism
Overarching theme: The lack of support	
Sub-themes:	"Sketchy" information on arrival
	"Getting them into lessons": policies and procedures
	Limited teacher expertise and experience
	Dismantling of the EAL service
Overarching theme: Supporting the students' diverse backgrounds	
Sub-themes:	Identifying and managing cultural differences
	The National Curriculum: "culturally lacking in diversity"
	Celebrating diversity in schools with small EAL populations

5.3.1 Language issues

Like the student participants, the role of language was a key theme across the data for all of the staff interviewees as they described their perceptions of the students' use of their languages and the ways in which they learned in the classroom. This overarching theme emerged from

three sub-themes: *English literacy: the key to the curriculum*, *Developing the English of the only student with EAL in the class* and *Varied perceptions of EAL and multilingualism.*

5.3.1.1 English literacy: the key to the curriculum

This theme emerged from the ways in which the teachers related the levels of English proficiency of the students to their academic attainment. At Northbridge, the deputy headteacher (T2) expressed frustration at the National Curriculum, describing it as a "one size fits all testing regime" that does not take the students' levels of English proficiency into account. However, at both schools, all teachers identified a lack of literacy and understanding of the academic language of their subject areas as a significant barrier to the progression of *all* students, not just the students with EAL. At Northbridge, a history teacher expressed their frustration with this obstacle to accessing the curriculum:

> *"T10: in history it's massive. I think you've got to have the reading age of about a 14-15-year-old to access the sources that they send […] you know you've got to be literate and you've got to have a command of language but it affects our weaker students as well. We're disadvantaging [both EAL and FLE students] massively"*
>
> *(Subject lead and history teacher, Northbridge, ep2)*

Recognising this barrier to accessing the curriculum in every subject, the staff at both schools reported that they had had training on how to improve literacy levels across all students, including Beck, Mckeown & Kucan's (2002; 2008) three tiers of vocabulary, a framework based on the complexity, meaning and frequency of language in each subject (see section 2.3.1.3 of the literature review). At Southgate, the assistant headteacher described their significantly low levels of literacy in the overall student population as "language poverty", which their literacy coordinator (T14) was focusing on combating through additional staff training and monitoring exercise books. This focus on literacy was often clear in lesson observations at both schools as teachers would sometimes break down the morphemes of a word to develop students' understanding[8]. In science, this was particularly important as the complex academic language of the subject is, as described by T13 at Southgate, like "a foreign language".

The two maths teachers interviewed at both schools also described how levels of literacy had become a significant barrier to learning in their subject due to the reformation of the GCSE examinations in 2014 to include more 'worded' questions that require lengthy explanations and justifications with precise language. Despite acknowledging that this can put maths into 'real-world' problem-solving contexts, the change had been particularly challenging at

[8] For example, a teacher explained the meaning of 'tri-' in 'trimurti' in a Religious Studies lesson at Southgate which represents the three gods of Hinduism.

Southgate School where there are lower levels of literacy across all students. The questions also sometimes required cultural knowledge that could especially impede understanding for students with EAL. Although Vanita, a year 10 student participant from Nepal, was in a top set for maths, her teacher identified these worded questions as a significant obstacle:

> *"T17: in the year 10 exam paper […] which is very wordy relative to her ability she didn't do very well […] I think maybe you assume certain cultural knowledge don't you and I think you have to make sure that when you give a word out you try and explain the word in a broader context about where it comes from"*
>
> *(Vice principal and maths teacher, Southgate, ep3)*

Recognising that literacy in English is the key to academic success, the teachers that were interviewed in the science and maths departments at both schools reported the ways in which they prioritised developing the subject specific language of the students. The teachers suggested that this meant that other aspects of their written work, such as spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in their exercise books were sometimes overlooked:

> *"T7: we would correct the science terminology rather than the English […] we're more focused on developing the language in science. Yeah, you don't pepper their page with red pen because that's demotivating. You pick your battles (laughs)"*
>
> *(Subject lead and science teacher, Northbridge, ep2)*
>
> *"T9: in maths the thing is they need to get the point across and if they're getting the correct point across does it really matter how they've constructed that sentence - not particularly"*
>
> *(Maths teacher, Northbridge, ep2)*

The lead maths teacher at Southgate identified "time constraints" as a reason for "focusing on the mathematical side of things", as well as what the students would be assessed on in their examinations:

> *"T17: ultimately it's just that staff will look at the maths rather than the English because is it the grammar that matters or is it those key words in maths. They probably look at what matters for that specific exam rather than what they need as a human being"*
>
> *(Vice principal and maths teacher, Southgate, ep3)*

However, the teacher recognised the potential benefits of marking and correcting students' literacy in maths in order to help them to access the 'worded' questions of the exams:

> *T17: if doing that actually helps them get better at the nuances of the language and therefore exams then it's time well spent isn't it"*
>
> *(Vice principal and maths teacher, Southgate, ep3)*

Although all of the teachers identified this link between literacy and achievement in exams, for some teachers it was not the only factor in academic attainment for students with EAL; some of the interviewees seemed to hold stereotypical gender perceptions of learners as they

identified positive attributes in their female students that they suggested aided their learning. For example, Vanita's history teacher (T18) reported idealised expectations of her due to her studious and motivated nature, ascribing it to "aspiration". Similarly, Tatiana's English teacher at Northbridge identified her commitment to her education as a significant factor in her progression, in contrast to Mahmood's attitude to learning:

> *"T5: she has such a drive. She's very proactive at asking for clarification which I think Mahmood doesn't do which is one of the issues. He's happy just to retreat into his happy little world"*
>
> *(Subject lead and English teacher, Northbridge, ep1)*

Similar idealised expectations were held of the female Fijian students by the assistant SENCo (T11) at Southgate, describing them as "goal-led" and "aspirational". In "stark contrast", the male Fijian students were seen as "louder" and often displayed challenging behaviour in school, as the student participants identified as well. In agreement, the assistant headteacher (T12) described Fijian culture as a "very patriarchal society" and suggested that the females saw "the opportunities that their schooling offers them here [in the UK]", whereas the males were less motivated in school as they "largely see themselves as following dad" by "joining the army". These descriptions highlight the teachers' perceptions of personal attributes (such as motivation) that, along with literacy in English, contribute to the academic success of students with EAL in these contexts.

5.3.1.2 Developing the English of the only student with EAL in the class

As noted previously, due to the small sizes of their EAL cohorts, in both of the schools a student with EAL would usually be the only learner in the classroom that would be accessing the curriculum through EAL. With a lack of external and internal support (which will be discussed in section 5.3.2), the teachers discussed the challenges associated with developing both the English and subject knowledge of students that were new to English.

In terms of developing the English of the only student with EAL in the class, the Syrian refugees stood out as a significant issue as both schools were not prepared for the amount of academic and linguistic support the students needed. At Southgate, T13 described having one of their refugee students in their science lesson as "really tricky" as the language barrier meant "they just sat there and you kind of just hoped that they would start absorbing the English language". T15 at the school also expressed concern about a refugee student in their class as they had demonstrated an initial silent period and had been "struggling" with their classwork. Although these students were partially withdrawn for several hours a week to work with the EAL service, an English teacher described feeling restricted in the extent to which they could help them in the classroom:

> *"T14: I felt awful because even though I knew I was doing everything in my power I just knew it wasn't enough and it was just like oh I'm trying you know […] this isn't quick enough to get you where you need to be"*
>
> *(Literacy coordinator and English teacher, Southgate, ep3)*

At Northbridge, teachers had also recognised how long it took for their first refugee student to learn English, in terms of both their BICS and CALP. As the student's science teacher, T7 expressed a "genuine sadness" at her lack of progress but recognised how they were only able to give "a fraction of [their] time" to help her as "there's 31 other students [in the class] who need support". Despite reassurance and advice from the EAL service "to not get too wound up" about the refugee student's slow progress, the SENCo at Northbridge described how the teachers were "on automatic pilot to think right I need to see all my students going through this process [of learning]". This suggests that the teachers were unfamiliar with the process of learning of a student with EAL and had the same expectations as they would for non-EAL learners.

Throughout lesson observations in the data collection process, Mahmood, a Syrian refugee in year 8 at Northbridge that was participating in the study, stood out in the EAL cohort as a student that was particularly struggling in lessons due to his limited English literacy proficiency. His English teacher (T5) expressed "an enormous sense of guilt" due to feeling restricted in the extent to which they could "tap into" his potential. Although the teacher described his spoken English as "his strongest thing", Mahmood struggled to understand the teacher's "sophisticated phrasing and vocabulary" in lessons. Despite 10 years of experience and being head of the English department, his teacher reported that they were "finding it very difficult to give him the kind of support he needs" as the only student with EAL in the class:

> *"T5: I just feel like I have to design the lesson for the vast majority of the students in the class […] it's not as if I feel I need to teach two lessons because I think we want to kind of encourage him to take part in the lessons as they are but the differentiation that is required to do that is a substantial addition to my workload and I'm just not able to sustain that"*
>
> *(Subject lead and English teacher, Northbridge, ep1)*

The differentiation referred to here was seen in lesson observations; Mahmood would often be provided with different tasks or worksheets to the rest of the class, which were created by his teacher and linked to the curriculum they were following[9]. It is important to note that this was not the norm at either Southgate or Northbridge; whilst two other teachers reported that

[9] For example, when the class were given a task to write a description of Dracula using an extended metaphor of an animal, Mahmood was given a worksheet that involved filling in word gaps in sentences related to Dracula.

they had previously translated texts into students' first languages, T5 was the only teacher at either school that had planned and prepared a differentiated task specifically for a student with EAL in a mainstream lesson throughout the data collection period. T5 acknowledged, though, that this was extremely time-consuming and, unless they had the benefit of extra time on a weekend, it was not always possible to create different resources for Mahmood. Thus, if there was a Teacher Assistant (TA) in the class, T5 would assign them to support him. However, as I saw in lesson observations, there was a stark contrast in Mahmood's learning and progress when a TA was not present. Without constant one-to-one support, he would struggle with tasks and lose focus, which meant the teacher often had to provide more support for him than for the rest of the class. Although T5 wanted Mahmood to study the same curriculum as his peers, they recognised how limited they were in being able to cater to his specific linguistic needs that were distinct from the other students in the class:

> *"T5: if I was working with him one-on-one, I would still be doing gothic[10], but I would be teaching it in a very different way. I would be focusing more on the language and grammatical concepts and repetition of them and building that rather than entering at that level that we have to"*
>
> *(Subject lead and English teacher, Northbridge, ep1)*

This suggests that T5 has knowledge of the language learning process but was restricted in the extent to which they could use this to support Mahmood's English development due to the curriculum and time constraints.

At both schools, it was noted in lesson observations that students with EAL that needed additional support due to their limited English proficiency (such as Mahmood, Mi-Sun and Vanita) would be seated at the front of the classroom where a teacher could access them easily. Vanita's maths teacher (T17) had also commented that she had been seated next to a FLE student who could "articulate bits of guidance". Many of the teachers had also identified that a TA could make a significant difference to supporting the only student with EAL in the classroom. However, the teachers reported that they were restricted as a TA would rarely, if ever, be assigned to classes specifically to work with students with EAL. At Southgate, the assistant SENCo commented that they were "struggling" as they were "thin on the ground in terms of teaching assistants" and the few that they had were primarily assigned to support SEN students. Similarly, at Northbridge, EAL students were only given TA support in class if they were registered as having SEN, even though they could provide a "funnel through which the work could be set" (T7). Some teachers at the school described how they would sometimes utilise a TA that had been allocated to their class for other students by asking them to help students that are new to English as this makes teaching them 'easier'. For example,

[10] I.e., gothic literature, which is part of the English Literature curriculum

Mahmood's English teacher described it as a "lucky coincidence" that she had a TA in his class when I observed during piloting. Later, the teacher reported that they had "put a referral into SEN" to request a TA specifically for Mahmood due to the issues in teaching him described above.

As well as a lack of TA support in class, the Assistant SENCo (T11) at Southgate referred to EAL teaching resources as "limited" and commented that creating differentiated worksheets or activities for one student with EAL in their class would be "quite time-consuming if you don't know where to start". As noted earlier, two of the 17 teachers (T8 at Northbridge and T14 at Southgate) reported that they had translated text into the students' first languages to help them access the curriculum. T8, Mi-Sun's English teacher, had translated questions into Korean using Google Translate, even though they had found it to be "inaccurate" and sometimes confusing for Mi-Sun (see Appendix 13 for example). T8 also reported a lack of books for students with EAL in the school library as Mi-Sun had been "very frustrated that she was reading the simplest of books" in library sessions when she first arrived at the school.

Thus, it was clear from the data that the teachers struggled to support students that arrived in their schools with limited English. This was influenced by their unfamiliarity and lack of experience and expertise in teaching students with EAL, which will be discussed further in section 5.3.2.3.

5.3.1.3 Varied perceptions of EAL and multilingualism

Across the data, there was significant variation in the teachers' perceptions of issues around EAL and multilingualism due to their own personal backgrounds and their experiences of teaching students with EAL. Their differing views and experiences meant that they had different expectations of these students.

At Southgate, all of the teacher participants stated that it was rare for them to hear students with EAL using their L1 in the classroom and they never used it in their learning. However, several of the teachers discussed their experiences of the male Fijian students (e.g., Jimmy and Semesa) using expletives in their L1 with their FLE peers (as discussed by the students themselves; see section 5.2.1.3). Although the students saw this as a tool for bonding with their peers, the teachers understandably expressed frustration as, in their view, it often disrupted learning. T15 commented that there was a lack of teacher trust in the male Fijian "characters" who were "pushing the boundaries" by using their L1 in the classroom, which suggests the teacher perceived of it as a way to misbehave. However, T15 seemed to recognise the importance of students maintaining their L1 and how it links to their identity, as they suggested "it's about a balance because they shouldn't be losing their culture either".

At Northbridge, the teachers did not identify any instances where they had experienced the students speaking to each other in their L1. As two of the participating students, Rohan and Yojana, had shared that they would speak Nepali to each other in school, this suggests that the teachers simply did not witness it. However, Mi-Sun's English teacher (T8) did discuss her use of Korean in her written work (see section 5.2.1.4), which she referred positively to as "a thing of beauty to look at". Although T8 commented that they had "no idea what she's writing" in Korean, they were happy to mark it when Mi-Sun had later translated it into English. In contrast, the consultant from the council's EAL service who had worked with Mi-Sun expressed concern over this method of learning:

> *"T1: we don't fully know how good her Korean is that she's writing so how good is the interpretation that she's giving to it […] you've got no idea if she's fully understood what she's been taught"*
>
> *(North Yorkshire EAL and GRT service consultant, ep1)*

T8's perceptions of EAL were reflected in their idealised expectations of Mi-Sun as she was perceived as a "role model" because "she's the best of the class and she doesn't even speak English". T8 saw Mi-Sun overcoming this barrier to learning as "an incredible incentive" for her FLE peers to put effort into their own schoolwork. As Mi-Sun could, in fact, speak English proficiently, this suggests T8 might have perceived her use of EAL as illegitimate and inauthentic in comparison to other students' use of English as a 'native' language (Kramsch 1998). This 'othering' and positioning of Mi-Sun as deficit may be based on an ideology of an "idealised" native speaker of English (Leung et al. 1997: 546) and a 'monolingual mindset' that T8 had developed over time. Being unfamiliar with multilingualism and having "zero experience" of teaching students with EAL before Mi-Sun, the teacher had been "quite worried" and "overwhelmed" by her arrival into the classroom. Perhaps demonstrating unquestioned beliefs and initially lower expectations of students with EAL, the teacher had been surprised by Mi-Sun's academic progress. Being monolingual, T8 identified how it was sometimes a struggle to understand the experiences of the students with EAL and the language learning process:

> *"T8: for someone who only has GCSE French and German- that's my limit - I just can't get my head around how you even begin to just absorb what things must mean by hearing it all the time. I don't get that"*
>
> *(English teacher, Northbridge, ep1)*

This lack of understanding of EAL and multilingualism has implications for the extent to which teachers can support the language development of these students, both in their L1 and in EAL. Problematically, these perceptions were echoed by other teachers as the majority were broadly monolingual; out of the nine members of staff interviewed at Northbridge, only two spoke more than one language fluently (a Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) teacher and a

maths teacher). At Southgate, only one out of the eight staff interviewed spoke more than one language fluently (an MFL teacher). Many of the monolingual teachers identified the lack of EAL and linguistic diversity in their own schooling and upbringing and commented on the ways in which it affected their perceptions of EAL and multilingualism. Having attended schools with no students with EAL, the vice principal at Southgate recognised their lack of experience in language learning, commenting that "you tend to see people as you see yourself don't you, if you're not careful", perhaps suggesting an awareness of their own 'monolingual mindset'. An English teacher at Southgate also described this unfamiliarity with EAL and multilingualism, not just for monolingual teachers but also the FLE students:

> *"T14: I think [the students] all might see [EAL] as like a special educational need that makes them have a different ability or something like that*
>
> *Res: like deficient*
>
> *T14: yeah and I don't think they'd ever say that out loud but I don't think they fully understand actually how difficult it is. I mean hand on heart I don't think I understand how difficult it is. I can empathise and understand it must be hard but I've never been through that myself"*
>
> *(Literacy coordinator and English teacher, Southgate, ep3)*

This suggestion that FLE students at the school may equate EAL with SEN is extremely problematic and positions English monolingualism as the norm and EAL as deficit.

In contrast, the multilingual teachers recognised how their own linguistic experiences could help them to understand and support students with EAL. Similar to the experiences of some of the student participants, T9, who migrated to the UK from the Netherlands at an early age, described a decay in their L1 since childhood as learning and speaking English had been prioritised, which helped them to empathise with students:

> *"T9: [we were] not allowed to speak Dutch in the house because my brother was just allowed to sit in a corner of a classroom and not understand anything. So I think knowing the hardship that he went through kind of makes me feel like I don't want my students to experience that so I try really hard to make sure that they feel included in what's happening - not to make them stand out or give them special attention - just so that they are fully involved in what's happening"*
>
> *(Maths teacher, Northbridge, ep2)*

Thus, as Mi-Sun's maths teacher, T9 said that they would encourage the use of her L1 in the classroom, referring to it as "brilliant" as "it's enriching her as a skill". The only multilingual staff participant at Southgate (T16), an MFL teacher of both German and French, also viewed multilingualism as an important skill and thought that students with EAL losing their linguistic abilities in their L1 was "such a huge, missed opportunity for them". T16 also described their perception of the differences in engagement in foreign language learning between

monolingual and multilingual students in their lessons: the FLE students that had been brought up as monolingual often "put the brakes on in their brains because they don't understand" learning another language. In contrast, they commented that the students with EAL engage with the subject and "don't question every step […] like changing of word orders". This suggests T16 had different expectations of students' success in learning a foreign language based on their EAL status.

Thus, these discussions show the variations in perceptions of EAL and multilingualism amongst the teacher participants that were often influenced by their own linguistic abilities or experiences with certain students. At Southgate, the male Fijian students' use of expletives in their L1 in the classroom had created teacher distrust in their language practices. And whilst many of the monolingual teachers at both schools perceived of EAL as a barrier to learning that affected their expectations of their students, the multilingual teachers had positive expectations of students with EAL, seeing their multilingualism as an important skill to be encouraged and developed.

5.3.2 A lack of support

The most common theme to occur across the interview data was a lack of support for both the students with EAL and the staff that taught them. The prevalence of the theme is evident in the fact that it emerged across a variety of discussions focusing on a range of themes: *"Sketchy" information on arrival*; *"Getting them into lessons": policies and procedures*; *limited teacher expertise and experience* and *dismantling of the EAL service*.

5.3.2.1 "Sketchy" information on arrival

All of the teachers interviewed identified a lack of cohesive policies and procedures for when new students with EAL arrived at the two schools, including a significant lack of information about the learners. The teachers at Northbridge reported that their registration system only provided information on the student's EAL status and their country of origin. One teacher commented that there had been a decline in information provided as external support also declined and the smaller numbers of students with EAL influenced the lack of information:

> *"T10: we used to have more [information] because I think there were more services and things like that because obviously we're a very rural area and the numbers of EAL students are really small we don't necessarily get a lot of information. You know with some students we've just basically had they've come from Portugal and that's about it really"*
>
> *(Subject lead and history teacher, Northbridge, ep2)*

T8, an English teacher at Northbridge, commented that this meant the first few weeks of a student's arrival at the school was often "trial and error" in the classroom "to see how they

cope". Northbridge teachers also described issues of under-identification of some students with EAL; T9 reported that "if they've been born here", some Nepalese students were often not registered as EAL on their system and another student that spoke Russian was "on that borderline of it's not on the register but English isn't the language spoken in the house". T7, the science lead, also commented that they can sometimes "not pick up on the fact that they're EAL" until later in the school year if they do not look for the information on the system, whereas a list of SEN students would be given to teachers at the beginning of each year. This teacher also recognised under-identification on the system and described their own confusion over the term 'EAL', linking it to English proficiency:

> *"T7: I wouldn't have characterized [Jaysha] as an EAL student because his English is so good […] I didn't particularly treat Yojana any different to anyone else because as far as I was concerned her language was fine and there wasn't anything I was expected to do on the SEN statement"*
>
> *(Subject lead and science teacher, Northbridge, ep2)*

However, the teachers reported that when their first Syrian refugee arrived in 2018 (Mahmood's older sister), more information was provided for staff due to more external support from the council's EAL service. Rather than just adding the refugee's EAL status and L1 to the registration system, an email with information was circulated and a staff briefing was held. The home and school liaison officer (T4) described how emails about the student (and later Mahmood when he transitioned from primary school) were subsequently circulated amongst all staff when necessary, such as to inform them about Ramadan. T4 explained that the additional information for staff was implemented as refugee students were a new experience for the school and integrating them into the school community was "a learning curve for everybody". However, increased awareness of the students' migration history, culture and lack of English was only useful for teachers to a limited extent as some still reported feeling overwhelmed due to their lack of experience in teaching students that were new to English (see section 5.3.2.3).

At Southgate, there were similar issues regarding a lack of information for those students with EAL that were not refugees. The Assistant SENCo (T11) had added a symbol to the register to denote students with EAL at the beginning of the new term when the first episode of data collection began and teachers could find out the L1 of a student on the system, which was provided by their parents. However, some teachers still suggested that more information would help to support the students. The subject lead for science referred to the information as "sketchy" as "you don't know the extent to which English is an additional language". Similar to T8 at Northbridge, they explained how the lack of information, combined with the initial silent period of students with EAL, meant that teachers often spent the first few weeks of a

student's arrival working out their academic abilities and levels of English proficiency. This was shown in the arrival of a new student with EAL from Guyana during the first episode of data collection. Although his English teacher (T14) had been told that "he predominantly spoke English and wrote in English", it later became apparent that his L1 was Guyanese Creole and he struggled with the grammar of Standard English. The assistant SENCo (T11) at the school had described how these challenges could be instigated by inaccurate information provided by parents, as they would identify a different ethnicity on intake documentation, but not characterize their child as having EAL. T11 and the assistant headteacher (T12) speculated in their joint interview about how the parents may have related identification of EAL to a range of factors, including English proficiency, nationality, identity, and order of language acquisition:

> *"T11: I think that there's a mixture of maybe pride perhaps. I mean what that means if their son or daughter is seen as being EAL does that mean they're not seen as English […] as soon as you label yourself as something different then you're seen as different and maybe that comes into it. I think maybe they've been born here so [the parents think] they are English. English is their first language when actually they speak a different language at home*
>
> *T12: do you think it's also because their English is better than their parent's they're like the experts to them in terms of English*
>
> *T11 yeah it's not that the parents don't identify them as having two languages. They'll just put English as their first one and have Fijian as their second one and I think it stems back to that they are actually quite proficient in English therefore English is their first language"*
>
> *(Assistant SENCo and subject lead for English and MFL (T11) and assistant headteacher and English teacher (T12), Southgate, ep3)*

These teachers' perceptions of the mixture of factors in the identification of students with EAL reflect the complex sense of identity that the student participants themselves also identified.

After uncovering these issues of inaccurate or a lack of information regarding the EAL population at Southgate, T11 described "having a lot of conversations with students regarding whether they speak a different language at home" in order to update their records. Recognising the problematic and time-consuming nature of this system of gathering information, T11 suggested that the intake documentation needed to be changed. Having just undertaken responsibility for the cohort when data collection began, T11 was eager to improve the school's EAL provision by providing teachers with "an accurate picture" of their cohort. Without this, teachers in these contexts are left to work out the specific needs and backgrounds of their students with EAL themselves.

5.3.2.2 "Getting them into lessons": policies and procedures

As well as a lack of information on arrival, all of the staff at both schools identified a lack of policies and procedures for when students with EAL would arrive. At both schools, new students with EAL would be paired with a 'buddy' and placed into a full mainstream class timetable on arrival. With no EAL lead or department and limited external support from the council's EAL service (see section 5.3.2.4), T6 at Northbridge felt restrained in the extent to which they could initially support these students:

> *"T6: we don't really have much choice beyond just getting them into lessons and getting them interacting with their peers and trying as best they can to just absorb what's around them and feel part of the school community […] but I feel that we end up in a situation where we go oh we know you've got challenges and you're going to find this really difficult but off you go"*
>
> *(Assistant headteacher, Northbridge, ep1)*

This priority of "getting them into lessons" and socialising them into the "school community" suggests that there is a perception that full immersion in an English-speaking context is the most important factor in language learning for students with EAL. However, there is also recognition that this is not enough support as they were aware that their students found this "really difficult", as also identified by the student participants that had arrived with no English (see section 5.2.1.1). T5 at Northbridge also recognised the limited external and internal support for their students with EAL due to their small cohort, commenting that it was "not enough" and meant that "it's just been left for teachers to just get on with it really". Leaving the teachers in these contexts with full responsibility of developing their students' EAL as well as their academic progress is extremely problematic due to their own lack of expertise and experience in EAL education (see section 5.3.2.3).

All new arrivals at both schools completed tests which each core subject department, along with the SENCo, then used to determine which set to place the students into. Therefore, the decisions were influenced by the EAL experience and expertise of the subject leads in each department. At Northbridge, this meant that there were differences in decision-making in this process; in science, the subject lead described the rationale behind placing their female Syrian refugee in a higher set:

> *"T7: because essentially we didn't know whether her poor test grades in year 9 were a factor of not understanding the science or just not understanding English and we felt it was fair to her to put her in a more able set so that she was surrounded by students who were working hard and would allow her to access the information [..] we don't assume that students aren't bright just because they can't speak English"*
>
> *(Subject lead and science teacher, Northbridge, ep2)*

In contrast, a teacher in the maths department at Northbridge described the decisions to place students with EAL into the lowest sets as "the opposite of what needs to happen". Mahmood's class of 12 was a mix of students with SEN, including "two with autism, one with ADHD, 7 or 8 with dyslexia, one with dyscalculia" and other behavioural issues. Having gained knowledge and expertise in EAL education from their training in a "specific EAL school" in which "90%" of the students were identified as having EAL, the teacher had concerns over the decisions in the maths departments:

> *"T9: when [Mahmood's] sister came here she was put into bottom set and I argued that that was not the right place to put an EAL student. They should be put in top set or second set and the argument I got back was well she won't be able to follow what's going on but the behaviour in lower sets and the language used doesn't help them develop at all […] when I was at my school in Essex the EAL students who arrived mid-year would be put into top set so that they were exposed to higher level language […] when they arrive [at Northbridge] they're put in a lower set [in maths] so they can cope with easier work"*
>
> *(Maths teacher, Northbridge, ep2)*

This suggests that the teacher in the maths department that made the decision to place these students in lower sets due to their EAL status lacked experience in teaching such students or had mistaken language competence for subject aptitude. As T9 seemed to recognise, placing these students in sets with lower standards of behaviour and SEN students has the potential to disadvantage students with EAL and position them as deficit. These differences in decisions made by different departments in Northbridge shows a lack of consistency that perhaps reflects how teachers' understanding of EAL education is heavily influenced by the contexts in which they have taught, as well as their training, which will be discussed in more depth in section 5.3.2.3.

5.3.2.3 Limited teacher expertise and experience

As seen in some of the data presented so far, it was clear that the teacher participants in both schools felt they lacked experience and expertise in teaching students with EAL. Although the length of time that the teachers had been in their roles varied, ranging from just one year to 26 years, the 'low-incidence' contexts in which they taught had had the most significant impact on their confidence in teaching students with EAL. Even those with years of experience in teaching reported feeling anxiety and a lack of expertise when a student with EAL first arrived in their class; for example, T8 at Northbridge had been an English teacher for 16 years and had built "an arsenal of techniques for all sorts of children with learning difficulties" but described how their "first thought is a slight bit of panic" as they felt they were not prepared for the "big barrier" of EAL. Similarly, the assistant headteacher at Southgate, who had been

teaching for 25 years, identified the contexts in which they had taught as key to their lack of EAL expertise:

> *"T12: always being in schools where the EAL population was quite small I sometimes feel that I haven't really honed my skills as much as I could have done if I'd have been working in a school in London for example"*
>
> *(Assistant headteacher and English teacher, Southgate, ep3)*

T12 emphasized this perception of differences in teacher expertise across schools further by saying that in cities like "Doncaster or Leeds", teaching students with EAL is "their bread and butter" due to their large EAL cohorts. This perception was echoed by other interviewees, such as T11 who suggested schools with higher EAL populations "have more knowledge of how to handle students with EAL". T7 suggested that the lack of academic progression of one of their Syrian refugees was influenced by the differences in expertise and support across schools:

> *"T7: I'm sure if we were working in an inner-city school we wouldn't have had this issue because there is a lot of support for [EAL students]. We just don't have it"*
>
> *(Subject lead and science teacher, Northbridge, ep2)*

Due to these differences in teacher experience, the EAL service consultant suggested that the implication for the students with EAL in the school contexts in this study is that they are "sitting in the corner [of the classroom] forgotten". This was reflected in T10's comment that the teachers are "a bit in the dark so we kind of treat them the same [as their FLE peers]". T8 was also concerned about the impact on the students:

> *"T8: there's no connected thinking. Everyone's just stabbing in the dark and saying right let's try this let's try that with them and not really having any kind of direction of this will work try this. It's teachers who have no experience of this just giving it a go and I don't think that's enough for students. You hope you can do a bit more for them"*
>
> *(English teacher, Northbridge, ep1)*

With no EAL department or specialist EAL teachers in either of the schools, the SEN departments often had to take on the responsibility for EAL provision. The SENCo at Northbridge commented that supporting students with EAL often "comes under my umbrella" and it was "just a question of picking up what needs doing and trying to make sure that it gets sorted". At Southgate, the assistant SENCo was overseeing EAL provision "to a certain extent" but admitted they were "struggling" due to their lack of expertise and the challenges in accessing external support from the council (see section 5.3.2.4). Nevertheless, many of the interviewees at both schools said that they would go to their SEN department for advice on supporting students with EAL. For example, T8 described emailing the SENCo when Mi-Sun

had first arrived to ask for advice by saying, "I don't know what I'm doing, I have no experience of this, is there anything I can do". A teacher at Southgate that was still in their Initial Teacher Training (ITT) also sought advice from the SEN department for a student with EAL as they were concerned about their ability to support them. The teacher commented that, due to a lack of guidance in their school-led training, they had independently researched EAL strategies, such as "visual dictionaries" but still felt lacking in expertise:

> *"T18: I'm just doing my best, but it is a pure fudge. There's no science behind it"*
>
> *(History and English teacher, Southgate, ep1)*

Despite their best intentions, seeking advice from the SEN departments at the schools is problematic as the SENCos were not specifically trained in educating students with EAL and, as the SENCo at Northbridge pointed out, "SEN and EAL are completely different things" and "they need completely different kinds of support" (see Pearce 2012; Reece 2018). Similarly, the assistant SENCo at Southgate was keen to differentiate between the two labels:

> *"T11: EAL doesn't come under SEN and that's a big thing for me. Just because a student's EAL doesn't mean that they're SEN"*
>
> *(Assistant SENCo and subject lead for English and MFL, Southgate, ep3)*

Nevertheless, the SEN departments were often the only source of advice for the teachers that also reported having not had any specific training on teaching students with EAL. Although many of the teachers described their training experiences on teaching students with SEN in their Initial Teacher Training (ITT), they could not recall learning about teaching students with EAL, as noted by two teachers at Southgate:

> *"T11: on your PGCE they focus on SEN groups and disadvantaged groups and EAL doesn't tend to be a topic that's touched on at all really*
>
> *T12: […] it's one of those things that I can't ever remember it being discussed or thought about or taught in lectures at university and sort of being dropped in at the deep end is how I felt certainly on my first placement"*
>
> *(Assistant SENCo and subject lead for English and MFL (T11) and assistant headteacher and English teacher (T12), Southgate, ep3)*

All of the teacher participants also identified a lack of EAL-specific training in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions throughout their teaching careers. Several teachers suggested that this is because they face a range of other concerns in their practice that are prioritised above the small number of students in their EAL cohorts, such as SEN:

> *"T7: I don't feel I've received any EAL specific training […] I think there are other priorities […] we've had plenty of training on dyslexia but that's a larger volume of students. You know the fact that I'm saying*

> *I only teach one or two [EAL students] a year, it's a relatively small amount"*
>
> *(Subject lead and science teacher, Northbridge, ep2)*

Thus, all of the teachers interviewed said that additional training in EAL education would be beneficial and specific teaching strategies would be particularly helpful. T8 at Northbridge described how training could also help them to understand multilingualism as "it's hard to get your head around what it must be like". However, due to the low number of students with EAL in the schools, some teachers reported that they would sometimes go long periods of time without teaching them, which would affect the relevance of training sessions:

> *"T13: any sort of training is only really useful if you have to use it straight away and if you then have a class without any EAL kids in for a few years you forget what you learned so it's something that needs to be repeatedly topped up and reminded and talked about in order for everyone to actually use it"*
>
> *(Subject lead and science teacher, Southgate, ep1)*

Thus, in these contexts, the training that teachers received seemed to reflect a hierarchy of concerns related to learning needs: whilst SEN and disadvantaged students were prioritised, training in teaching students with EAL had been neglected due to the small size of their EAL cohorts. Recognising this issue, some teachers felt that training would be useful if it involved specific teaching strategies that are also applicable and relevant to students other than those with EAL, such as FLE students with low levels of literacy.

The findings from interviews with these teachers in their 'low-incidence' contexts provide significant evidence that they feel they lack expertise and experience in EAL education. The participants themselves made important comparisons between their schools and the more researched school contexts with higher populations of students with EAL that they perceive to have more expertise. These findings and their implications will be discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

5.3.2.4 Dismantling of the EAL service

The role of the North Yorkshire EAL and GRT service was a key area of discussion with senior teachers at both schools. With no internal specialist EAL teachers or departments in the school contexts, the council's service had been crucial in supporting students with EAL in the past. Therefore, the teachers described how the dismantling of the team in 2019, during the course of this research, was a significant blow to their EAL provision.

In both schools, the services of the team had been used to support many of the students with EAL that participated in this study. The consultant described how the students were referred to the service by the schools and then partially withdrawn from the mainstream classroom for

explicit English instruction with a member of the team for 1-3 hours a week. As shown in section 5.2.1.1, the students had found withdrawal for these sessions extremely beneficial for their language development and it had also helped to ease their anxiety over speaking English around and to teachers and their peers in the classroom. Whilst the schools had to fund and buy in the sessions for these students themselves, senior teachers reported that the Syrian refugee students had arrived with funding for a course of free sessions with the EAL service. At Northbridge, the home and school liaison officer that worked closely with the refugees to support their adaptation to the school and community also commented that the Arabic translator provided through the EAL service had been invaluable too.

Historically, the team had supported many Nepalese students in the area and the EAL service consultant had described how there used to be more provision and support available. For example, they had previously facilitated the Nepalese students at Northbridge to undertake the IGCSE, an examination widely used in international schools that focuses on grammar as well as speaking and listening skills, which the consultant said had "really good results". As well as language development, the EAL consultant outlined other ways in which they had supported minority ethnic students in the county, including dealing with issues of radicalisation, female genital mutilation, and hate crime. Throughout their time in the role, the consultant described how the EAL service had been restructured numerous times over the years but across the six months of data collection the team was dismantled, and several members of the team were made redundant, including the consultant interviewed. Despite the small size of their EAL cohort, the SENCo at Northbridge identified that this would create a significant challenge for schools in North Yorkshire as they "are just going to be left just trying to work it out themselves really, which is hard". Similarly, T15 at Southgate recognised the difficulties this brings in a school that already lacked support and teacher expertise in teaching students with EAL:

> *"T15: I think suddenly having students arrive with very limited English into a school environment is very challenging and if we've got no external support for them it's then how do you staff it and manage it in school"*
>
> *(Senior teacher and subject lead of music, Southgate, ep2)*

The assistant headteacher at Southgate described the dismantling of the service as "absolutely disgraceful" and suggested that their low numbers of students with EAL actually means the council's support is more vital than ever:

> *"T12: it's worrying that even though our percentage of EAL students isn't as high as an inner city I think perhaps they have more knowledge of how to handle students with EAL […] I think there's now just a question mark over how we handle those students themselves"*
>
> *(Assistant headteacher and English teacher, Southgate, ep3)*

Considering the critical lack of internal support for students with EAL in these 'low-incidence' contexts, the removal of external guidance, funding and expertise in the form of the EAL service is extremely concerning. There is no doubt that this would have a significant impact on the ways and extent to which new students with EAL can be effectively supported in these schools.

5.3.3 Supporting the students' diverse backgrounds

Despite the significant lack of support for students with EAL in the schools, the teachers described how they were passionate about recognising and celebrating the diverse cultural identities of their learners. This emerged from interview questions regarding three areas: *identifying and managing differences in their cultural identities*; *the lack of cultural diversity in the National Curriculum* and *celebrating diversity in schools with a small EAL population*.

5.3.3.1 Identifying and managing cultural differences

As the EAL populations at both schools were largely heterogeneous, teachers described recognising and managing differences in the cultural identities of the students with EAL that they had encountered throughout the process of helping them to feel part of the school community.

Although the teachers at Southgate identified cultural differences in the identities of the Fijian students, some staff felt that the process of adapting and feeling a sense of belonging at school was easier for new Fijian arrivals as they made up the majority of the EAL cohort. T15 identified a sense of solidarity amongst the Fijian students, referring to them as "an extended family" that "will look out for each other". T14 recognised how their familiarity with the identity of the cohort created expectations of new Fijian arrivals which meant they had less anxiety when supporting them:

> *"T14: I think because we have so many [Fijians] they're almost part of the school background and demographic so actually you know how to help them if they're struggling. And I think they're a lot more vocal, they're a lot more confident in asking questions, they're a lot more social, they've got a lot more friends so they're speaking all the time"*
>
> *(Literacy coordinator and English teacher, Southgate, ep3)*

This perception of the nature of the Fijian students was echoed by other members of staff who also described the differences in attitudes to gender within the cohort, which had been recognised by some of the Fijian student participants. As discussed earlier, whereas the females were perceived as polite, well-behaved, and motivated to learn in school, the male Fijian students were described as loud, less committed to their learning, and often pushing boundaries with their behaviour. One teacher speculated that this could be due to differences between the school and home contexts:

> *"T13: I think family life is quite strict for them and maybe in school they feel they've got that freedom to misbehave"*
>
> *(Subject lead and science teacher, Southgate, ep1)*

A similarly strict home life for the Nepalese students was also perceived by many of the teachers. Although Southgate had only four in their EAL cohort, Nepalese students made up the majority of the EAL population at Northbridge. Like the idealised perceptions of the female Fijian students, all of the Nepalese students were described as quiet, studious, and well-behaved. However, the SENCo at Northbridge identified the ways in which socialising with their peers at school and adopting their cultural values could be a source of conflict with their parents:

> *"T3: my impression is that there is a culture that dad is the head of the family and what he says goes and the problem that we sometimes have here is that they come over here and maybe the children start questioning that and seeing their friends who maybe have a different kind of relationship with the family and that can lead to a bit of conflict […] they hang onto their traditional values and their children perhaps want to have a bit more freedom and a slightly different kind of relationship"*
>
> *(SENCo and MFL teacher, Northbridge, ep1)*

Another teacher described how they thought this created conflicting identities in the Nepalese students as the parents were "keeping their traditional culture":

> *"T10: the kid is in between two worlds and I just think it must be really hard because they're expected to be more British and fit in with their friends but then they go home and it's more traditional and I just think it must be really tricky […] they must feel that they're being torn in different ways"*
>
> *(Subject lead and history teacher, Northbridge, ep2)*

These teachers' perceptions echo Rohan's comments about conflicts with his parents regarding maintenance of his cultural heritage.

Despite the size of the Nepalese cohort at Northbridge, the SENCo commented that "there is not a typical kind of EAL student" at the school as they had welcomed students from a diverse range of backgrounds; this meant it was "difficult to make any generalisations about what they need". Whereas most of the time cultural differences between students with EAL and their peers did not require specific measures to be put in place, the home and school liaison officer (T4) had described supporting the settlement of the Syrian refugee students and their families as particularly challenging. For example, T4 described having to deal with the parents' concerns about their daughter sitting next to male students in classes and getting changed for PE. T4 commented that the school also made sure the students were "catered for in the

kitchen" and, as identified earlier, circulated emails to staff providing information about their culture, such as Ramadan. T4 also described how staff had initially been "lenient" on Mahmood when he first transitioned to Northbridge from primary school due to their perceptions of his identity in terms of his migration circumstances. This meant that he had developed behavioural issues which T4 described as "another hurdle" they would need to overcome with his parents. The range of measures implemented for their Syrian refugees show the ways in which the staff at Northbridge had recognised and attempted to support cultural differences in the identities of the students.

As the student participants had also identified (see section 5.2.2.4), teachers at both schools reported that ethnic and cultural differences between their students with EAL and their peers had sometimes led to incidences of what the staff referred to as 'casual racism'. T15 at Southgate echoed the student participants' explanations by saying, "it's about miseducation and that they just don't understand what they're doing and how it can be perceived as being racist". Similarly, T10 at Northbridge suggested that "our kids don't mean to be nasty" and incidences occurred because of a "lack of knowledge" of cultural and ethnic diversity. In an attempt to tackle the issue of racism in Northbridge, T10 described a "brilliant" assembly that the deputy headteacher had conducted, in which they had "shocked" and "absolutely horrified" the students by showing "the kids' words on the screen". The deputy headteacher had commented to me in the staff room that they were trying to tackle casual racism with "education, not punishment". At Southgate, students that had displayed controversial beliefs and attitudes had taken part in a workshop with an external organisation, which had led to celebrations for National Fiji Day (see section 5.3.3.3).

In their predominantly white, Anglocentric school contexts, the teachers identified the challenges they faced in identifying and managing cultural differences between the students with EAL and their peers. In these processes, some of the teachers reflected on their own identities and how they affected the ways in which they supported the students. Similar to the ways in which the teachers had described their unfamiliarity and a lack of understanding of multilingualism, they also described a lack of cultural and ethnic diversity in their own upbringings and backgrounds. At Northbridge, T10 described how they had "the most white upbringing known to mankind" and T14 at Southgate commented that they had "never had a cultural identity that has been far removed from where I'm teaching". T13 echoed this and summarised how they felt their unfamiliarity with diversity made them different to others:

> *"T13: I think it affects the confidence that I have with somebody from a different country. It's not something that I'm used to. I wasn't brought up speaking to lots of people from lots of different cultures. Everybody was white and British. It was just the way it was and I don't have any prejudices or anything like that but sometimes I'm not*

> *as confident as somebody who maybe has been brought up down in London or something and just exposed to all these different cultures all the time"*
>
> *(Subject lead and science teacher, Southgate, ep1)*

5.3.3.2 The National Curriculum: "culturally lacking in diversity"

As well as failing to take the English proficiency levels of students with EAL into account, the English and history teachers at both schools described their dismay and disappointment at the lack of cultural diversity in the National Curriculum. As identified in the literature review, texts from non-British authors and the section of poetry from other cultures were removed from the English curriculum in the reformation of the GCSEs in 2014. This prompted the assistant headteacher (T12) at Southgate to describe the English curriculum as "elitist" and "culturally lacking in diversity". An English teacher at Northbridge commented that the removal of texts from other cultures is "shocking" and has left them with "a very impoverished curriculum".

The teachers described how their disapproval of the reform and the lack of control over the GCSE specifications motivated them to introduce certain texts into Key Stage 3 instead. For example, the teachers had chosen to study some poetry from other cultures and traditional American literature, such as *Of Mice and Men* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. However, due to the lack of cultural and ethnic diversity in the classes, these texts could sometimes create tensions; an English teacher at Southgate described how some students can "feel quite uncomfortable" and "self-conscious" with some aspects of the texts as they touch upon racism and cultural differences, which some of the student participants also identified (see section 5.2.2.4). In addition, the teacher also described their own feelings of anxiety when recalling their first experience of reading the racist expletives in *Of Mice and Men* to a class with just one non-white student:

> *"T14: it was the most awkward moment of my life […] normally I teach it to a predominantly white class and that was the first time there was a cultural difference at all and I was like oh gosh how do I handle that. My heart was thumping. I was like what if I say something wrong, what if I say something culturally insensitive. My brain was whirring"*
>
> *(Literacy coordinator and English teacher, Southgate, ep3)*

However, the teacher recognised that these controversial texts could instigate sensitive class discussions that can be beneficial for all students by generating understanding and empathy for others.

The history teachers at both schools also criticised their subject's curriculum largely because of its emphasis on British history. T10 at Northbridge commented that this sometimes affected the academic achievement of students with EAL in the subject as they could lack cultural

knowledge "that we take for granted" such as "festivals and why we have bonfire night". They also suggested that having a history curriculum that is "not necessarily a world view" does not support the cultural diversity and background of students with EAL. A history teacher at Southgate echoed this concern by saying that "drilling British history into them […] takes away the legitimacy of the culture they've brought into the classroom". This history teacher was particularly passionate and angry about the potential influence that this could have on the beliefs and attitudes of all students towards other nationalities and cultures:

> *"T18: it's going to limit your perception of the world and it's going to create I think a sense of - and maybe it's reflected in today's society- of Britain is Great and Britain doesn't need anyone else in the world. Britain is an entirely independent nation […] they get that kind of blinkered view"*
>
> *(History teacher, Southgate, ep1)*

Overall, the history and English teachers at both schools perceived an Anglocentric focus in their curriculums which they felt excluded the diversity of their students with EAL, and limited all students' understanding and perception of other cultures. These findings suggest that the National Curriculum not only neglects the linguistic needs of students with EAL, but also the diverse nature of their cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

5.3.3.3 Celebrating diversity in schools with small EAL populations

Teachers at both schools described the challenges they faced in celebrating diversity in contexts that significantly lacked ethnic and cultural diversity. Within the county of North Yorkshire that T5 described as "primarily white" and "very narrow in terms of ethnic makeup", the teachers recognised the benefits of exploring and learning about other cultures for all students. T13 suggested that it can help to combat racism and xenophobia as FLE students would understand cultural differences and therefore "be more accepting". However, the schools differed in the extent and ways in which they were celebrating diversity in their contexts.

At Southgate, two members of the senior leadership team, the subject lead for science (T13) and the subject lead for music (T15), reported that they were working with students on assemblies and tutor time activities to develop personal aspects of students, including empathy and cultural capital, which is where the celebrations for National Fiji Day at the school emerged from. T15 explained that the assemblies that the students had performed for the school had been instigated by a student workshop. In the workshop, four students with EAL that had arrived at various points in their schooling from Fiji had discussed their linguistic and cultural identities, which had "shocked" their FLE peers who "struggled to get their head around" these different backgrounds (T15). As a proud Fijian, one of the students had

expressed their desire to celebrate National Fiji Day in school, so the group of students in the workshop planned and performed the assemblies. The teacher described the celebration as "fantastic" as "it came from the kids, and it was about the kids". Other teachers at the school described how positive the celebrations had been for all of the students and how it had generated interest and enthusiasm in learning about other cultures.

As the Fijian celebrations had been such a success, T13 also described their aims to celebrate the cultural background of the Nepalese students as well but commented that "there's only four of them so I didn't want to put them on the spot". Therefore, instead of a whole-school assembly, T13 described how Vanita had written about the festival of Dashain, which teachers read in a tutor period. T14 commended Vanita for this as "it is your identity that you're exposing to people so it must be really daunting". T13 reported that they were also trying to find appropriate ways of exploring and celebrating other cultures around the world in order to enhance the cultural capital in all students so that they had "the same opportunities that anyone else would have anywhere else".

At Northbridge, where they had a larger Nepalese cohort that made up the majority of the EAL population, T5 described how the school had celebrated their culture and festivals in the past, but this had declined:

> *"T5: we used to do a bit more […] certainly one year we had an assembly where they talked to the school - a specific celebration in the Nepalese calendar - and they did a talk about it and it was fantastic and it just feels like that doesn't happen anymore […] this is a significant population in our school who have a really interesting vibrant culture that perhaps we as people from North Yorkshire don't know about"*
>
> *(Subject lead and English teacher, Northbridge, ep1)*

The SENCo (T3) echoed this perception that the school "used to do much more" to celebrate diversity but they had "veered away from it" as there were "different things on the agenda". However, the history lead (T10) described how there had been an Amnesty International group for students from a range of backgrounds during the previous school year, from which it emerged that the students had said "they don't always feel that their cultures are recognised". Thus, T10 suggested that the school did not do enough and, although it might be easier to celebrate the Nepalese cohort, for the students in the rest of the EAL population "it's hard to celebrate diversity because you're celebrating one person".

The teachers' accounts present the challenges they faced in trying to help the students with EAL to express and celebrate their cultural backgrounds in school. At Southgate, the teachers identified that achieving these aims had been aided by the size and confident nature of the Fijian cohort that were keen to share their culture with the school in assemblies, whereas

recognising and celebrating the culture of others in the EAL cohort was more challenging. At Northbridge, although they had celebrated Nepalese festivals in the past, staff suggested that its student population could benefit from exploring and learning more about diversity in the future.

5.3.4 RQ2 summary

Section 5.3 has presented the findings related to the second research question that were generated from interviews with the teacher and staff participants, as well as some of the classroom observation data. The teachers identified the significant role that language plays in the experiences of students with EAL, both in social interactions and in their learning. Although some teachers identified how commitment and aspiration can contribute to a student's progress, they described how proficiency in English is ultimately the key to the curriculum and academic attainment, even in subjects like maths where worded questions can be a significant barrier for students with EAL. The teachers identified the crucial role they play in the development of the students' English, although some acknowledged how they focused on improving their use of the academic language of their subject area whilst overlooking errors in other aspects of their written work. The teachers also described the difficulties they faced in teaching a learner that is the only one in the class accessing the curriculum through EAL. Refugee students were a particular challenge as the schools were not prepared for the linguistic and academic support these learners needed. With time constraints, no Teacher Assistant support and a lack of teaching resources, many teachers were disappointed with the lack of progress made by these students. Perceptions of EAL and multilingualism varied across the teachers interviewed; the majority were monolingual and perceived of EAL as a barrier to learning that affected their understanding and expectations of learners, whereas the few multilingual teachers saw multilingualism as a key skill that needed to be developed.

The most pertinent theme for all of the teachers was the considerable lack of support for EAL education in both schools due to their small EAL cohorts. Firstly, the teachers described how the lack of information provided when new students with EAL arrived at the schools was a crucial obstacle to initially supporting them. Although the SENCo at Southgate School was attempting to make improvements to the information provided to staff, the teachers reported that it was ultimately the parents of the students that were often confused over the label 'EAL' when completing intake documentation. Following the students' arrivals at the schools, teachers at Northbridge described challenges when placing them into sets, as decisions were made by subject leads whose EAL knowledge and expertise varied. Although many teachers reported that they would go to their SEN departments for advice on supporting students with EAL, there was a significant lack of expertise amongst the staff in both schools due to a lack

of training and experience in EAL education. This meant that the arrival of a student with limited English would often create a sense of anxiety and panic. Whilst the council's EAL and GRT Service had historically been crucial in supporting the schools' EAL cohorts, senior teachers commented that the dismantlement of the team throughout the data collection process in 2019-2020 meant that schools that were already constrained in adequately supporting students with EAL would be left in an extremely difficult position.

Despite this overall lack of support for students with EAL, the teachers described how they were endeavouring to support and celebrate their diverse backgrounds in school. In identifying and managing cultural differences, some teachers at Southgate suggested that the nature and size of the Fijian cohort at the school meant that new Fijian arrivals would settle in more easily than other students with EAL. In both the Fijian and Nepalese cohorts, some teachers perceived how their strict family life meant that they struggled to balance their parents' attitudes and expectations alongside their life at school with their peers. Whilst the schools were familiar with their Fijian and Nepalese cohorts, the arrival of the Syrian refugees was described as a learning curve as they had presented new cultural differences to manage. At Northbridge, this involved implementing more provision and measures than the school typically put in place for students with EAL, such as more information for staff and working closely with the parents to respond to their individual needs. Like the student participants, the teachers identified how cultural and ethnic differences in the students with EAL had led to incidences of racism and xenophobia that both schools were striving to combat through education. However, the English and history teachers expressed anger and frustration at the reformation of their curriculums in 2014 which they believe left them teaching impoverished specifications that lack cultural diversity. Teaching in predominantly white, Anglocentric contexts with very little opportunity to explore diversity in the curriculum, many of the teachers recognised their own roles in giving a voice to students with EAL in their schools. Although Southgate had achieved this aim with their Fijian cohort by celebrating National Fiji Day, the teachers had found it challenging to find ways for other students with EAL (such as the four Nepalese students) to share their culture in ways they felt comfortable. At Northbridge, some teachers suggested that the school needed to do more to celebrate diversity as they recognised how it could help FLE students to understand and empathise with their EAL population.

This chapter presented the findings from the range of methods adopted in this project to explore the research questions. The qualitative data gathered in this study presents a range of overarching themes and sub-themes that together illustrate the perceptions of the school experiences of students with EAL and their teachers in the two schools that can be referred to

as ‘low-incidence’ contexts. The next chapter will further explore the findings in the context of existing research and the key theoretical frameworks adopted in the study.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings that were outlined in the preceding chapter, exploring the ways in which they link to, are informed by, and can also inform the existing research into EAL in England (as summarised in Chapter 2) and the poststructuralist theories of language and identity that were presented in Chapter 3. The chapter will examine the findings regarding the participating EAL students' perceptions of their school experiences (RQ1) and the teachers' perceptions of their experiences of teaching such learners in the two 'low-incidence' contexts (RQ2). Section 6.2 will explore the normalisation of English monolingualism in the two schools and section 6.3 will examine the lack of ethnic and cultural diversity. Section 6.4 will then address the implications of RQ1 and RQ2 for policy, practice, and provision.

6.2 The normalisation of English monolingualism at school

As seen in Chapter 5, language was perceived as central to the academic and social experiences of the students with EAL at both schools. Across the data from both the student and teacher participants, several issues emerged which positioned English monolingualism as the 'norm' in the two 'low-incidence' contexts: 'EAL' terminology issues; English as the gatekeeper to academic success; teachers' unfamiliarity with EAL and multilingualism; students with EAL feeling excluded and 'othered' in school; the learners' 'split' linguistic identities; subtractive bilingualism; and language inclusion and exclusion.

6.2.1 'EAL' terminology issues: under-identification and oversimplification

Reflecting contemporary research in the field of EAL education, the findings of this study highlighted the heterogeneous nature of the EAL population in England and, thus, problematic issues around the term 'EAL' itself. Across the data, the students with EAL and their teachers recognised how English is crucial for both their learning and social interactions in school. This presented a challenge for the teachers as there was significant variation in the English proficiencies of their EAL cohorts, ranging from multilingual students that were born in the UK to new arrivals that were new to English. This was reflected in the sample of student participants from each school: the group of 8 students at Northbridge Academy ranged from Dominik (year 8, aged 12), a bilingual student born in the UK to Polish parents, to Mahmood (year 8, aged 12), a Syrian refugee that had arrived two years earlier with no English; similarly, within the sample of 9 students at Southgate School, English proficiency varied from Nissam (year 8, aged 12), a bilingual student born in the UK to Nepalese parents, to Vanita (year 10,

aged 14), a Nepalese student that had arrived in the UK aged 11 with no English (see *Table One*, section 4.3.2.2.1).

6.2.1.1 The 'EAL' label, identity, and legitimacy

As the findings showed (section 5.3.2.1), some teacher participants recognised issues of under-identification in their school contexts. At both schools, some students with EAL had not been identified as such by their parents on intake documentation, which suggests there may have been confusion over the terminology or perceived disadvantage in being ascribed such a label. Although the parents of the students did not participate in this study, T11 and T12 at Southgate had speculated that the parents' perceptions of the linguistic and cultural identities of their children and connotations of the 'EAL' label had influenced their decisions not to identify the students as such; T11 suggested that the parents may not label their child as "different" because of "pride" as it may mean "they're not seen as English". This implies that T11 believes the parents may be concerned that their child may not be considered a 'legitimate speaker' of English by members of the school community if they are labelled as 'EAL' (Bourdieu 1991; see Chapter 3). It may also be a parental concern that they considered the national identity of their children to be English and they perceived that the EAL label would contradict that. These perceptions could be based on a fear that marking their child as 'different' would affect the extent to which the students feel accepted, included, and respected at school (i.e., their sense of belonging) (Goodenow and Grady 1993). It was also suggested by T12 that parents may perceive of their children as "experts" as "their English is better than their parents'". This interpretation of the students' linguistic identities suggests that the parents may perceive of their children as legitimate speakers due to their proficiency in English and associate EAL with illegitimacy and inauthenticity (Kramsch 1998). Furthermore, if the parents were unaware of potential EAL provision and support that could be provided at school, they may not see the label as relevant to their child's schooling.

Of course, without the voices of the parents themselves, this study is limited in the extent to which it can explain the under-identification of EAL in the two schools. Nevertheless, this issue echoes Arnot et al.'s (2014) concerns that some students that have EAL are not appearing on school statistics. Although the assistant SENCo (T11) at Southgate was attempting to rectify this by asking students themselves whether they speak languages other than English, these findings suggest both schools' induction processes need to be reconsidered. In addition, the local authority has a responsibility to improve school intake documentation and aid parents' understanding of the term (and potential support for their children) in order to provide schools with accurate information.

6.2.1.2 Masking English proficiency: the broad nature of EAL categorisation

Section 5.3.2.1 also showed that even for those that were identified as having EAL, the term did not provide enough information for the teachers in terms of the students' English language proficiencies; as T13 had commented, the information was "sketchy" as "you don't know the extent to which English is an additional language." This aligns with previous research highlighting concerns over the potentially homogenising nature of the term 'EAL', which masks the huge variation in English proficiency within the population (Demie & Strand 2006; Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015; Anderson et al. 2016; Strand & Hessel 2018; Hutchinson 2018; see Chapter 2). Teachers at both schools identified how this lack of information meant that they spent the first few weeks of a student's arrival trying to assess their linguistic and academic capabilities in lessons and/or placed the learners in the wrong sets for some subjects. Taking into account the lack of experience and expertise that the teacher participants in these contexts had in terms of EAL education (which will be explored in section 6.4.1), this is extremely problematic and highlights the crucial need for more effective intake procedures for new arrivals in these contexts.

It is also important to note that misconceptions or under-identification regarding the term 'EAL' were not just a concern for the students that were new to English. This is exemplified in T7's misunderstanding of the label (section 5.3.2.1) as they believed it denotes a student with limited English proficiency. Although the needs of a bilingual student proficient in English would differ significantly from a student that is new to English, they still have linguistic challenges that teachers need to be aware of. Bourdieu's (1977b; 1990, see also Chapter 3) theory of practice is a useful tool for highlighting this issue; as noted, Bourdieu (1974) argued that the education system perpetuates and maintains inequalities in society as students from educated families (whose linguistic practices at home match the dominant linguistic form at school) have an advantage in terms of their linguistic capital. This sheds light on how a student born in England like Jaysha at Northbridge, who speaks Nepalese at home with his family and English proficiently in the school context, may be disadvantaged as he is tasked with acquiring linguistic practices for two very different fields, which may affect his academic achievement (Hardy 2012). T7 also revealed their perception of Yojana's (year 10, aged 14) linguistic capital and the EAL label when they commented that they would not treat Yojana differently to other students "because her language was fine". As Yojana arrived in the UK aged 10 with no English, this is concerning given that research has found that it can take between 5 to 11 years to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins 2000; Demie 2013a). Thus, although teachers may perceive that students like Jaysha and Yojana have the same linguistic abilities as their FLE peers, they need to be aware

of linguistic challenges students with EAL may still face and how this may affect their academic progression.

Thus, the issues of under-identification, misconceptions, and broad nature of the EAL label uncovered in this research align with key trends identified in the literature and illuminate issues in 'low-incidence' contexts in particular. The findings also reveal that, almost certainly due to the small sizes of the cohorts in the two schools, students with EAL were not prioritised in terms of policy, provision, and staff training, compared to students with SEN or those from disadvantaged backgrounds (see section 6.2.3.4 for discussion). Thus, if the students with EAL are not even labelled as such, or the teachers have misconceptions about what having EAL means, the learners are at risk of falling further under the radar, both academically and socially.

6.2.2 Linguistic capital in English: the gatekeeper to academic success

Across the data from both the student and staff participants, learning and developing English literacy and language was recognised as crucial for students with EAL to access the content and testing requirements of the curriculum. However, adjusting pedagogy and delivery of the curriculum content for just one student with EAL in a class was extremely challenging for the teachers in the two 'low-incidence' contexts, which made personal investment in developing English even more important to the students' academic success.

6.2.2.1 The National Curriculum: a "one-size fits all testing regime"

In line with critics such as Leung & Creese (2008), Safford and Drury (2013) and Costley (2014), the deputy headteacher (T2) at Northbridge had described the National Curriculum (NC) as a "one-size fits all testing regime" that does not take the range of linguistic abilities of students with EAL into account. To T2, EAL certainly seemed to be the "invisible" concern to policymakers that Leung (2001: 45) referred to it as. However, as Schleppegrell (2004) notes, the 'language of schooling', particularly in secondary school subjects, presents a challenge for *all* students, not just those with EAL. The findings suggest that this was recognised by many of the staff participants at both schools as they had discussed the task that *all* of their students faced in developing the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins 1979; 1981) required in their subject areas. This was an especially significant issue at Southgate School where there were lower levels of literacy across the whole student population (described as "language poverty" by T14), which positioned many of them as disadvantaged. Using Bourdieu's (1977b; 1990) theory of practice as a theoretical lens, the teachers recognised the level of linguistic capital required of *all* students in the field of education and the ways in which this can determine their social possibilities (e.g., access to further education, employment, etc.).

However, unsurprisingly, it was found that the level of proficiency in English that is required to access the curriculum was considered particularly challenging for students with EAL that arrived later in the education system and were in the early stages of their English language acquisition. This is in accordance with previous studies that have identified that the likelihood of an EAL student's academic success in England is strongly affected by their age of arrival and/or level of English proficiency (see sections 2.3.1.3 and 2.3.2.1).

The findings revealed that educating the only student in a class with EAL that did not meet the requirements of a highly prescriptive curriculum based on assumptions of English monolingualism was incredibly challenging for the teachers (see sections 5.3.1.1 and 5.3.1.2). This was not just the case for language-heavy subjects like English, science, and history; at both schools, it was found that the linguistic and cultural capital demanded by new worded questions in the reformation of the maths curriculum disadvantaged students with EAL in particular. Although many of these learners had been partially withdrawn to develop their English language with a consultant from the council's EAL service, they needed a substantial amount of time to develop their linguistic capital, particularly in terms of CALP, in order to access a NC delivered and tested in English. Whilst research has found that teachers in schools with high EAL populations have developed strategies for adapting the curriculum or their pedagogy to meet the linguistic needs of EAL learners (such as grouping EAL students together for a task or providing differentiated resources) (Conteh 2007; Wardman, Bell & Sharp 2012; Payne 2017), the teacher participants in the two 'low-incidence' contexts of this study lacked experience, expertise and the time to adapt their delivery of the NC for just one student with limited English in their class. In addition, as T5 noted, the mainstream subject teachers needed to "design the lesson for the vast majority of students in the class", which reveals the clear advantage that the NC gives to FLE learners in these schools. Consequently, the priority of developing the English language and/or literacy of their students with EAL was subsumed by curriculum priorities, such as developing subject knowledge and CALP, and testing requirements. Thus, on one hand, the teachers were empowered to grant access and development of linguistic capital in their learners but, on the other, disempowered by restrictions and priorities within the contexts in which they were operating, like those in Flynn's (2018) study. This illustrates the considerable power exercised in the education system in England by the NC and its oppressive structure that positions students with EAL as disadvantaged and disempowered.

This section has explored how the value and legitimacy of English was recognised in the field of education in the two schools (Bourdieu 1977a). The teachers identified that ownership of linguistic capital in the form of the 'legitimate language' (i.e., English) acts as a gatekeeper to academic success for *all* students, not just those with EAL (Luke 2008). However, the

discussion highlighted how those that arrived at the schools in the early stages of English acquisition were positioned as disadvantaged and disempowered by a National Curriculum that disregards the limitations of their linguistic capital. Therefore, although the intention of the NC was to provide equality of access to education (Leung 2016), the findings have highlighted how it actually perpetuates a deficit model of students with EAL, particularly in the 'low-incidence' contexts of this study. The teachers' restricted control over the content and delivery of the curriculum and a lack of internal and external support for their EAL cohorts hindered the extent to which they could support these students, which shapes the parameters of the students' social possibilities (Bourdieu 2002).

6.2.2.2 Differences in EAL student investment

Although all of the EAL student participants recognised the importance of learning English for academic achievement, the findings revealed differences between the learners in terms of their investment in developing their English language skills (Norton Pierce 1995; see section 3.2.2.1). At Southgate, there were perceptions of gender differences in EAL students' investment, as four of the teachers had revealed idealised expectations of their female students with EAL based on their "aspirational" nature, whereas the male Fijian students were seen as less committed and prone to misbehave (see section 5.3.1.1). Similarly, at Northbridge, whereas Mahmood would "retreat" in lessons, Tatiana was "proactive at asking for clarification" (T5). This may be based on Tatiana's perception that "when you learn a new language it just opens up multiple doors", which implies that her investment in increasing her linguistic capital was based on the understanding that she could then acquire a variety of symbolic resources, such as further education or employment (Norton Pierce 1995). Other students at Northbridge had also recognised the benefits of investment in English, such as helping to increase their parents' linguistic capital by correcting them (Charlotte) or gaining access to college (Mi-Sun). Furthermore, Dominik's preference for speaking English to a new Polish student 'buddy' in primary school, rather than their shared L1, suggests a perception of the legitimacy of English as the dominant linguistic form that his peer would benefit most from investing in (Norton Pierce 1995). Considering the level of English proficiency required to access the curriculum and participate in the speech community of the classroom, particularly in the 'low-incidence' contexts of this study (outlined above), teachers need to be aware of the range of factors that may influence EAL students' investment in increasing their linguistic capital.

6.2.3 Teachers' unfamiliarity with EAL and multilingualism

As seen in section 5.3.1.3, the data suggests that the majority monolingual teacher participants at both schools were unfamiliar with EAL and multilingualism, which influenced the experiences and identities of the students with EAL. Sections 6.2.3.1-6.2.3.4 will explore the

dominant ‘monolingual mindset’ of the teachers, the implicit ‘English only’ policy in their classrooms and their efforts to do their best for their multilingual learners despite a significant lack of EAL experience, expertise and training.

6.2.3.1 The dominant ‘monolingual mindset’ of the teachers

Introduced in section 2.3.1.1, the ‘monolingual mindset’ refers to the tendency in many anglophone settings (e.g., the UK, the US and Australia) to regard English monolingualism as the norm and stigmatise multilingualism (Safford & Drury 2013). As seen in section 5.3.1.3, evidence of this ideology emerged from interviews with the 14 English monolingual teacher participants across both schools as they struggled to empathise and understand the experiences of students with EAL and multilingualism. Worryingly, T8 at Northbridge also expressed a negative perception and initially lower expectations of a new arrival with EAL, correlating with findings in previous research (Sood & Mistry 2011; Mehmedbegović 2014). The data suggests that the habitus (i.e., beliefs, dispositions and habits) of these teachers had been socially ingrained throughout their own upbringings, the predominantly monolingual educational fields in which they had operated, and a curriculum based on assumptions of English proficiency and monolingualism (Bourdieu 1991; Flynn 2013).

In contrast to the monolingual teachers, the findings suggest that two of the three multilingual teachers interviewed (T9 at Northbridge and T16 at Southgate) were more able to understand and empathise with the students with EAL due to their own linguistic identities (see section 5.3.1.3). Perhaps based on the notion that their own linguistic capital provided access to their employment in teaching MFL, T16 saw the value in multilingualism as an “opportunity” for students with EAL (Bourdieu 1991). They also expressed more positive and idealised expectations of EAL students in French and German lessons, which contrasts with T8’s deficit perception and initially lower expectations of Mi-Sun, outlined above. At Northbridge, T9 consciously tried to make their multilingual learners “feel included” in the classroom because of their own experiences of being bilingual, such as L1 decay due to an “English only” policy in their family home to encourage acquisition. Furthermore, T9 had benefitted from increasing their professional capital through training in a school with “90%” EAL students. These findings resonate with previous research that has found that teachers that are multilingual themselves or have more experience of teaching students with EAL can empathise with such learners and have a positive influence on their learning (Shin & Krashen 1996; Martin-Jones & Saxena 2003; Gandara et al. 2005; Conteh 2007; Pettit 2011).

However, by virtue of the nature of the ‘low-incidence’ contexts of this study, these multilingual teachers (and their positive views and experiences of multilingualism and teaching students with EAL) were in the minority, whilst the dominant English monolingual

teachers and FLE students hold power and status as 'legitimate speakers' (Bourdieu 1991). The position of reduced power of the EAL student participants should not be underestimated; indeed, as noted by Norton & Toohey (2011), social relationships are crucial to the process of subjectivity construction, as an identity may be imposed on an individual by others (see section 3.2.2). In both schools, the pervasive 'monolingual mindset' resulted in an implicit 'English only' policy in the mainstream classroom, which had implications for the linguistic practices and identities of the students with EAL.

6.2.3.2 The implicit 'English only' policy of the classroom

As the findings revealed (sections 5.2.1.4 and 5.3.1.3), the participating students with EAL and teachers at both schools did not associate the first languages of these students with their classroom learning. Instead, the aim for both the students and teachers was to develop their English as quickly as possible through immersion in the target language at school, potentially based on assumptions of the 'input hypothesis' (Krashen 1982; see section 2.3.1.1). This resulted in an implicit 'English only' policy in the mainstream classrooms of the schools, which positioned the L1s of the students with EAL as irrelevant and inferior.

As the literature review outlined, research suggests that use of the L1 in mainstream classrooms can be important for a healthy sense of self-identity (Anderson et al. 2016), self-esteem (Duquette 1999; Johnstone et al 1999; Cummins 2000), positive relationships with teachers (Conteh 2018) and development of EAL vocabulary (Lewis, Jones & Baker 2012; Conteh 2015). As Wardman, Bell & Sharp (2012) note, many schools in areas that have long histories of high immigration and many years of experience supporting students with EAL have developed strategies for facilitating the use of their L1 in their learning. For example, they may group students together that share the same L1, perhaps based on the concept of 'language brokering', which refers to children that act as interpreters or translators for others that do not speak the dominant language (usually their parents or family members, although not in this case) (Cline, Crafter & Prokopiou 2014). In addition, schools with high EAL populations may have employed multilingual teachers or teacher assistants that share the same L1 with the students and can help facilitate their learning through translanguaging practices (Martin-Jones & Saxena 2003; Conteh 2007; Payne 2017). In contrast, research has found that teachers in 'low-incidence' contexts do not tend to encourage the use of L1s in the classroom due to a lack of confidence, resources and knowledge, as well as fear (Murakami 2008; Wardman, Bell & Sharp 2012; Bailey & Marsden 2017). This was reflected in the findings of this study as the two schools did not have the staff expertise or knowledge to provide opportunities for the students with EAL to use their multilingualism as an advantage in their learning; the only ways in which two of the 17 teacher participants had incorporated the L1 of students with EAL in the classroom was through translated resources for those new to English.

Crucially, the aim of this was not to encourage or support L1 maintenance, but to help the students to access the curriculum in the English language. Thus, their L1 was only seen as beneficial in their transition to speaking and learning the dominant linguistic form proficiently.

However, the findings regarding Mi-Sun at Northbridge reveal that, in practice, the L1 of learners can potentially be incorporated into an EAL student's learning in the mainstream classroom in these contexts (see sections 5.2.1.4 and 5.3.1.3). There are a range of factors that most likely contributed to Mi-Sun's resistance of the 'monolingual mindset' and implicit 'English only' policy of the classroom, including her motivated and studious nature, and her previous experiences of multilingual pedagogy in her South Korean schooling. It is also worth noting that Mi-Sun's mum was an English Language Teacher (ELT) in South Korea, demonstrating to her how multilingualism as a form of cultural capital can be exchanged for economic capital (Bourdieu 1991). Hence, as the field of education, society and culture of South Korea that Mi-Sun experienced was governed by a different set of rules (i.e., logic of practice) that valued multilingualism, her habitus included a perception of high value in the linguistic capital she had arrived in the UK with (Bourdieu 2002). In addition, choosing to incorporate her L1 into learning also may have been affected by Mi-Sun's identification with South Korea as an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991; see section 3.2.2.1). As Kanno & Norton (2003) argue, language can instil a sense of belonging and a transnational tie to a community of the imagination. Thus, the findings related to Mi-Sun highlight the ways in which the distinctive cultural and educational experiences gained prior to arrival in the UK can influence the linguistic identity and translanguaging practices of students with EAL. Importantly, though, Mi-Sun's method of writing notes in her L1 (Korean) and later translating into English was executed autonomously by her and not facilitated by teachers. Therefore, although the method may have been supporting her L1 maintenance, the council's EAL service consultant expressed valid concerns over the extent to which Mi-Sun understood the curriculum content that she had been taught. Furthermore, Mi-Sun's learning would ultimately be assessed in English (excluding the subject of MFL), which deems her linguistic capital in multilingualism as irrelevant to her success in the education system in England (Bourdieu 1991).

The only other languages that were incorporated into the EAL students' learning in school by teachers were German and/or French in their MFL lessons, neither of which were the first language of any of the student participants, further reinforcing the idea that their L1 linguistic capital is not pertinent to their school education. This demonstrates how educational policy in the form of the NC and classroom practices in these schools reflect and reinforce inequalities in the 'linguistic marketplace' by creating a hierarchy of languages, positioning English as the 'legitimate language' of academic success and the first languages of the students with EAL as

illegitimate and irrelevant (Bourdieu 1977b). The findings suggest that this implicit hierarchy had a subtractive influence on the linguistic practices and identities of the EAL student participants, which will be explored in section 6.2.6.

6.2.3.3 "Everyone's just stabbing in the dark": teachers doing their best

As seen in section 2.3.5, teachers play a crucial role in supporting students with EAL in schools, as their beliefs, confidence and attitudes have a significant influence on the academic success of such learners. Therefore, it is concerning that the findings of this study (see section 5.3.2.2) revealed that the teacher participants at both schools lacked professional capital in terms of their EAL pedagogical knowledge, experience, and expertise, reflecting the findings of previous studies in 'low-incidence' contexts (Cline et al. 2002; Murakami 2008; Flynn 2013). The teachers also expressed a sense of constraint due to a significant lack of internal and external support for new students arriving with limited English (section 5.3.2). Although some students with EAL had been withdrawn for one or two sessions a week to work with the council's EAL consultants when they first arrived (prior to dismantlement), the teachers recognised that this provision had not been enough, and they had struggled to support the learners in the mainstream classroom (see section 5.3.1.2). In the absence of external guidance, no EAL lead or department in either school and limited Teacher Assistant support, teachers at both schools were left feeling like they were "stabbing in the dark" (T8) and "just doing [their] best" (T18).

Just like those in the 'low-incidence' contexts of Murakami's (2008) study, some teachers had reported they had little choice but to research strategies and search the internet for EAL resources to use, which was extremely time-consuming for the individual needs of just one student with EAL in every lesson. Lacking the professional capital to cater for the specific linguistic needs of their students with EAL left many of the teachers at Northbridge and Southgate feeling guilty, disappointed, and disempowered (see section 5.3.1.2). Like the teachers in Flynn's (2013) study, their frustration had resulted in feeling professionally inadequate, rather than objection to educational policies or a lack of external support. This is concerning given that research has found a link between teachers' feelings of competency and their students' academic achievement (Shin & Krashen 1996; Karabenick & Noda 2004; Gandara et al. 2005; Pettit 2011; see section 2.3.5).

Other teachers had, problematically, approached teaching their EAL learners in the same way as their FLE students. As the SENCo at Northbridge had suggested, the teachers' lack of experience regarding the specific needs of students with EAL meant teachers are "on automatic pilot" by expecting the same learning trajectory of *all* students, perhaps also due to the highly prescriptive nature of the NC and standardised examinations, as well as a prevalent

'monolingual mindset'. Although the teachers may have perceived their lack of differentiated practice as fair and equal treatment, the linguistic differences between students should not be neglected in pedagogy (Cline et al. 2002). Indeed, language may just be one facet of the complex identity of a student with EAL, but it is crucial to accessing the curriculum and assessment in the education system in England, as seen in section 6.2.2 (Hutchinson 2018).

The lack of expertise and experience of the teachers in the two 'low-incidence' contexts of this study contrasts with findings in schools with higher populations of students with EAL, where teachers' EAL expertise and knowledge has evolved over time in reaction to changing demographics of their student populations (Karabenick & Noda 2004; Kaneva 2012; Payne 2017; Flynn 2018; Schneider & Arnot 2018). Thus, the findings of this study may imply that external support from the Local Authority may be more vital in 'low-incidence' areas such as North Yorkshire. Therefore, the dismantlement of the council's EAL service will only further disadvantage and disempower the students with EAL in this area, reinforcing the "uneven playing field" of the education system in England (Flynn & Curdt-Christiansen 2018: 414).

Just like Costley (2014) suggested about the teachers in Murakami's (2008) study, the experiences of the teachers in this project can be likened to those in urban settings in the 'assimilation' period of EAL provision in the 1950s to mid-1960s in England (see section 2.2.3.1); in both scenarios, classrooms were diversifying and there were no coherent policies for supporting new students with EAL, so they relied on 'ad hoc' arrangements and an expectation of teachers to just "get on with it" (Bracken et al. 2017: 36). Thus, the findings of this study further accentuate the recurrent nature of responses to EAL learners in England across time as the country continues to grapple with its multilingual identity (Costley 2014).

6.2.3.4 "Dropped in at the deep end": the lack of teacher training

As seen, the teachers in the two 'low-incidence' contexts of this study felt they were inexperienced and unfamiliar with the challenges associated with students with EAL in terms of language and identity due to their own upbringings and the nature of the educational contexts in which they had taught. This section will explore how a lack of training in EAL pedagogy exacerbated this issue further and left the teachers feeling restricted and lacking confidence in the face of a student with EAL.

As seen in section 2.3.5, there is a requirement in the *Teacher's Standards* (DfE 2011: 12) that all teachers are expected to "have a clear understanding of the needs of […] those with English as an Additional Language"; this rests on the assumption that Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers and schools will prioritise and allocate time to train teachers in EAL pedagogy and strategies. However, previous research has revealed that confidence in this area is a major concern for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) (Hall & Cajkler 2008; Cajkler & Hall 2009;

Cajkler & Hall 2012). Stakeholders such as NALDIC (2013) and Leung (2016) suggest this is due to insufficient coverage of EAL in ITT, an argument supported by the findings of this study. Indeed, aligning with previous research (Murakami 2008; Graf 2011; Bailey & Marsden 2017), this project has found further evidence that teacher training providers are less likely to allocate time to EAL pedagogy in 'low-incidence' areas as it is perceived as less of a priority (see section 5.3.2.3). This was exemplified in reports from teachers of a lack of EAL coverage in both university-led and school-led training programmes. Furthermore, the teachers felt that EAL was not sufficiently covered in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions in these two contexts either due to their small EAL populations. As seen, this meant that not only did NQTs in the schools feel they lacked confidence in teaching students with EAL, even those with years of teaching experience feared the arrival of an EAL learner to their classroom.

In the two 'low-incidence' schools in this study, considering budget constraints and the small sizes of their EAL cohorts, it is understandable that other considerations (i.e., SEN and disadvantaged students) were prioritised in terms of training and CPD. However, the staff felt this focus on other issues meant there was a contrast with teachers in schools with higher EAL populations in terms of EAL expertise and experience (see section 5.3.2.3). This variation in teachers' 'professional capital' across schools has been a concern for researchers in the field of EAL education for some time, as the good practice that exists in schools in urban areas is not being disseminated to rural areas like those in this study (Sharples 2016; Mehmedbegović et al. 2018; Flynn & Curdt-Christiansen 2018).

As seen, the lack of expertise across the staff workforces is even more concerning in light of the fact that there were no EAL specialist teachers or departments in either school. Reflecting the findings of other studies in 'low-incidence' contexts (Cline et al. 2002; Murakami 2008), this meant that teachers would seek advice about supporting students with EAL from the SEN departments. This is extremely problematic, as the SENCos acknowledged themselves that they were not EAL specialists, so the extent to which they could advise the staff was limited. Furthermore, as Reece (2018) argues, SENCo responsibility for EAL provision can lead to the conflation of language and learning needs, contributing to a deficit perception of EAL learners. Having been aware of the distinction between EAL and SEN themselves, the SENCos at each school had drawn on the expertise of the North Yorkshire EAL and GRT service, which had been the driver of the dissemination of good practice and support for students with EAL in the area. The knowledge and tools for training and supporting the schoolteachers in developing their EAL pedagogy and practice had been there in the form of external EAL consultants, but the dismantlement of the service left members of the schools' leadership teams questioning how they could effectively support their EAL cohorts going forward.

6.2.4 Students with EAL feeling excluded and 'othered' in the school context

As seen in section 6.2.3, a 'monolingual mindset' was prevalent amongst the majority of the teacher participants, resulting in an implicit 'English only' policy in their classrooms. For those students with EAL that arrived at the schools with very little English, not being able to 'join the chain' and feel a sense of belonging to the classroom speech community was a frustrating and isolating experience (Bakhtin 1981; see section 5.2.1.1). This disempowering positioning had contributed to two of the student participants (May at Southgate and Yojana at Northbridge) opting to stay quiet in lessons. Rather than not speaking in order to listen and absorb the language around them as Graf (2011) has suggested, their inhibition for fear of making mistakes indicates that they had adopted a silent period as a survival reaction in order to hide what they perceived as a deficiency (see Safford & Costley 2006, 2008; Bligh 2014; Anderson et al. 2016; Underwood 2016). This may be rooted in a feeling of being positioned as the 'other' that must adapt and assimilate to the English monolingualism 'norm' (Reece 2018). Thus, it may be that May and Yojana identified themselves as inferior due to their perceptions of linguistic differences between themselves and their peers, which caused them to suffer linguistic shame (Garcia 2011). For Yojana, her silence was restricted to the classroom as she would "speak English all the time to [her] friends", which suggests a perception that her teacher would be more likely to assess the value of her linguistic capital than her friends would (Bourdieu 1991). Thus, these findings highlight how the classroom environment and perceptions of their status as legitimate English speakers may inhibit students with EAL. As a result, not only are they tasked with developing their English, but also the confidence to speak (Anderson et al. 2016).

The challenge of developing this confidence as a student with EAL is highlighted further by the student participants' accounts of being "mocked" (Charlotte, Northbridge) and "picked on" (Ike, Southgate) by their FLE peers when they had first arrived at their schools (see section 5.2.2.1). Perhaps based on a process of 'othering', this suggests that the FLE students had perceived a linguistic difference in the identity of their new multilingual peers and then intentionally used this to make them feel inferior and exclude them (Dervin 2012). This form of linguicism bestows power and status upon monolingual English speakers at the expense of speakers of other languages (Skutnabb-Kangas 1998). Having also identified issues of bullying in their study, Anderson et al. (2016) point out how harrowing this hostility can be for students with EAL that are already coping with significant changes in their lives.

Other students with EAL at Southgate had been 'othered' through requests from their FLE peers to speak in their L1. Although Semesa and Jimmy had enjoyed teaching their L1 to their peers (see section 6.2.5 for discussion), others felt patronised and annoyed. Recognising the unfamiliarity that FLE students had with multilingualism, T14 had suggested FLE students at

Southgate "might see [EAL] as a special educational need". Lanvers, Hultgren & Gayton (2019: 3) argue that these attitudes of "adolescent anglophone speakers" towards multilingualism are rooted in the ideology of English as the national language and a lack of priority given to language learning within educational policy. Using Bourdieu's (1990) theoretical perspective, the habitus (i.e., the beliefs and dispositions) of these English monolingual students had been socially ingrained throughout their upbringings and schooling in a monolingually biased society and 'low-incidence' educational context. This includes the development of unquestioned beliefs (i.e., doxa) regarding multilingualism, resulting in an Anglocentric 'monolingual mindset' that moulded their behaviour towards students with EAL (Bourdieu 2002). Indeed, as Coleman (2009: 9) notes, "any country which perceives itself as monolingual will be at best apathetic and at worst hostile to the acquisition and use of other languages".

To Angelica (a Belizean student at Southgate), the solution to this issue was to put "British kids" in "the same position" as a student with EAL in another country so they can "finally understand". This suggests an implicit awareness of how the field in which a student is socialised and educated can mould their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour towards speakers of other languages. It seemed that Angelica perceived that placing FLE students in the same disempowered and deficit position that students with EAL experience in the UK would increase their empathy and reduce the stigma they associate with multilingualism. However, it is important to note that FLE students would still be in a privileged position as English speakers in many other countries due to the symbolic capital English holds as a global language and lingua franca (Jenkins 2015).

Of course, tackling the attitudes of FLE students that hold dominant positions as monolingual English speakers is difficult, as ideologies are rarely reshaped and renegotiated by those in positions of power (Van Dijk 2013). Still, the findings of Lanvers, Hultgren & Gayton (2018) suggest that the Anglocentric habitus of FLE students can be challenged and subverted using interventions that raise awareness of the global spread of English and the benefits of multilingualism. Although the strongly prescriptive nature of the National Curriculum means school leaders and teachers have little autonomy in implementing such interventions, the National Fiji Day assemblies at Southgate (see section 5.3.3.3) had been a step in the right direction in this respect, as they provided an opportunity for some of the Fijian students to educate their FLE peers on their experiences of multilingualism.

6.2.5 EAL students' 'split' linguistic identities

The discussion so far has highlighted the normalisation of English monolingualism in the school contexts of this study due to a range of issues, including perceptions of English as the

gatekeeper to academic success, the 'monolingual mindset' of the majority of the teachers and FLE students, the implicit 'English only' policy of the classroom, and the positioning of other languages as inferior and illegitimate. Thus, in school, many of the participating students with EAL had a monolingual identity imposed upon them, which meant they compartmentalised their languages for different contexts: generally, their L1 at home and English at school (see section 5.2.1.4). This meant they had learned to adapt their linguistic identities in order to 'fit into' different social worlds, which mirrors the experiences of students with EAL in the 'low-incidence' schools of Cline et al.'s (2002) study, as they had displayed what Cline & de Abreu (2005) referred to as 'split identities' (see section 2.3.4).

Evidence that the English monolingual bias had imposed 'split identities' on the student participants is revealed by Charlotte and Dominik's suggestions that an 'English only policy' at school is the best way for new students to improve their use of EAL (see section 5.2.1.1). These perceptions suggest that the expectations and norms within their field of education had moulded the habitus (i.e., socially ingrained dispositions) of the students with EAL (in addition to the teachers and FLE students), which included doxa regarding a monolingual ideology (Bourdieu 2002). Their comments also suggest a perception that immersion in a target language can aid acquisition, as well as a misconception that the L1 could interfere with this process, a view that Anderson et al. (2016) found is held by some teachers.

Of course, in practical terms, many of the EAL cohort had little choice in what language to speak at school as many of them did not share an L1 with another student or teacher. For those that arrived with little English, not being able to speak to their peers or teachers in their L1 was an isolating and frustrating experience as their most basic means of self-expression were denied (Lamb and Budiyanto 2013). Thus, the student participants recognised that investment in acquiring English was crucial to forming friendships and participating in the classroom speech community (see section 5.2.1.1). Although new Fijian or Nepalese arrivals would have more linguistic choices as some other students shared their language in school, there were still factors that would limit their linguistic opportunities; for example, as the cohorts were spread across the schools, a Fijian or Nepalese student would often still be the only student in a class with their L1. In addition, although Fijian students like Semesa and Jimmy at Southgate and Nepalese students like Yojana and Rohan at Northbridge would sometimes use their L1 in social interactions with each other (see section 6.2.7), the majority of the time they would interact in English. This may have been because English was prioritised and promoted within the school context but could also be due to the marginalisation of their L1 and resulting subtractive bilingualism, which will be explored in the next section.

6.2.6 An environment of subtractive bilingualism

Although all of the student participants reported using their L1 to some extent in their home lives, the findings revealed that they all felt their L1 proficiency was underdeveloped (see section 5.2.1.5). Some of the student participants had undergone a process of 'subtractive bilingualism' as they reported that their spoken and literacy skills in their L1 had decayed over time (Carroll & Combs 2016). This resonates with students with EAL in previous studies in northwest England (Wardman, Bell & Sharp 2012), in London (Wallace & Mallows 2009; Mehmedbegović 2014) and in Scotland (de Britos 2020). Some participants reported that this became particularly noticeable when they would speak to friends or family from theirs or their parents' country of origin who would evaluate aspects of their L1 use, such as their accent (Dominik, for example, said that his grandma in Poland would correct his Polish when he would "trip up on words"). As Kramsch (2012) argues, the authenticity of a language speaker is sanctioned by members of the speech community that an individual seeks to identify with. Thus, by evaluating the authenticity of the students' linguistic capital, these friends and family members were (most likely unintentionally) positioning the students with EAL as illegitimate speakers of their own L1 (Bourdieu 1991).

In addition to this exclusion from their L1 speech communities, the discussion has previously demonstrated how the students' use of English at school would be evaluated by their teachers and peers, affecting their sense of belonging to the school speech community (Bakhtin 1981; 1984). Thus, T10's comment that the students were "in between two worlds" encapsulates the dual exclusion and disempowerment these students faced in both their home and school contexts. The parents and family members that corrected the student participants' use of their L1 may have been implicitly aware of this link between language and community membership. This seemed to be particularly important to the Fijian parents of students at Southgate; Semesa's comment that his parents told him to "learn Fijian first" because "they hate speaking English" (see section 5.2.1.5) suggests they have a strong emotional attachment to their L1, and they wanted to separate themselves from the linguistic practices of the host culture (Berry 1994). Trying to increase their children's linguistic capital through encouragement and evaluation of their L1 may have been due to the strength, pride and a feeling of importance that they themselves derive from their identity as a member of their speech community (Kramsch 1998). It may be that these parents saw that this sense of belonging would be a good return on their children's investment in maintaining and developing their L1 (Norton Pierce 1995).

However, the findings highlighted variation in parental attitudes to language that imposed on the linguistic identity of their children. As the findings revealed, the parents of some students (e.g., Dominik and Charlotte) would not encourage the use of their L1 at home as they wanted

to focus on English, which positioned their L1 as inferior. This may provide an insight into their unquestioned beliefs (i.e., Bourdieu's 'doxa') regarding the value of languages in the 'linguistic marketplace': i.e., it may be that these parents perceive the high value in English as the dominant form in education and society (both in the UK and globally) and therefore did not encourage investment in their children's L1 at home (Bourdieu 1991; Norton Pierce 1995).

Still, even with parental encouragement and intervention, the students still found L1 development challenging. As seen in section 5.2.1.5, Angelica struggled to speak Belizean Creole with her family, so would opt to speak English instead. Thus, even though Angelica associated her L1 with attachment to her family and culture, immersion in the field of education (particularly in a 'low-incidence' context) had moulded her habitus over time to perceiving English as the default language option, causing a hinderance to the development of her L1.

Indeed, the influence of the school context on the linguistic identities of these students with EAL should not be underestimated. It is, of course, the setting in which they would spend the majority of their day (during term time) and the key context in which they experienced the process of acculturation (Berry 1994, see section 2.2.2.2). This means adjusting to an education system with a curriculum built on assumptions of monolingualism and policy that states that the responsibility of maintenance of the L1 lies with the students themselves (Overington 2012). As discussed previously, there were little or no opportunities for the students to invest in the maintenance or development of their spoken or literacy skills in their L1 at school. This lack of explicit instruction had had a significant effect on the student participants that were born in the UK (i.e., Dominik, Jaysha and Rohan at Northbridge and Nissam at Southgate), as they all reported that they did not know how to read and write in their L1. This supports Bourdieu's (1977b; 1991) argument that education helps to entrench inequalities in society, as it has the power to position certain languages as illegitimate and therefore deny linguistic capital to speakers of them.

The findings thus suggest that resisting the monolingually biased ideologies of the UK (and 'low-incidence' contexts in particular) required a level of autonomy and commitment from a student with EAL. As shown in section 6.2.3.2, Mi-Sun was unique in that she was the only student participant that was incorporating her L1 into her learning in the classroom, which aided her maintenance of the linguistic skills in Korean that she arrived in the UK with at the age of 11. This echoes the findings of Cline et al.'s (2002, as cited by Cline & de Abreu 2005) study in 'low-incidence' contexts where personal factors, such as developing a confidence in themselves as bicultural, helped students with EAL to successfully maintain their L1. However, there were certainly limitations to the extent to which Mi-Sun's use of Korean in

her schoolwork would prevent L1 decay; following her arrival at Northbridge, she was no longer receiving any explicit instruction in Korean or experiencing multilingual pedagogy. This lack of support for the L1 maintenance of students with EAL in the education system in England inevitably limits their multilingualism, demonstrating how, even though a student may be highly motivated to invest in their L1, contextual factors and social structures can limit this process (Norton Pierce 1995).

The findings discussed in this section have accentuated the complex individual differences and contextual factors that impacted upon L1 maintenance or development for all of the student participants. Although the habitus of these students is rooted in their family upbringings, they experienced a different process of acculturation to their parents due to their unique contextual and social experiences (Burcham 2009). Thus, despite parental encouragement for some of the student participants, their schooling had played a dominant role in their linguistic abilities and identities as they adapted to the English monolingualism norm in school (Bourdieu 2002). This impediment to the development of proficient bilingualism for the students in this study illustrates the symbolic power of the English language. As seen, as well as dominating on a global scale as a lingua franca, English holds the power in education in England as the 'legitimate language' that provides access to the curriculum and desired employment (Hardy 2012). In this study, it has been demonstrated how English holds a heavy weighting of symbolic capital in the two 'low-incidence' educational contexts, which means they play a significant role in the reconstitution of cultural and structural inequalities between English and other languages (Bourdieu 1977a). The one-way transfer of the dominant language had deprived the students with EAL of opportunities to develop their bilingualism effectively, limiting their linguistic capital and consequently restricting their social possibilities (Bourdieu 1991). However, as much as the students had been 'victims' of linguicism, it is unfair to position them as passive agents in the construction of their linguistic identities, especially in light of the findings that some of the student participants would occasionally choose to engage in translanguaging practices in order to both include and exclude, which will be explored in the next section.

6.2.7 "Something to bond over": language inclusion and exclusion

So far, the discussion about the role that language played in the experiences of the students with EAL in this study has identified the ways in which aspects of their linguistic identity were shaped by others, such as the dominance of English, the 'monolingual mindset' and the resulting L1 decay. This section will explore the agency that some of the student participants had over their linguistic practices through the ways in which they would use language to both include and exclude others.

Although the student participants reported that they mainly used their L1 in the home context and English in the school context, there were occasions where some of the students would use their L1 to enhance relationships with their peers at school. As noted previously (section 5.1.2), Fijian students made up the majority of the EAL cohort at Southgate School. Focus group discussions with the participating Fijian students revealed a sense of pride and strength in their ethnic and cultural identities. The finding that these participants would greet other Fijian students in the school corridors using their L1, even those they did not know well, suggests an awareness of how they could use their Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) in their L1 to bond and create a sense of inclusion (Cummins 1984). This demonstrates how translanguaging practices can enable students with EAL to show solidarity towards other members of their speech community and enhance their sense of belonging, which is important for a health sense of self and group identity (Anderson et al. 2016). In their 'low-incidence' school, I would argue that these linguistic practices were bold in the face of the pervasive 'monolingual mindset' ideology that stigmatised multilingualism in this context. Indeed, as Cline & de Abreu (2005: 551) noted, an EAL student's use of their L1 is a "conscious and deliberate act of engagement with a particular form of ethnic identity". Thus, it is through language that these Fijian students were confidently negotiating and constructing their unique linguistic, cultural and ethnic identities in social interactions outside of the classroom in school (Heller 1987).

Classroom observations at Southgate also uncovered linguistic practices where Jimmy and Semesa had used Fijian expletives they had taught their FLE peers in order to bond with them in lessons (see section 5.2.1.3). Using their Fijian language as "an instrument of power", this was a deliberate act of including their peers and excluding their teachers from a linguistic exchange (Bourdieu 1977a: 648). Arguably, Jimmy and Semesa were using their linguistic capital in Fijian as a mechanism for asserting their own identities and resisting monolingual identities (Bourdieu 1991). Although they did not associate their L1 with learning in the classroom as it did not provide access to the curriculum in the way that English does, these two Fijian students were able to use their L1 linguistic capital to gain social capital in the form of stronger relationships with their peers (Bourdieu 1991). Understandably, though, the teachers expressed frustration with the students' use of Fijian in this way as they were disrupting learning and "pushing the boundaries" (T15), which affected the level of trust the teachers had in them. Thus, Jimmy and Semesa's use of their L1 to misbehave in lessons contributed to the perception that teachers and students had of the "cheeky" male Fijian student identity in school.

At Northbridge, as noted (section 5.1.1), the linguistic and cultural background of the majority of the EAL cohort was Nepalese. In contrast to the Fijian students at Southgate, the Nepalese

students were perceived by teachers as quiet and studious learners that were well-behaved. Nevertheless, the findings showed that Rohan and Yojana, in year 10, bonded by choosing to insult each other in Nepali in social interactions. This use of multilingual practice in the form of feature selection suggests that they also recognised the value of their linguistic capital for enhancing peer relationships (Otheguy, García & Reid 2015). Through the use of their L1, Rohan and Yojana were identifying themselves as insiders of the Nepalese nation, arguably an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991), distancing themselves from outsiders that cannot speak Nepali (Kramsch 1998). Although Rohan and Yojana commented that these social interactions would take place in the school context, the teacher participants never witnessed this, which suggests the students were discrete. This may be due to a desire to exclude teachers from an interaction that was incredibly personal to the students' identities.

As Mills (2001) notes, for multilingual students, making a linguistic choice is a choice of identity. In the contexts of this study, the Fijian and Nepalese students had more linguistic freedom than other EAL students due to their shared form of identity with others at school and in the local community. In contrast, the student participants that were from their own unique linguistic and cultural background were constrained by the social contexts in which their identities played out. As we have seen, there was variation in the students' attitudes to this restriction. On one hand, Charlotte, the only Filipino at Northbridge, felt frustrated and excluded at not being able to participate in shared L1 bonding, which demonstrates how a student with EAL can be motivated to use their L1 due to its significance to their identity, but be restricted by the context in which they are operating (Creese & Blackledge 2015). However, Charlotte was still able to use her multilingualism to benefit herself in certain contexts, such as teaching her FLE friends Tagalog insults to include them in the speech community she felt affiliated with (Norton & Toohey 2011). Furthermore, her use of English to include her stepdad in an interaction at home demonstrates how she was skilled at utilising and exchanging her linguistic capital for stronger relationships with friends and family (social capital), giving her a more powerful positioning in certain social contexts (Bourdieu 1991).

On the other hand, the findings (see section 5.2.2.1) showed that students like May and Dominik would get frustrated and annoyed at being asked to speak in their L1, perhaps because it made them feel excluded from the English monolingualism norm. Dominik's comment that his FLE peers were "never going to use" Polish suggests he perceives that there should be a specific purpose to language learning other than bonding with peers, perhaps as a form of embodied cultural capital that can be exchanged for access to employment (Bourdieu 1991). His comment that his FLE peers did not need to learn his L1 as they were "not even Polish" suggests he was defensive over his unique identity as a member of the Polish speech community and even though he was born and raised in the UK, Dominik's L1 helped him to

feel a sense of belonging to Poland as an 'imagined community', which he wished to exclude his peers from (Anderson 1991).

This section has explored the ways in which the student participants with EAL would use their linguistic capital as a means of including themselves in a group and bonding with their peers whilst simultaneously excluding and distancing others. For the Fijians at Southgate and the Nepalese at Northbridge, shared linguistic practices were a marker of solidarity that they associated with being insiders of their speech communities. Although all of these students had reported a decay in their L1 (see section 6.2.6), it is clear that they had invested in learning insults and expletives to use as a tool for bonding with their peers. In this instance, they saw enhancing social relationships as a good return on their investment (Norton Pierce 1995). To an extent, this provided opportunities for these students to exercise power and control over the construction of their complex identities. In contrast, the feelings of linguistic isolation of participants like Charlotte, May and Dominik highlight the challenges students with EAL may face in 'low-incidence' contexts when they have no shared L1 with another student. Thus, the individual variation and contextual factors that influenced the participants' use of their first languages further highlight the heterogeneous nature of the EAL student population.

6.3 The lack of ethnic and cultural diversity

As well as facing the complex linguistic challenges that have been discussed so far, the findings revealed that the student participants perceived ethnic and cultural differences between themselves and their FLE peers, which also influenced the extent to which they felt included or excluded in their 'low-incidence' school contexts. These concerns will be explored in the next section, followed by a discussion of the lack of diversity and inclusion in the National Curriculum.

6.3.1 "You feel like you're in the middle of something": navigating cultural and ethnic differences

Throughout the complex and uncertain period of adolescence, all school students struggle to fit in and "achieve a coherent sense of self" (Lamb & Budiyanto 2013: 3). However, the findings of this study suggest that this period is even more challenging for students with EAL that are also undergoing a process of acculturation in 'low-incidence' contexts (Berry et al. 1994). For these learners, it was not just their multilingualism and EAL that made them feel 'different' to their peers (see section 6.2.4); their experiences and sense of their own identity were complex and influenced by a range of factors, including their nationality, family, ethnicity, and cultural background.

6.3.1.1 Developing biculturalism

The ways in which the Fijian student participants presented their identities at Southgate School have been touched upon already in how they used their first language to bond with other Fijians and non-EAL peers (see section 6.2.7). As well as language, the findings suggest that the identity of the Fijian students was tightly bound to their culture, religion and nationality. These participants actively maintained their cultural heritage outside of school through a sociable Fijian network in the town that regularly gathered for bible readings, religious celebrations, and parties. As Kramsch (1998: 6) notes, members of a community "acquire common ways of viewing the world through interactions with other members of the same group". Thus, the Fijian students' pride in their heritage and commitment to cultural practices seemed to have been heavily influenced by family networking, which had contributed to a strong and positive sense of their national identity. From a poststructuralist perspective, these participants were investing in their membership to a group (i.e., social capital) in order to gain a sense of cultural solidarity and inclusion (Bourdieu 1986; Norton 2013). This affiliation with their community had filtered into the school environment, where the Fijian student cohort were perceived as "an extended family" (T15) that supported each other.

Although Gundara (2000: 73) warns that communities do not have "a coherent, consistent character" and constitute a wide variety of individuals, they can portray certain aspects of identity as a whole. This was shown in the awareness of both the teachers and student participants at Southgate of how Fijian culture was different to what they saw as 'British' culture. The findings suggested that the Fijian community that had migrated to North Yorkshire made concerted efforts to retain the traditional, patriarchal and strict heritage of Fijian society. This meant that Fijian students had to manage cultural gender expectations at home that differed from the beliefs and attitudes of their FLE peers, teachers and British society. Thus, the habitus of the Fijian student participants had been entrenched by the cultures of the different fields they navigated (i.e., family and school) over time and they had learned (and were still learning) to adapt their identities in order to conform to the different expectations of these sites of socialisation (Bourdieu 1991). Over time, familiarity with the identities of their Fijian cohort meant that the teachers at Southgate had developed their knowledge and understanding of Fijian culture, which meant that they were better equipped to support new Fijian arrivals at the school.

These findings demonstrate how the identity of students with EAL in the UK is not only linked to the development of bilingualism, but also biculturalism, the concept of two distinct cultures combining or co-existing (Mills 2001). Simultaneously developing or maintaining membership of two separate cultural groups was not always easy for the participants. In contrast to the Fijian students, for two of the Nepalese participants (Rohan at Northbridge and

Nissam at Southgate), retaining their cultural heritage was an area of contention with their parents. Just like language, culture is "a process that both includes and excludes" (Kramsch 1998: 8); as identified in a discussion of language inclusion in section 6.2.7, shared forms of identity can help a person to feel a sense of belonging to a community (Goodenow and Grady 1993). Thus, the parents of Rohan and Nissam most likely wanted their children to invest in maintaining their cultural heritage in order to feel a sense of inclusion that they themselves derive from Nepalese cultural practices. However, it may be that these students, both born and raised in the UK, were resisting the cultural identity their parents were imposing on them as they had been heavily influenced by the pressure to conform to the values, beliefs and attitudes of British society and their FLE peers at school. Rohan implicitly recognised that his habitus had been socially ingrained by the norms of British culture and his educational context (the latter being a site of identity construction that his parents had not experienced in the UK). There was a suggestion that his parents were unhappy with the influence of these fields on his identity in his joke that he was "a disgrace" to them (Bourdieu 1991).

Rohan had been particularly vocal about how navigating cultural differences had affected his sense of belonging; even though he would use the Nepali language to bond with Yojana (see section 6.2.7), it seems Rohan perceived Nepal as an 'imagined community' that he struggled to fit into as he did not "understand the culture" (Anderson 1991). However, feeling that he did not "fit in with the UK people either" suggests Rohan felt socially different to his perception of a British cultural identity, which was intensified by his experiences of being 'othered' and marginalised by people that had questioned his nationality based on his Nepalese ethnic appearance (Dervin 2012). This positioning of a white British ethnicity as the norm had contributed to Rohan's view of the UK as having an insular mentality with discourses of hostility and anti-immigration sentiment (see section 5.2.2.4). A sense of dual exclusion from both the Nepalese and UK communities had impacted upon Rohan's national affiliation as he reported that he did not perceive himself as "British or Nepali", reflecting the finding in Hoque's (2015) study where British-born Bangladeshis in London felt dually excluded from both British and Bangladeshi communities. This relationship to two different cultures, whilst not having full ownership of either, reveals how a student with EAL can develop an ambivalent, contradictory identity (Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock 2010).

6.3.1.2 Differences in teacher and student perceptions of racism

Other student participants had also experienced feelings of exclusion due to their ethnic identity within their predominantly white schools. This was exacerbated by the content of the National Curriculum (which will be discussed in section 6.3.2) and race-related abuse and name-calling, which echoes the findings in other 'low-incidence' contexts of Cline et al. (2002) and Murakami (2008). As the Macpherson (1999) report states that the crucial factor

in racism is a target's subjective perception, it is concerning that there did appear to be a discrepancy between the student and teacher participants' perceptions of racism within the schools: whereas the students recognised it as bullying that clearly had a negative impact on their feelings of social inclusion, several teachers at both schools had described it as students using 'casual racism' without meaning to offend. Here, the finding that the student participants chose not to report racist incidents to staff is crucial. Their fears that reporting would lead to further bullying, or a lack of consequences reveal the disempowered positioning and lack of voice of ethnic minority students in the school environment, demonstrating the challenges the schools face in supporting these learners. As Hall (2019) notes, it is not just the responsibility of the students with EAL to 'fit in'; the institutional environment is collectively shaped by policy, staff leadership, teachers and students. Above all, though, it is teachers and school leaders that have the authority and power within school to implement change. Thus, if staff are not informed of incidents and given the opportunity to handle racist and xenophobic issues sensitively, students can be left feeling vulnerable and insecure (Bennett & Lee-Treweek 2014).

As suggested by Norton (2000), these issues of identity need to be considered in relation to the students' connection to the broader social, economic and political world. Indeed, schools are a microcosm of wider society that often represent the social and cultural relations of the community (Reynolds 2008). As discussed in Chapter 2, government policy, increases in migration, media and global events have contributed to the 'hostile environment' of the UK and demonisation of migrants (Goodfellow 2020). Reece (2018: 16) argues that there is currently an issue in this continued discourse of assimilation which has a perception of diversity as an issue and the solution is ethnic minorities "shedding their identities" in order to conform to the white, British, monolingual norm. Reece (2018) adds that, rather than a reciprocal process of acculturation, there are expectations of immigrants to achieve acceptance and not of the British host community to be open-minded towards different cultures, races and traditions. The perceptions of some of the students with EAL within this study echo these concerns. In this study, the two 'low-incidence' schools were situated in a county that T5 described as "narrow in terms of ethnic makeup" and the student participants themselves recognised as lacking in diversity. Against this backdrop, where differences between students may be more distinct, developing biculturalism and a confident, healthy sense of identity was challenging, which adds to the stress of identity formation already associated with adolescence (Stroink & Lalonde 2009). The findings highlight the important distinction between being perceived by others as different, resulting in feeling excluded, and constructing a positive perception of their own identity as different, which can contribute to feeling included (Anderson et al. 2016).

Arnot et al. (2014) believe that teachers' awareness of these issues is crucial to understanding the educational needs of students with EAL and identifying any challenges they face both in school and in the wider community. However, as well as unfamiliarity with multilingualism (see section 6.2.3), some of the participating teachers in the 'low-incidence' contexts of this study had recognised that their 'white' ethnic identity hindered the extent to which they could understand and empathise with students with EAL, which affected their confidence in teaching them. This finding is concerning in light of research that suggests a diverse workforce in a school can have a positive impact on the learning of students with EAL due to their shared experiences of being 'othered' (Martin-Jones & Saxena 2003; Conteh 2007; Santoro 2007; Sood & Mistry 2011; see section 2.3.5). Thus, teachers like those interviewed in this project need to make conscious efforts to develop their knowledge of the hidden challenges that are associated with students with EAL other than language, such as bicultural conflict, racism and ethnic identity that can make students feel they are "in the middle of something".

6.3.2 Cultural capital and the National Curriculum

6.3.2.1 "Impoverished" curricula: a form of symbolic violence

The nature of the curriculum was a key issue that emerged from the data from both the students with EAL and their teachers in the study. As well as concerns over the National Curriculum assuming the same linguistic abilities of *all* students (see section 6.2.2), interviews with the teachers revealed their frustrations over the ways in which their reformed curriculums also neglected the diverse ethnic and cultural identities of their students with EAL (see section 5.3.3.2). Data from the focus groups with the student participants and classroom observations also provided insights into uncomfortable experiences of the students that were triggered by certain literature texts and aspects of the history curriculum.

As noted (section 5.3.3.2), just like those in the *Teach First* review (Sundorph 2020), the English teachers at both schools had consciously chosen to read the novels *Of Mice and Men* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* with Key Stage 3 students in order to counteract the removal of texts from other cultures from the GCSE English Literature curriculum. However, as seen, studying these texts in the 'low-incidence' classroom contexts had triggered uncomfortable experiences for some of the black students at Southgate School, mirroring the experiences of students in Bennett & Lee-Treweek's (2014) research in secondary schools in Cheshire. Although it was likely unintentional, the behaviour of the 'white FLE British' students marked the identity of the black Fijian students as different and made them feel inferior to the 'norm'. This reveals how the reading of these texts in schools with a lack of ethnic diversity can isolate students with EAL and create tensions with their peers. Therefore, as the *Teach First* review suggests, the inclusion of texts that have positive representations of diversity could help to

instil a sense of pride and understanding of other cultures and help to reduce the racism, xenophobia and feelings of exclusion that were also discussed in section 6.3.1.2 (Sundorph 2020).

The history curriculum was also criticised by teachers at both schools for the 'British' cultural knowledge it demands of students. The findings suggest that migrant students that arrive later to British society and the education system may lack the cultural capital that the history curriculum values, potentially disadvantaging them academically (Bourdieu 1977b). By commenting that it is cultural knowledge that "we take for granted", T10 highlights how the dominant members of a society can hold doxa about the value of their cultural capital (Flynn 2015a). In line with other critics such as Alexander & Weekes-Bernard (2017) and Arday (2021) and campaigns to 'decolonise' the curriculum (Ajayi 2020), T18 was extremely passionate about the ways in which the history curriculum perpetuates inequalities in society and condemned the content for "drilling British history into [students]". Demonstrating an awareness of how this positions the diverse backgrounds and cultural capital of students with EAL as illegitimate, T18 recognised that such learners do not enter the education system as 'blank slates', just as Anderson et al. (2016: 15) point out.

This study also highlights issues with the maths curriculum, which adds a new perspective to criticism of the NC in England. As well as identifying that the reformation of the maths GCSEs in 2014 has disadvantaged students with low levels of literacy in English (both FLE and EAL learners), the findings suggest that the cultural knowledge often required in the exams can put students with EAL at a further disadvantage. Although the maths teachers recognised that the new 'worded' questions could provide real-life contexts for problem-solving, they expressed frustration at how the specific cultural capital demanded by the reformed maths assessments could affect their students' abilities to gain institutionalised capital in the form of a qualification, which they could exchange for jobs or access to higher education in other fields (Bourdieu 1990).

As noted in section 3.2.1.1, Ofsted adopted the concept of cultural capital in their inspection framework in 2019 in an attempt to tackle the underachievement of disadvantaged students (Ofsted 2019a). However, as argued by Bourdieu (1977b), not all forms of cultural capital are equally valued by society. This is exemplified in the controversy surrounding the reformation of the National Curriculum in 2014, which has been heavily contested by stakeholders and teachers in this study for what it appears to deem valuable and invaluable (Mansell 2019). As Bourdieu (1977b) argued, a curriculum is a means of inculcation into what is valued and considered legitimate in society. By claiming that the reformed curriculum is "essential knowledge" and "the best that has been thought" (Ofsted 2019b: 43), the literature, history

and culture of other backgrounds and ethnicities are devalued by default (Moylett 2019). This devaluation of the cultural capital of students with EAL in the classroom can destabilise their sense of belonging at school, which can affect their academic attainment and future economic capital (Bourdieu 1991). Thus, the curriculum could actually be perpetuating what Bourdieu (1990) refers to as *symbolic violence*: the imposition of the ideology of the dominant onto subordinated groups, which entrenches inequality and naturalises the status quo. As well as imposing the dominant language onto students with EAL as a demonstration of power (Phipps 2019; see also section 6.2.2), the content of the NC burdens less-powerful members of society with assimilating to the cultural capital of the white British middle class, which maintains the status and economic and political power of the dominant cultural group (Fosse-Galtier 2019). Therefore, in reality, rather than promoting an inclusive education system, the one-way transfer of culture through the reformed curriculum and Ofsted's uninformed use of the concept of cultural capital contribute to the marginalisation of students with EAL.

6.3.2.2 Celebrating diversity: teacher attempts at extracurricular solutions

The issues above highlight the dilemma teachers were facing when supporting students with EAL in the 'low-incidence' contexts of this study (and indeed teachers across England): although it makes sense from a pedagogical perspective to recognise a student's cultural identity so they feel engaged in their learning, teachers are navigating an education system that is heavily reliant on an Anglocentric National Curriculum and institutionalised cultural capital in the form of academic qualifications. Thus, it was incredibly challenging for teachers to have any autonomy over providing opportunities for their students with EAL to express their diverse identities in school, as much as they wanted to create an inclusive and supportive educational community.

However, the findings did reveal that both schools had attempted extracurricular solutions to celebrating diversity in their contexts. Whereas teachers at Northbridge recognised that this had declined in recent years due to other priorities, two of the leadership team at Southgate School were implementing assemblies and tutor time activities to develop the empathy and cultural capital of all of their students outside of the prescribed curriculum (see section 5.3.3.3). In particular, the National Fiji Day celebrations were a positive opportunity for the Fijian students to share their unique cultural capital with the school community and celebrate diversity. As the students themselves noted, educating FLE 'British' students in this way could help to normalise and destigmatise other cultures, which could reduce the racism and xenophobia students with EAL may face. However, the findings from focus groups highlighted how daunting it can be for students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts to present their cultural identity to their peers, as some were concerned it would contribute to marking them as different and lead to bullying. Furthermore, there are arguments in the

literature that one-off days or events to celebrate diversity, which Murray & O'Doherty (2001) refer to as 'touristic interculturalism', actually risk contributing to the 'othering' of students with EAL (Devine 2009). Bryan & Bracken (2011: 108) argue that, rather than promoting equality, these celebratory days reinforce the status and privilege of the dominant group by positioning them as the "'tolerator' of difference" that gets to dictate "the acceptability (or otherwise) of the ethnic Other". Therefore, as de Britos (2020: 75) argues, "inclusion needs to be embedded in everyday practice not tokenistic".

Thus, the findings discussed regarding the reformed National Curriculum highlight the ways in which it neglects the cultural capital of students with EAL, contributing to the maintenance and reinforcement of existing inequalities in society. It is argued that, with time constraints and a lack of EAL expertise (see sections 6.2.3.3 and 6.2.3.4), teachers should not be burdened solely with the responsibility of finding ways to recognise and celebrate diversity outside of the curriculum. Rather, this thesis suggests that the National Curriculum needs to be reformed again so that it actually promotes the inclusivity and equality it purports to.

6.4 Implications for EAL policy, practice and provision

As the literature review showed, cuts to funding and a lack of centralised policies and guidance for the EAL student population has resulted in school-led support for such learners (see section 2.3.3). Although the intention of the mainstreaming approach to educating students with EAL was to promote inclusivity, the current variation in provision across schools encourages and perpetuates existing social inequalities (Flynn & Curdt-Christiansen 2018). As seen so far, the findings from the two 'low-incidence' contexts of this study suggest that supporting their students with EAL was incredibly challenging due to the normalisation of English monolingualism and a lack of ethnic and cultural diversity in both the school community and the content of the National Curriculum. Without explicit prescriptions and top-down guidance for students with EAL, the findings revealed that the school leaders and teachers in both Northbridge Academy and Southgate School were challenged in making informed decisions when responding to the linguistic and pedagogical needs of their learners. This meant the schools had, understandably, as T6 put it, "not much choice beyond just getting them into lessons". Nevertheless, leadership teams in these contexts need to be proactive in avoiding the assimilationist practices of the past so that EAL learners do not fade into the background. Accordingly, sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 will propose recommendations that seek to address particular issues that arose from the data regarding policy, practice, and provision for students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts.

6.4.1 Teacher training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The issues regarding the lack of EAL expertise and experience in the teachers of this study (see sections 6.2.3.3 and 6.2.3.4) provide a clear rationale for improving EAL training in both ITT and CPD, particularly in 'low-incidence' areas.

Aware of their significant role in supporting all students in their schools, the teachers in this study wanted to do their best for their EAL cohorts. Certainly, they were not willing participants in restricting the linguistic proficiency and development of their students with EAL and thus reproducing societal inequalities (Bourdieu 1991). However, as Flynn (2013: 238) points out, "wanting to 'do the right thing' is not the same as knowing how to do the right thing or even being in a position to do the right thing". Indeed, the teachers' positioning as educators was restricted by a range of factors, including a lack of EAL experience in the contexts in which they had taught, the absence of effective training in EAL pedagogy and practising in an education system with a curriculum based on assumptions of English monolingualism. These issues had moulded the teachers' habitus (i.e., beliefs and dispositions), which brings with it doxa that, although not fixed, are difficult to shift (Bourdieu (1977b). This highlights the need for improvements to ITT, as increasing awareness of EAL issues at the beginning of a teacher's career could help to prevent the development of misconceptions and unquestioned beliefs (i.e., doxa) regarding students with EAL.

The findings of this study also provide evidence for concerns over the shift from university-led training to School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT), as the lack of expertise within the two 'low-incidence' contexts meant it was not possible for good practice to be disseminated to trainee teachers (e.g., T18) that were learning 'on the job' (Murakami 2008; Graf 2011; Sharples 2016). Therefore, although it may be difficult in practice, a mandatory requirement for trainee teachers to spend part of their ITT in a school with a high EAL population and teacher expertise would be extremely beneficial, as it would likely increase their awareness of good practice, provision, and pedagogical strategies for students with EAL.

For teachers already practising in 'low-incidence' contexts, counteracting their beliefs and dispositions that have been moulded over time is likely to take a great deal of awareness training through CPD. The findings suggest this may be particularly important for English monolingual teachers as they lacked experience and understanding of EAL and multilingualism, with some holding deficit beliefs about EAL learners (see section 6.2.3). However, in an era defined by severe cuts to funding and no governmental centralised policies or guidance for students with EAL, the current school-led approach means senior leadership teams need to be autonomous in implementing effective CPD for their workforce. Crucially, though, this is less likely to be prioritised in 'low-incidence' contexts as other issues are

foregrounded (e.g., SEN students) against small EAL cohorts that are unlikely to affect the schools' performances in league tables. Furthermore, in these schools, the findings suggest that investment in increasing teachers' professional capital through additional training is affected by the extent to which they feel it is relevant and practical for their everyday practice. Of course, EAL strategies that are effective in a mainstream classroom with a high percentage of EAL learners may not work in 'low-incidence' contexts and the findings demonstrated that using differentiated strategies and resources for just one student with EAL in a class was an incredible feat for the teachers. With this in mind, I argue that it would be unrealistic to expect 'low-incidence' schools to prioritise EAL training for *all* teachers. Instead, there is an argument for upskilling Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) in these contexts as they can help to provide a "funnel through which the work could be set" in the mainstream classroom, as suggested by T7. Furthermore, without the support from consultants from the council's EAL service, effectively trained HLTAs would be useful substitutes for new arrivals with EAL to be partially withdrawn from their timetable to develop their English. HLTAs would also have the added benefit of being able to liaise with teachers to help develop the learners' subject specific language (i.e., CALP) of the mainstream curriculum in these sessions.

Indeed, the findings of this study, as well as previous research, highlight how important it is that attention is directed to developing the language of students with EAL so that they can successfully access the curriculum (Cummins 1981; Gibbons 1991; Strand & Hessel 2018; Hessel & Strand 2020; see section 6.2.2). As previously shown, though, language is increasingly being recognised as a key factor in the academic success of *all* students, not just those with EAL (Roessingh 2016). Data collected at both schools suggests they were aware of this as recent CPD sessions had focused on developing the literacy levels of all learners, which had included Beck, Mckeown & Kucan's (2002; 2008) three tiers framework. Many teachers were observed implementing this training when introducing new vocabulary in lessons by explaining the pronunciation, morphemes, meaning and context in which it would be used. This is an example of good practice in the mainstream classroom as it creates a 'language-conscious pedagogy' that would have a positive impact on the linguistic capital of *all* learners (Gibbons 1991). In these 'low-incidence' contexts, this highlights how teacher training on strategies that consider the linguistic needs of *all* learners (rather than differentiation for just one student) may be an effective solution for improving the mainstream learning for students with EAL.

However, it is concerning that teachers in the maths and science departments at both schools reported that they would focus on developing the CALP specific to their subject areas, which meant occasionally overlooking literacy errors by students with EAL (see section 5.3.1.1).

This finding suggests that responsibility for developing the literacy of EAL learners is weighted more heavily on English teachers in these schools as spelling, punctuation and grammar undoubtedly underpin success in this subject area. However, I would argue that this is problematic as the findings have demonstrated that students' linguistic capital can affect their academic attainment in all subjects, not just English. Thus, a collective and collaborative effort across the teaching staff in improving the English literacy of their students with EAL would certainly enhance their chances at success in all subjects.

6.4.2 'Settling in': recommendations for supporting new arrivals with EAL

The crucial absence of expertise and experience in both Northbridge and Southgate resulted in a lack of cohesive and consistent provision and support for the arrival of new students with EAL. Issues with the process of these learners 'settling in' included a lack of information, the dismantlement of the council's EAL service, the practice of setting, and the 'buddy' system.

6.4.2.1 Assessing the English proficiencies of new arrivals

In both schools, the data highlighted how the arrival of a new student with EAL was daunting for both the learner and the teachers supporting them; this was exacerbated by a lack of information, an issue that was explored in section 6.2.1. As seen, it is vital that teachers have a clear picture of the complex linguistic, cultural and ethnic identity of a new student with EAL as it can be key to adjustments to provision, curriculum delivery and support (Hutchinson 2018). This provides a rationale for improving intake documentation and procedures for new arrivals in these contexts. Although it is no longer mandatory (as of 2018) to report on the English language proficiency of their students with EAL, assessing new arrivals using the Department for Education English Proficiency Scales (DfE 2020b) and categorising them according to their stage of English acquisition would initially provide teachers with more information that they could use to implement teaching strategies and support (NALDIC 2018). As research has found that the level of English proficiency in a student with EAL is central to understanding their achievement, the use of the scales for internal purposes could be extremely beneficial to schools such as those in this study (Strand & Hessel 2018; Hessel & Strand 2020; Strand & Lindorff 2020). However, without a trained EAL lead or department and considering the dismantlement of the council's EAL service, this is extremely challenging for these schools in 'low-incidence' contexts, even though they were keen to improve their EAL provision. Therefore, implementing the use of the scales requires strong school leadership, as well as action and support initiated at a higher level- either governmental or local authority- in order to provide external guidance, staff training and funding for improving information on arrival.

That being said, the findings suggest that Northbridge had demonstrated potential for good practice in the additional information that was circulated via email regarding the cultural, religious and migration background of their first Syrian refugee student in 2018 (see section 5.3.2.1). Adaptation to their new school environment was also supported by extra provision, including a course of free withdrawal sessions and increased family-school communication, which was aided by a translator, the EAL service and additional funding due to the nature of the students' 'forced migration' circumstances (see section 5.3.2.4). Although, ideally, this should have been complemented with sufficient staff training, additional information and provision meant teachers were more sensitive to the learners' backgrounds and could help them adjust to their new school environment (and wider community) (Peterson, Meehan & Durrant 2017). It had also been a "learning curve" (T4) for the staff as it had, to an extent, increased their awareness of good practice for students with EAL.

6.4.2.2 Intensive English development through partial withdrawal

The findings above demonstrate the invaluable nature of the external support from the council's EAL service in these 'low-incidence' contexts. Indeed, reports from both teachers and students in this study recognised that partial withdrawal from the mainstream classroom to work a consultant from the service was extremely beneficial for linguistic development, which helped to relieve anxiety for both the students with EAL and teachers in the mainstream classroom. Although the idea behind the mainstreaming approach to students with EAL was to promote inclusivity and to avoid the racist and discriminatory practices of the 'withdrawal period' of the mid 1960s-70s (Costley 2014; see section 2.2.3.3), the findings suggest that one-to-one intervention with an external EAL specialist is necessary, particularly in settings such as those in this study where mainstream classroom teachers lacked EAL expertise and experience. Furthermore, intensive investment in their language development in the early stages of their arrival could be crucial to their academic achievement in the long run (Hutchinson 2018). Therefore, the dismantlement of the North Yorkshire EAL and GRT service is, as the assistant headteacher at Southgate described it, "absolutely disgraceful" (section 5.3.2.4) and the extent to which it will impede the English language development for EAL learners in the area cannot be understated.

As seen, in some schools that are more accustomed to dealing with EAL learners, dedicated departments or internal specialist teachers can effectively support their arrival (Chen 2009; Cunningham 2012; Payne 2017). However, the findings revealed that the removal of support from the EAL service left the SENCos at Northbridge and Southgate solely in charge of EAL provision, which, as already stated, is problematic as it can contribute to the confusion of learning and language needs (Reece 2018). Thus, if the responsibility for EAL provision in these contexts is going to continue to be overseen by the SENCos at each school (which seems

likely, as they have been left with little choice), their title should reflect this. Furthermore, undergoing specific EAL training could help them to counteract the loss of guidance and advice from the council and provide effective partial withdrawal procedures for new arrivals.

6.4.2.3 Ongoing assessment to make informed and effective setting decisions

Upskilling SENCos could also help to establish coherent policies for new arrivals, rather than relying on ad hoc arrangements. As seen, one of the first issues to arise when a new student with EAL enters a school is the question of which set to place them into. Despite evidence that suggests it can be problematic, detrimental and inequitable (Burris & Welner 2005; Higgins et al. 2015; Steenbergen-Hu, Makel & Olszewski-Kubilius 2016; Arnot et al. 2018), the practice of setting is almost universally adopted in secondary schools as it has the benefit of enabling teaching to match with students' needs and abilities (Francis et al 2016). However, the practice was an area of concern in the maths department at Northbridge as, due to a lack of EAL experience and expertise, Mahmood was placed into the lowest set alongside an overwhelming number of SEN students (see section 5.3.2.2), which contributes to the positioning of EAL learners as deficit and impacts equality of opportunity (Reece 2018; Mehmedbegović et al. 2018). In contrast, many of the other teacher participants recognised that placing students with EAL in a higher set and sitting them next to an 'articulate' student that acts as a linguistic 'role model' can help them to develop their English (Arnot et al. 2014). Still, rather than a 'blanket' policy of placing new arrivals in higher sets, Anderson et al. (2016) argue that decisions should be made with careful consideration of the individual needs of an EAL learner and be based on ongoing assessment of their learning. In 'low-incidence' contexts that lack a designated EAL specialist, a SENCo should oversee this responsibility in collaboration with subject leads and teachers to make informed and effective setting decisions.

6.4.2.4 Careful and considered 'buddy' selection

The induction process for new students with EAL at both Northbridge and Southgate also included deciding on a 'buddy' to pair them with, as both schools recognised this could ease the emotional turmoil and adjustment associated with settling into a new school environment. In both schools, buddies were usually selected on the basis of having a shared L1 with the new arrival (see sections 5.2.1.2 and 5.3.2.2), which is likely to have been based on an expectation of the buddies to act as 'language brokers' (Cline, Crafter & Prokopiou 2014). In the two 'low-incidence' school contexts, finding another student that shared the same L1 as a new arrival would sometimes have been challenging. However, the findings revealed that this criterion may be problematic anyway as it does not mean a student makes an ideal buddy (see Tatiana's experience in section 5.2.1.2) Therefore, an alternative may be Angelica's suggestion that buddies could be a student with EAL but do not necessarily need to share the same L1. Indeed, research has suggested that friendships with other students with EAL can be an important

source of social capital due to their shared form of identity that creates a sense of solidarity and security (Devine 2009; Anderson et al. 2016; Hall 2019). Furthermore, due to their own experiences, a buddy with EAL could provide support and knowledge for a new arrival when challenges arise, easing the process of integration into the school community (Arnot et al. 2014).

6.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has explored the findings from the 'low-incidence' contexts in this study. As they deviated from the English monolingual 'norm', the student participants with EAL in this study faced difficulty in navigating an education context, National Curriculum and teaching practices that failed to cater to their specific linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Thus, supporting these learners in adapting to their new educational environment and achieving academic success was incredibly challenging for the school leaders and teachers. Together, these issues resulted in recommendations for improving teacher training and practical suggestions for policy, practice and provision to support the arrival of new students with EAL in 'low-incidence' schools.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter will conclude this thesis by summarising the study and addressing the research questions through a discussion of the research journey, and subsequently drawing conclusions from the project's findings. Consequently, it will outline the original contributions of this project to the field of EAL education, followed by a critical reflection on its limitations and recommendations for further research. The chapter concludes with final thoughts and reflections on the project.

7.2 Thesis summary

7.2.1 The research journey

The literature review at the beginning of this thesis contextualised this project by exploring the education system in England and how, in the last 70 years, it has struggled to respond effectively to increased cultural and linguistic diversity within schools and classrooms caused by migration to the UK, and by the growth of more substantial second-generation minority communities. As seen, a vast range of research has led to the suggestion that the academic achievement of a student with EAL in England is strongly influenced by their level of English proficiency[11]. A range of linguistic issues that had arisen from the literature were explored, including the 'monolingual mindset', the language of schooling, the role of translanguaging practices, and concerns over what is seen as a linguistically challenging and culturally narrow National Curriculum. An exploration of previous research suggested that schools with higher EAL populations that are more accustomed to linguistic diversity have developed a range of provision and strategies for supporting such learners experiencing these issues[12]. However, in 'low-incidence' contexts (i.e., areas with a thin distribution of students with EAL), the few studies conducted in both primary (Flynn 2013; Hamilton 2013) and secondary schools (Cline et al. 2002; Murakami 2008) revealed distinct challenges for both practitioners and learners.

Considering the current climate of cuts to funding and a lack of overarching, cohesive guidance for EAL learners unearthed in Chapter 2, this study aimed to extend existing knowledge of 'low-incidence' contexts through a contemporary investigation of how policy

[11] (e.g., Demie & Strand 2006; Wyness 2011; Hollingworth & Mansaray 2012; Demie 2013a; Strand, Malmberg & Hall 2015; Demie 2016, 2017, 2018; Schneider & Arnot 2018; Strand & Hessel 2018; DfE 2019c; Hessel & Strand 2020)

[12] (e.g., Martin-Jones & Saxena 2003; Conteh 2007; Reynolds 2008; Burcham 2009; Chen 2009; Cunningham 2012; Kaneva 2012; Sharples 2016; Payne 2017; Reece 2018)

is enacted in practice, exploring both teacher and learner accounts of their experiences in secondary school contexts. The two questions that guided this project were:

1. How do students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts perceive their school experiences in the UK in terms of:
    - Language, accessing the curriculum, and support?
    - Opportunities to develop and express their developing and changing identities?
2. How do teachers and other staff members perceive their experiences of teaching and supporting these students with EAL?

A constructivist approach was adopted in order to address these research questions, which included qualitative methods of data collection (classroom observations, diary recordings, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups) within two secondary schools in North Yorkshire. As shown in Chapter 4, the sample of participants included students with EAL at Northbridge Academy (n=8) and Southgate School (n=9) to address RQ1, as well as 18 staff members, including school leaders, teachers and a consultant from the council's EAL service to address RQ2.

The methodological choices within this study were carefully considered. As we have seen, the two research sites were selected on the basis of their small EAL student populations; just 2% at Northbridge Academy and just under 6% at Southgate School were recorded as having EAL at the time of data collection in 2019-2020. These figures are considerably lower than the national average of 17.1% of students in secondary schools in the same year (DfE 2020a). Without national strategies and centralised policies, a case study of two 'low-incidence' schools within the same Local Authority provided an opportunity to make comparisons between them in terms of their individual approaches to provision and support for their EAL learners. Significant weight was attached to the voices of both staff and students with EAL in these settings in order to triangulate multiple perspectives to create a holistic, detailed overview of the cases.

Thematic analysis of the rich data yielded from the methods was presented in Chapter 5, with 2 overarching themes and 9 sub-themes related to RQ1 and 3 overarching themes and 10 sub-themes related to RQ2. These findings and research questions were considered in a discussion in Chapter 6 in relation to existing literature explored in Chapter 2 and poststructuralist theoretical frameworks of language and identity presented in Chapter 3.

7.2.2 Conclusions drawn from findings

Sections 7.2.2.1-7.2.2.5 will address conclusions drawn from the findings, demonstrating how they extend knowledge within the existing field of research into students with EAL in the education system in England, particularly in 'low-incidence' contexts.

7.2.2.1 The challenge of accessing an inherently monolingual curriculum in an 'English only' classroom

Unsurprisingly, language was a key aspect of the experiences of the students with EAL in this study. Due to the nature of their educational contexts, the student participants were often the only one in their class learning and interacting through EAL. Bourdieu's (1977b) theory of practice had been a useful framework for uncovering the inequalities within these classrooms; as seen, the level of linguistic capital required to access the curriculum and achieve academic success presented a challenge for *all* learners, not just those with EAL. However, in accordance with previous research, the findings revealed that the level of English proficiency required was particularly challenging for students that arrived later to their education in North Yorkshire and were in the early stages of English acquisition.

The challenge of accessing the curriculum was exacerbated further for students with EAL by the teachers' unfamiliarity with EAL and multilingualism due to a lack of experience, training and expertise. This resulted in a dominant 'monolingual mindset' and implicit 'English only' policy in the mainstream classroom, where pedagogy, practice and delivery of the NC was designed for the FLE students that made up the majority of the class. Thus, developing the linguistic repertoire of the only student with EAL in a lesson was subsumed by priorities dictated by a highly prescriptive curriculum and testing requirements. Consequently, those students with EAL that demonstrated motivation and autonomy over their investment in developing their English were more successful in accessing the curriculum.

Student participants had also recognised that investment in their English linguistic capital was crucial for a sense of belonging in the school context as it could be exchanged for social capital in the form of friendships.

7.2.2.2 The dominant, subtractive influence of English on the linguistic practices and identities of the students with EAL

Although English is positioned as the 'legitimate language' in wider society and the education system in England in general, the pervasive promotion of English in the two institutional contexts in this study had had a significant impact on the linguistic practices and identities of the students with EAL. The findings suggest that the student participants' academic experiences in an 'English only' classroom and social experiences of feeling 'othered' and

excluded by their FLE peers had imposed a 'monolingual mindset' on the students with EAL in the school context. This resulted in the students with EAL displaying 'split identities' by compartmentalising their English language at school and L1 at home.

However, the findings did reveal that the Fijian students at Southgate and Nepalese students at Northbridge had used expletives and insults in their first languages in order to bond with their peers at school. These translanguaging practices suggest an implicit awareness in these students of how linguistic capital can be exchanged for social capital in certain contexts (Bourdieu 1991). Crucially, though, the Fijians and Nepalese participants had derived confidence to use their L1, resist monolingualism, and express a certain identity from a sense of solidarity with peers from the same linguistic background. In contrast, for the rest of the student participants, not having this shared form of linguistic identity with others was an isolating experience. Reports from these students about being annoyed at requests to speak in their L1 and some choosing to stay silent in the classroom suggest a fear of being perceived as different to the English monolingualism 'norm' at school.

Indeed, the normalisation of a 'monolingual mindset' at school had had a subtractive influence on the first languages of all student participants. As well as affecting their sense of belonging to their cultural and familial heritage, this form of linguicism deprived the students of linguistic capital in the form of multilingualism and their ability to express their identity through their full linguistic repertoire. This reveals how the 'rules of the game' (i.e., logic of practice) within these specific contexts may limit the parameters of the social and educational possibilities of students with EAL (Bourdieu 1991).

Altogether, the language issues that arose from the findings of this study provide original contributions to our understanding of how students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts face challenges of learning, identity and belonging that their English monolingual peers do not struggle with in the same way.

7.2.2.3 The challenge of developing biculturalism in an ethnically and culturally narrow environment

As well as their use of EAL and multilingualism, there were a range of other individual and contextual factors that influenced the student participants' diverse identities in their educational contexts and wider community, including their culture, ethnicity and nationality.

The findings revealed how the Fijian students at Southgate had displayed confidence and motivation in maintaining their cultural heritage due to the influence of family networking and the sense of belonging they derived from this group membership. In contrast, others had found simultaneously developing membership of two different cultural groups difficult, which

sometimes caused conflict with their parents that were keen for them to retain their cultural heritage. The findings suggest that the students' investment in developing and managing their biculturalism was strongly linked to their national identity and affiliation to theirs or their parents' country of origin as an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991; Norton 2013).

The student participants' sense of belonging had also been destabilised by experiences related to their ethnic identity within their predominantly white schools, instigated by the content of their history and English curriculums, as well as incidents of bullying. Worryingly, the findings suggested that the student and teacher perceptions of racism at school were different: whereas the teacher participants saw it as 'casual racism', it had clearly negatively impacted the feelings of social inclusion for the students with EAL.

7.2.2.4 The one-way transfer of culture through the National Curriculum

Teachers need to be aware of the complexities and conflicts in the ethnic and cultural identities of their students with EAL as it may affect the learners' feelings of belonging to the school community, which can impact their engagement in learning and academic achievement. Indeed, the classroom is not simply an environment where knowledge is transmitted or where students are socialised into education; it should be a place where a student's history, culture and ethnicity are valued so that they feel secure in their identity. However, the teachers in this study recognised that the content of the National Curriculum was failing in this respect. Aligning with other critics in the field of education, the English, history and maths curricula were perceived as upholding the norm as 'white', 'British' and 'English-speaking', which questions the legitimacy and value of the identities of students with EAL. By positioning these learners as the 'other', not just linguistically but also ethnically and culturally, the NC maintains an unquestioned hierarchy of dominance. Thus, it was argued that the reformed NC acts as a form of 'symbolic violence' by pushing assimilationist ideologies, which normalises the status quo (Bourdieu 1990).

Although the school leaders and teachers in both schools were constrained by the NC in the classroom, both schools had attempted to implement extracurricular solutions for celebrating diversity. Whereas teachers at Northbridge recognised this had declined in recent years and they needed to do more, senior staff at Southgate were making conscious and concerted efforts to use assemblies and tutor time to raise awareness of other cultures. This included the National Fiji Day celebrations that teachers and some students with EAL felt could help to reduce racism and xenophobia in the school. However, as seen, these one-off celebratory days can be seen as tokenistic and can contribute to the 'othering' of students with EAL. Therefore, although there may be no straightforward strategy for a diverse and inclusive curriculum that works in all educational contexts, the findings of this study make a strong argument for the

NC to be reformed again so that everyday practice can take the linguistic, cultural and ethnic identities of students with EAL into account.

7.2.2.5 The lack of EAL policy, practice and provision: implications and recommendations

As the literature review had discussed, the mainstreaming approach to educating students with EAL in England emerged from criticisms of the previous withdrawal policy that considered it to be unequal treatment that was based on differences between learners. Thus, the move to bring EAL learners back into the mainstream classroom was to address critiques of educational policy on the grounds of racism and prejudice with the idea of equal and consistent learning for *all* students. However, as seen, in recent years there has been a decline in policies seeking to address the needs of students with EAL, including the removal of both ringfenced funding and the mandatory requirement to report data on the English proficiencies of such learners (Costley 2014). The absence of centralised policies and guidance has led to a school-led approach, which means provision and support for students with EAL varies from school to school. The findings of this study highlight how this puts the academic achievement and social inclusion of EAL learners in 'low-incidence' contexts at risk.

School leaders and teachers at both schools had concerns over the extent to which they could support their EAL cohorts due a range of issues, including the lack of information provided on arrival, deciding which sets to place new EAL students into and a lack of EAL expertise and experience amongst the staff. The latter finding echoed concerns of other stakeholders that both ITT and CPD fail to sufficiently prepare practitioners for the reality of teaching students with EAL, particularly in 'low-incidence' contexts. With no designated EAL lead in either school and the dismantlement of the council's EAL service, this range of issues made teacher participants feel professionally inadequate in the face of a student with EAL that challenged their pedagogical norms. As seen, this range of issues can be likened to the ad hoc arrangements and lack of expertise in teachers in the 'assimilation' period of EAL education in England in the 1950s to mid-1960s (Costley 2014).

Consequently, despite the rhetoric of inclusion that permeates government educational policies, the reality of EAL practice within two schools is revealed in this study. This reality highlights the ways in which students with EAL in these contexts are disadvantaged and disempowered by the social structures they are operating within. Thus, although it was logical and understandable that the schools prioritised support and teacher training for other learners (such as those with SEN), the findings provide a clear rationale for improving training on EAL pedagogy and practice in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and Continuing Professional

Development (CPD). Furthermore, a range of recommendations were made that could help to address the needs of students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts:

- improving student intake procedures by reintroducing the Department for Education English Proficiency Scales (DfE 2020b) for internal purposes
- changing the job title of SENCos to reflect their EAL responsibility
- upskilling Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) to help develop the English of students with EAL both in the mainstream classroom and in partial withdrawal sessions
- ongoing assessment of EAL learners to make informed and effective setting decisions
- careful and considered 'buddy' selection

Although these recommendations could go some way in improving the support and education for students with EAL in these contexts, the findings of this project have demonstrated that the current school-led approach is ineffective and encourages "potential for an uneven playing field" (Flynn & Curdt-Christiansen 2018: 414). Thus, supporting arguments of previous research, this study proposes a further, contemporary argument for top-down guidance, national strategies and centralised policies for students with EAL in England.

7.3 Contributions

As Chapter 2 demonstrated, literature regarding students with EAL, how they should be taught and resulting arguments of inequalities within the education system in England is extensive. However, as seen, there is a paucity of up-to-date research that explores the experiences of both students with EAL and practitioners in 'low-incidence' contexts. Thus, drawing on multiple methods and perspective, this study contributes to existing knowledge by providing unique insights into how contemporary EAL educational policies are enacted in practice in two rural schools in North Yorkshire with small EAL populations.

As the conclusions above show, it was found that accessing the curriculum, achieving academic success and developing a sense of belonging in the school community was incredibly challenging for the students with EAL. These difficulties were intensified by the normalisation of English monolingualism in school, the crucial lack of EAL expertise and experience in the staff workforces and an absence of policy, practice and provision focusing on the EAL cohorts. Consequently, a range of recommendations were proposed, including changes to teacher training courses and practical suggestions for schools in 'low-incidence' contexts to improve the 'settling in' process for new students with EAL.

As seen, this thesis is situated within a climate of budgetary cuts, academisation of schools, an absence of centralised EAL policies and a decline in EAL expertise due to a lack of teacher

training and the dismantlement of local authority services. This increasing fragmentation of the education system in England has reduced coordination between schools, leading to variation in EAL pedagogy and support from school to school. The findings within the two 'low-incidence' contexts of this study have further highlighted the ways in which this approach to the education of students with EAL is extremely problematic. Although the students with EAL in Northbridge and Southgate may face similar challenges to those in schools with large EAL cohorts (and indeed their FLE peers), this research suggests these issues were exacerbated further by the educational context in which they were learning and socialising. This was unravelled using poststructuralist theories of language and identity: Bourdieu's (1977b) analytical toolkit (i.e., the 'logic of practice') and Norton's concept of investment (Norton Pierce 1995; Norton 2000; 2013) provided valuable interpretive instruments for uncovering the invisible and the unconscious in the two educational contexts. Exploring the findings through these lenses revealed the contextual factors and inequitable social structures that limited the parameters of the social and educational possibilities for both the students with EAL and their teachers.

Thus, this study provides a strong argument for new approaches to educating and supporting students with EAL, not just in 'low-incidence' contexts, but in the education system in England overall. The thesis acknowledges that good practice exists in pockets within this system, but EAL expertise needs to be disseminated to all contexts to avoid the inequalities uncovered in the schools in this project. That being said, the thesis has highlighted a history of slow response in governmental leadership in this field and many changes over time have been locally determined. Therefore, the study has contributed recommendations and practical suggestions for schools (particularly in 'low-incidence' contexts) to improve their EAL practice, pedagogy and support (see section 6.4). However, here lies another 'gap': although researchers in the field of EAL education and organisations like NALDIC are doing invaluable work in providing guidance, evidence-based practice, and support for teaching students with EAL, if teachers and Teacher Assistants lack time or are not directed to this support, it fails to have the desired effect. This highlights the need for collaboration between researchers and practitioners to collectively improve the standards for EAL learners in England.

7.4 Limitations

Based on the research questions and aims of the project, this study was developed carefully and contributed contemporary insights into 'low-incidence' secondary school contexts. In Chapter 4, the trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability of the study were explored (see section 4.3.5). Nevertheless, it is also important to consider the study's limitations in this concluding chapter.

Although policymakers find generalisability of research useful, the degree to which the findings of this study are transferable or applicable to other contexts was not a primary concern due to the methodological approach that was taken, as seen in Chapter 4. As a case study, the aim was to enhance understanding by providing a unique, contextualised snapshot of the experiences of the students with EAL and their teachers in two school contexts in North Yorkshire at a specific point in time. However, school leaders and teachers in other contexts may recognise similarities between themselves and participants in this study in terms of their experiences of educating and supporting students with EAL. Thus, they can draw their own conclusions about the relevance of the knowledge, recommendations, and practical suggestions within this research for their own institutional contexts.

Of course, every institutional context is distinctive, and the habitus of individuals within them is bound to differ both within and between schools. Indeed, a key theme in this field of research is the need to avoid the stereotyping of students with EAL and highlight the diversity of their cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds (Anderson et al. 2016; Conteh & Meier 2014; Leung 2014). This diversity was evident in the heterogeneous nature of the sample of student participants in this study. However, as seen in Chapter 4, the sampling process included requesting school leaders to select students with 'sufficient' levels of English to take part, based on their own judgement, which means the views of those with lower levels of English are not represented. In this small-scale study, though, this decision was based on practicalities and limitations of the project, as well as a desire to avoid further disruption for new arrivals that already face a range of issues when settling into a new school. Nevertheless, this highlights the need for further research in these areas that can explore the initial arrival and English acquisition of students with EAL.

A final point to make regarding the limitations of the study is consideration of my positionality as a researcher in this project. Recognising the underrepresentation of the voices of students with EAL and their teachers in 'low-incidence' contexts, the methods in this study enabled the experiences and perceptions of the participants to come to light. However, it is important to note that these voices have been represented within the thesis through my perspective and interpretation as the author. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that other researchers may have established different conclusions from the data.

Furthermore, my positionality is also important when considering the different relationships that I had with the two schools as research sites. As seen in section 4.2.3.1, I had completed my teacher training through a yearlong PGCE placement in Northbridge Academy prior to approaching them in the school recruitment stage of this project. This meant that a relationship built on trust had already been established, whereas I was initially a stranger to the staff and

students at Southgate School. Although this may have added credibility to the findings as my preconceived perceptions of Southgate were limited, my unfamiliarity with teachers and students may have inhibited their responses in interviews and focus groups. Though it may be difficult to assess the extent to which this may have affected the data, immersion in the contexts over a significant period of time helped me to develop a similarly strong rapport at Southgate as I had at Northbridge. Furthermore, as Chapter 4 highlighted, the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings have been strongly enhanced by triangulation of methods and perspectives and a consistent process of reflexivity, which helped me to develop a unique understanding for interpretation of the data.

7.5 Recommendations for further research

It is hoped that this study will stimulate further dialogue around students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts, including a number of avenues for future research:

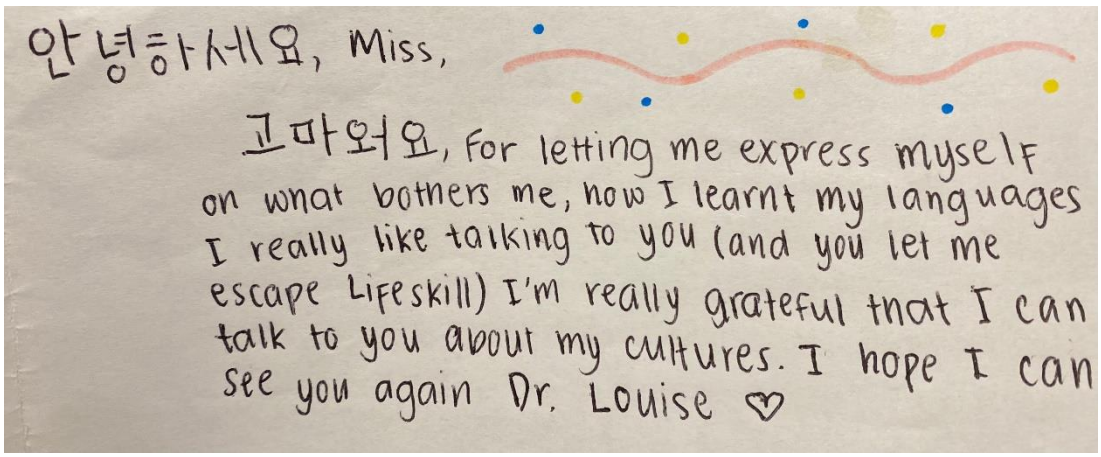
- As seen in section 6.2.1.1, the teachers at Southgate suggested that the parents of their students with EAL may have had perceptions of the 'EAL' label that affected the accuracy of intake documentation. Due to the practicalities of a small-scale study, the sampling in this project was limited to the students with EAL and staff at the schools. Thus, in future research, it may be beneficial to explore the views and perceptions of the parents of EAL learners by listening to their voices first-hand.
- As the data from students with EAL revealed attitudes of FLE students that were concerning, it may also be beneficial to explore the perceptions of English monolingual students in these contexts from their own point of view. This may produce research that can help to reduce racism and xenophobia in 'low-incidence' contexts.
- Finally, perhaps the most important and urgent research needed is an exploration of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts. In this study, the timing of the data collection period was extremely fortuitous, as it ended just before the first lockdown in the UK in 2020, which means the findings are a reflection of the two educational contexts just before the disruption of the pandemic. Considering the challenges already faced by students with EAL that are elucidated in this thesis, the impact of the pandemic on their learning and wellbeing should not be underestimated. Indeed, a conversation with a school leader at Northbridge Academy in May 2020 suggested that the emergency transition to online teaching in the first lockdown had had a critical negative impact on the progress of their students with EAL compared to other learners. This highlights the need for

in-depth academic research that explores the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the experiences of these learners and their teachers.

7.6 Final thoughts and personal reflections

As seen, despite decades of ongoing and increasing migration, the findings in the two 'low-incidence' contexts of this study highlight how the education system in England is still struggling to respond to the linguistic and cultural diversification of classrooms. This project listened to students with EAL whose needs and diverse identities have been somewhat neglected by their educational contexts. In focus groups and classroom observations, I was humbled by the particular challenges these learners face in their everyday lives that I have never experienced myself, and the ways in which they coped with them. For the teachers in this study, supporting the students with EAL was extremely challenging as they too are being let down by the specific contexts and wider education system in which they are teaching. I feel privileged to have been in a position to give all of the participants in this study a voice. Collectively, they painted a picture of a range of issues within 'low-incidence' contexts that have helped to develop our understanding of the difficulties they face from their own perspectives. This has implications for practice, pedagogy and support in other schools, as well as future research in the field of EAL education.

On a personal note, this doctoral experience has been extremely challenging, particularly following the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. However, in a professional sense, the journey has given me distinct insights into the education system that I would not otherwise have had. Above all, though, the students with EAL that generously shared their stories gifted me a unique perspective that has undoubtedly changed the way I will teach in the future. This is perfectly illustrated by the note below, in both Tagalog and English, that I received from Charlotte at Northbridge Academy at the end of data collection:



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research Proposal

Northumbria University
NEWCASTLE

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for taking the time to consider this research proposal.

My name is Louise and I am a PhD student at Northumbria University, studying in the Department of Humanities. My research is investigating the experiences of students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) in secondary schools in North Yorkshire. I have attached a proposal that outlines the background to the research, aims and objectives, indicative methodology, implications and ethical considerations.

Despite the recent increase of migration and the diversity of students within schools in the North Yorkshire area, the region has been relatively neglected in terms of research into the ways in which schools can and do support EAL students' needs. I wish to address this issue by uncovering the thoughts and perceptions that students with and their teachers hold about their school experiences, with a view to informing pedagogic practice. I am looking to identify 2 schools that will engage in the research that differ in terms of their EAL student populations.

The research is a 3-year project that began in October 2018. The plan is to collect data within the schools in the Autumn term of 2019. Prior to data collection, I would like to conduct a pilot study in the summer term in order to build trusting relationships with the students and teachers. However, I very much appreciate that my research plan needs to be flexible in order to accommodate and/or work around the school's needs.

I appreciate that this is a lot to ask of you and your school. However, I can assure you that there will be no disruption to the school or staff in terms of time, reputation or cost. Instead, the research aims to be extremely beneficial for the school as you will be contributing to new research by providing an insight into the personal experiences of your students with EAL in rural areas. Additionally, the school will receive a final copy of the research project (and also a more speedily digestible summary) that I hope will be useful for any CPD programmes you may run or develop, as well as to teachers in secondary schools across the UK.

It would be great if I could arrange a meeting with you to discuss the research and any questions/queries you may have.

Kind regards,

Louise Howitt

Language, identity and the school curriculum: challenges and opportunities for students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) in 'low-incidence' secondary school contexts.

INTRODUCTION

A good understanding of the role that schools play in the social development of students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) in the UK is critical as schools are an important location for the development of relationships between migrant populations and the community in which they live. Although students with EAL may have much in common with students with English as their first language (L1), they also have distinct and diverse needs: as well as attempting to navigate a curriculum through a language whilst also learning that language, they face social obstacles to their learning, such as the development of relationships with their peers and adjusting to a new cultural environment (Reynolds 2008).

This study will be an exploratory project that will focus on teachers' and EAL students' perceptions of these educational and social obstacles in schools with low populations of students with EAL.

BACKGROUND

There are now over 1.17 million (1 in 6) children studying through the medium of English as an Additional Language (EAL) in the UK education system (Department for Education 2016). As this figure has doubled since 1997, researchers in Applied Linguistics have been paying increasing attention to the education of students with EAL (Anderson et al. 2016). However, there are significant gaps in the literature; for example, a large amount of the research has been conducted in primary schools, meaning the experiences of EAL students in secondary schools are underrepresented. Statistics show that 15.7% of secondary school students are exposed to a non-English language at home. This rate has steadily increased over recent years, creating challenges for secondary schools in terms of pedagogy and practice.

Within North Yorkshire, EAL students belong to cohorts that have vast differences in terms of their linguistic, cultural, geographical, social and educational backgrounds (Bracken, Driver and Kadi-Hanifi 2017). They may be part of 2nd or 3rd generation migrant communities, part of a family that has migrated for economic reasons, or asylum seekers or refugees. As the demographic profiles of schools across the area are rapidly changing, there is a need for research that provides an insight into the opportunities for and obstacles to learning for students with EAL.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This study will be a non-evaluative exploratory project into the educational and social experiences of EAL students in the north east of England. The aim is to collect data in two secondary schools in close proximity that differ in terms of the size of their EAL student populations.

The study will consider the following research questions:

1. How do students with EAL in 'low-incidence' contexts perceive their school experiences in the UK in terms of:
    - Language, accessing the curriculum, and support?
    - Opportunities to develop and express their developing and changing identities?
2. How do teachers and other staff members perceive their experiences of teaching and supporting these students with EAL?

INDICATIVE METHODOLOGY

This project will be a case study of two or three secondary schools in North Yorkshire. The schools will be selected based on their differing profiles in terms of their EAL student populations. The project will be a qualitative study using a range of methods to explore the daily experiences of students with EAL and their teachers at school. Data collection will involve the following sources: semi-structured interviews with teachers, focus groups with EAL students, narrative recordings and classroom observation fieldnotes. The EAL student participants will be selected based on the aims of the study, with 15 EAL speakers ideally participating from each school. Prior to data collection, I will volunteer my time in the school as a teacher assistant in order to orient myself with the complexities of the school and to build a trusting relationship with the students and teachers.

IMPLICATIONS

This study is expected to contribute to the field of Applied Linguistics with new findings regarding the educational and social experiences of students with EAL in secondary schools in the north east of England, a region that has been relatively neglected in this area of research. The research will have significant implications for policy and practice in the provision of support for students with EAL in secondary schools not only in the northeast, but the rest of the UK too. It would draw recommendations for existing teachers, trainee teachers and teacher assistants.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to and throughout the research, extensive consideration of ethical considerations will be carried out, which includes the following:

- Ethical approval will be obtained from Northumbria University's Institutional Ethics Committee.
- Participation in the study will be voluntary and informed consent will need to be obtained from all participants.
- As the students involved in the study would be under the age of consent, parental consent will need to be obtained.
- The identities of all participants and the school will be anonymised in order to protect identities.

Appendix 2: Parental Consent Form

Northumbria University
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8ST
Email: [redacted]
Telephone: [redacted]

Dear parent/guardian,

My name is Louise, and I am a PhD student at Northumbria University. As part of a research project, I am finding out about the school experiences of secondary students whose first language is not English, and so who speak English as an 'Additional Language' (EAL). In [redacted] School, students with EAL come from a range of backgrounds and speak a variety of first languages, and my project hopes to find out students' own views about their English language needs and priorities, and their experiences in school. Ultimately, the aim of the project is to understand 'school life' for students with EAL and help schools and teachers to give students the best experience possible.

With the permission from school, your child has been invited to participate in this project. This will mean:

- Your child will be asked to keep a diary of their experiences.
- I will observe some of their classes.
- They will take part in group discussions with other students with EAL. These discussions will be recorded.

The project is only to 'observe and understand'. Students will not be judged or examined, all information (seen and heard) will be confidential and remain anonymous, and the whole process will be as open and friendly as possible. Your child will have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. All data collected will be stored safely and securely and destroyed after submission of the project.

As part of the project's design, it is clearly important that all students and their parents/carers both understand the project and its aims and agree to take part. I would be extremely grateful, therefore, if you could complete the forms below to indicate whether you understand the aims of the project and give permission for your child to participate. Please ensure that the forms are returned to reception. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details above, or contact my supervisor, Graham Hall, by email: g.hall@northumbria.ac.uk.

Best wishes,
Louise Howitt

EAL Student Research

Parental Consent Form

please tick or initial where applicable

I have carefully read and understood the information about the study.	
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study and I have received satisfactory answers.	
I understand that my child is free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason for withdrawing, and without prejudice.	
I give consent for my child to take part in this study.	
I give consent for voice recordings to be made.	
I also consent to the retention of this data under the condition that any subsequent use also be restricted to research projects that have gained ethical approval from Northumbria University.	

Name of student: ..... **Date**: .....……..
Signature of Parent / Guardian: .....
Signature of researcher: **Date**: **Name**:

Appendix 3: Student Participant Information Sheet

Department of Humanities
Northumbria University
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8ST
Email: [redacted]
Telephone: [redacted]

Date: 25/06/2019

Dear student,

My name is Louise, and I am a PhD student at Northumbria University. As part of a research project, I am finding out about the school experiences of secondary students whose first language is not English, and so who speak English as an 'Additional Language' (EAL). In [redacted] School, students with EAL come from a range of backgrounds and speak a variety of first languages, and my project hopes to find out students' own views about their English language needs and priorities, and their language-related experiences in school. Ultimately, the aim of the project is to understand 'school life' for students who speak English as an Additional Language and help schools and teachers to give students the best experience possible.

With the permission of school, I am inviting you to participate in this project, which will involve me observing some of your classes and speaking to you in a group with other students with EAL. You will also be asked to keep a diary over a few months so you can write down any of your experiences. The project is only to 'observe and understand'. You will not be judged or examined, all information (seen and heard) will be confidential and remain anonymous, and the whole process will be as open and friendly as possible.

As part of the project's design, it is clearly important that all participating students and their parents/carers both understand the project and its aims and agree to take part. Although your parent/carer has given permission for you to take part in the research, it is important that you also give verbal consent to take part in the project.

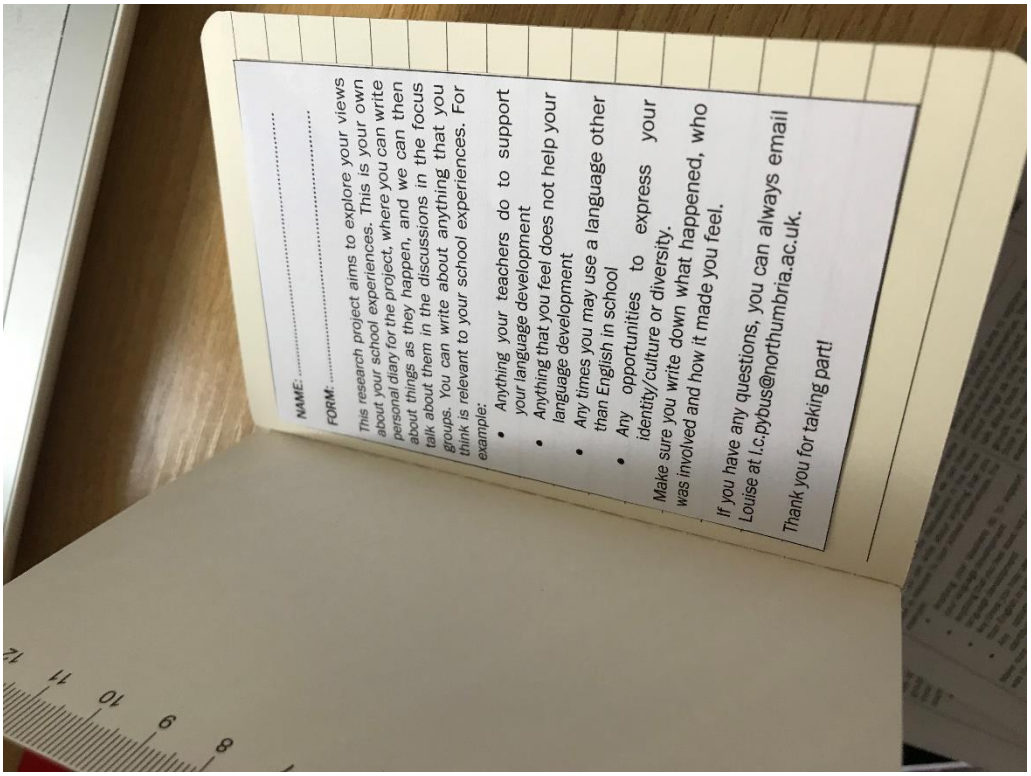
If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details above.

Best wishes,
Louise Howitt

Appendix 4: Classroom Observations Example Timetable

DATA COLLECTION NORTHBRIDGE TIMETABLE WEEK 2 23rd- 27th September 2019					
	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1	**9.15-10.20** English Mahmood (8)	**9.15-10.20** Interview T4	**9.15-10.20** Maths Rohan & Charlotte (10)	**9.15-10.20** Interview T6	**9.15-10.20** Physics Rohan, Yojana & Charlotte (10)
2	**10.20-11.20** Maths Yojana (10)	**10.40-11.40** English Dominik (8)	**10.20-10.40 & 11.00-11.40** Maths Tatiana (9)	**10.20-10.40 & 11.00-11.40** Maths Jaysha (9)	**10.40-11.40** German Dominik (8)
3	**11.40-12.50** English Rohan, Yojana & Charlotte (10)	**11.20-12.20** German Jaysha (9)	**11.40-12.50** Media Studies Rohan & Yojana (10)	**11.40-12.50** Interview Mahmood (8)	**11.40-12.50** Science Mahmood (8)
4	**12.50-13.20 & 13.50-14.25** English Mi-Sun (9)	**12.50-13.50** Maths Mahmood (8)	**12.50-13.20 & 13.50-14.25** Biology Mi-Sun (9)	**13.20-14.25** History Dominik (8)	**12.50-13.20 & 13.50-14.25** Maths Mi-Sun (9)
5	**14.25-15.30** Biology Jaysha (9)	**13.50-14.30** Focus Group 2: Jaysha, Mi-Sun & Tatiana (9)	**14.25-15.30** Interview T5	**14.25-15.30** History Yojana (10)	**14.25-15.30** Biology Rohan, Yojana & Charlotte (10)

Appendix 5: Student Diaries



NAME: .....

FORM: .....

This research project aims to explore your views about your school experiences. This is your own personal diary for the project, where you can write about things as they happen, and we can then talk about them in the discussions in the focus groups. You can write about anything that you think is relevant to your school experiences. For example:

- Anything your teachers do to support your language development
- Anything that you feel does not help your language development
- Any times you may use a language other than English in school
- Any opportunities to express your identity/culture or diversity.

Make sure you write down what happened, who was involved and how it made you feel.

If you have any questions, you can always email Louise at l.c.pybus@northumbria.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking part!

Appendix 6: Teacher Interview Questions

Background info

- Can you describe your role?
    - Subject specialism?
    - How long have you been teaching?
    - When did you do your initial teacher training?
    - How long have you been in this school?
- How would you describe the school and its setting?
- Have you had much experience teaching/interacting with students with English as an Additional Language?
- What does the term 'EAL' mean to you? What are your first thoughts about a student with 'EAL'?
- How do you think your own background/upbringing/experiences affect how you teach EAL students?

Arrival

- What happens in the school when you have a new student with EAL?
    - How do you find out about them?
    - What information are you given about them?
    - How is it decided what set they go into?
- When they first arrive in your classroom, how do you decide where to place them?
    - If left to their own devices, where do they sit? E.g., have you observed them every gravitating towards other EAL students?
- How long do you think it takes them to settle in?
- Do you have any experience of communicating with the students' parents?
- Who would you go to for advice regarding an EAL student?

In the classroom

- What are your perceptions of the needs of students with EAL in the classroom?
- What challenges have you faced when teaching EAL students?
    - What difficulties do they face in the classroom?
        - (Teachers' spoken language? Accents?)
- What do you think restricts you in terms of supporting EAL students?
- What strategies have you used for EAL students?
    - How much do you differentiate for them?
    - What activities do you think they prefer?
    - Have you ever translated resources into a student's home language(s)?
    - How do you think your perceptions and attitudes towards EAL students affects your pedagogical approaches?
- To what extent do you think their cultural background influences their education here?
- To what extent do you think the curriculum supports students with EAL?
    - (e.g., language, social, cultural, diversity)
- To what extent do you think EAL students can be a resource for education? (i.e., teaching other students about culture and language)
- How do you think assessment benefits or disadvantages EAL students?

Literacy

- How do you think their literacy levels affect their learning in your subject?
- Have you used any strategies for improving literacy in your subject or across the school?
- Have you/would you correct a student's SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) in their exercise book? How confident would you feel in doing this?
- How do you feel about identifying a potential SEN in a student with EAL?

Use of first language(s) & language learning

- To what extent do you allow them to use their first language(s) in the classroom?
    - (Written/spoken)
- How do feel about the use of their first language(s)?
- To what extent do you think the L1 can affect second language learning?
    - Does it interfere or help?
- How do you think the levels of literacy in the student's home language(s) can affect second language learning and academic success?
- What do you think are the best ways for learning another language?

Outside the classroom

- How do EAL students get on outside of the classroom?
- How do they get on socially?
- Do you have any clubs/prayer rooms/additional support?
- Do you think the process of arrival and settling in is easier for girls or boys?

Training

- In your initial teacher training (ITT), did you receive any training on teaching students with EAL?
- Have you had any training since your ITT? (E.g., CPD)
- How do you think CPD could help?
- What would you like to learn more about with regards to EAL students?

Leadership Staff Questions

- Who oversees the provision for EAL students?
- How have you used the council's EAL service to support the students?
- How do you feel about your current support for EAL students?
- (If they feel restricted) Ideally, what would you like to do for the EAL students if you weren't restricted?
- What CPD would you like to run for the staff on EAL students? What do you think would be effective?

Appendix 7: EAL Service Consultant Interview Questions

Background info

- How long have you been in this job role?
- What did you do before this role?
- How did you end up in this role?
- How do you understand 'EAL'?

The role of a consultant

- How would you describe your role in supporting schools and EAL students?
- What initial assessments do you make?
- How long would you support a student with EAL?
- How do you support them?
- How do you support other staff to work with EAL students?
- What are your perceptions of the needs of students with EAL in the classroom?
- What strategies do you recommend for EAL students? (Use of L1?)
- Can you tell me about any training you have done with staff in schools?

Challenges

- What kinds of students with EAL are there in this area? (e.g., backgrounds, families etc.)
- What do you think are the biggest challenges facing EAL students in this area?
    - How long do you think it takes them to settle in? Acquire English? Make friends?
- What are your biggest challenges when supporting students with EAL in this area?
- What do you think are the biggest challenges facing schools and teachers in this area?
- What challenges do you think teachers face when teaching EAL students in the classroom?
- To what extent do you think their cultural background influences their education here?
- To what extent do you think the curriculum supports students with EAL? (e.g., language, social, cultural, diversity)
- To what extent do you think EAL students can be a resource for education? (i.e., teaching other students about culture and language)
- How do you think assessment benefits or disadvantages EAL students?
- What do you think restricts schools in terms of supporting EAL students?
    - How is it different for academies/maintained schools?
- Can you tell me about the recent dismantling of the council's EAL service?

Appendix 8: Student Focus Group Questions

Have the students written in their diaries? Is there anything they'd like to discuss?

Arrival and migration experiences

- When did you come to the UK?
- Why did you come to live in the UK?
- Where did you live before you came to the UK?
- What are your earliest memories of arriving in school in the UK?
- What were the most helpful things that teachers did when you first arrived?
- How did you get along with other students? (Inside and outside of the classroom)

Learning English

- Did you learn any English before you came to the UK? (Which 'English' did they learn?)
- How did you feel about learning English? Did learning English relieve any anxiety or discomfort?
- Did you find it easy or difficult to learn English?
- What was particularly difficult about learning English? (new alphabet?)
- How did you feel in school when you could not understand what teachers and other students were saying? (Did you employ any strategies for understanding?)
- How did you learn English?
- If you were withdrawn from the classroom (e.g., to go to learning support), how does that make you feel?
- Did you have any particular strategies? Or did teachers?
- How did you get on with homework when you were learning English?
- What were the most helpful things that teachers or other students did to help you learn English?
- Does the presence of other students with EAL provide you with some comfort and confidence?

Identity/nationality

This section will require a level of sensitivity due to the nature of the questions

- How often do you visit your family's home country?
- How often do you get opportunities to speak to friends/family in your home country?
- Do you think you may return to live there one day?
- How do you see yourself in terms of language, nationality and who you are?
- What does citizenship mean to you?
- How do you think your different identities get recognised in school?
- Do you feel different?
- What language do you think in? Dream in?

Use of English and use of L1

- What languages can you speak?
- How did you come to learn them?
- When do you use your home language and when do you use English?
- Can your parents speak English?
- If your parents/family members speak English proficiently, what reason do you have for using your own language at home?
- If your parents don't speak English, does this constrain communication with the school?
- Are there occasions where you have to translate for your parents? How does this feel?

- What do you think of education in England? What do your parents think of education in England?
- Do your parents ever help you with your homework? Do they encounter difficulties?
- On the other hand, have you noticed a lack of home language proficiency? How do you feel about this?
- Do you think in English? Or do you think in your home language and translate in your head?
- Do you ever use your home language at school?
- Do you read books at home? In English or your home language?

Literacy in L1

- Do you use your L1 in the classroom? How do your teachers feel about it? How do other students feel about it?
- Have you had any opportunities to develop/continue your literacy skills in your L1? How do you feel about this?
- Will you take your GCSEs or other examinations in L1 or English?

School experiences

- Did you make friends with other EAL students or English-only students?
- Do you ever teach your language or culture to other students? Do they ask about it? Would you like people to ask/be more interested in your language/culture?
- Do other students in school speak your language? How do you feel about this?
- Do you take part in any extra-curricular activities?
- Would you like the school to celebrate your diversity more than they do currently? (e.g., assemblies, registration, activities, dedicated days?)
- Have you experienced any negativity? (e.g., bullying, racism)
- What dreams/aspirations do you have for the future? Do your parents have similar views?

Previous education experiences

- What education have you had in your home language?
- What are your memories of school in other countries (main differences between these schools and UK schools; medium of instruction; differences in how they were taught English in those countries as opposed to being taught English in the UK)?

Classroom and learning experiences

- What difficulties do you experience in the classroom? (Teachers' spoken language? Accents?)
- How do you feel about participating in lessons?
- Which classroom activities do you find easier? (Written/discussions)
- What subjects are easier/harder? Do you find learning a foreign language easier because you've had to learn English?
- Do you find opportunities to express their cultural and social identity?

Appendix 9: Student Focus Group Episode 3 Worksheet Template

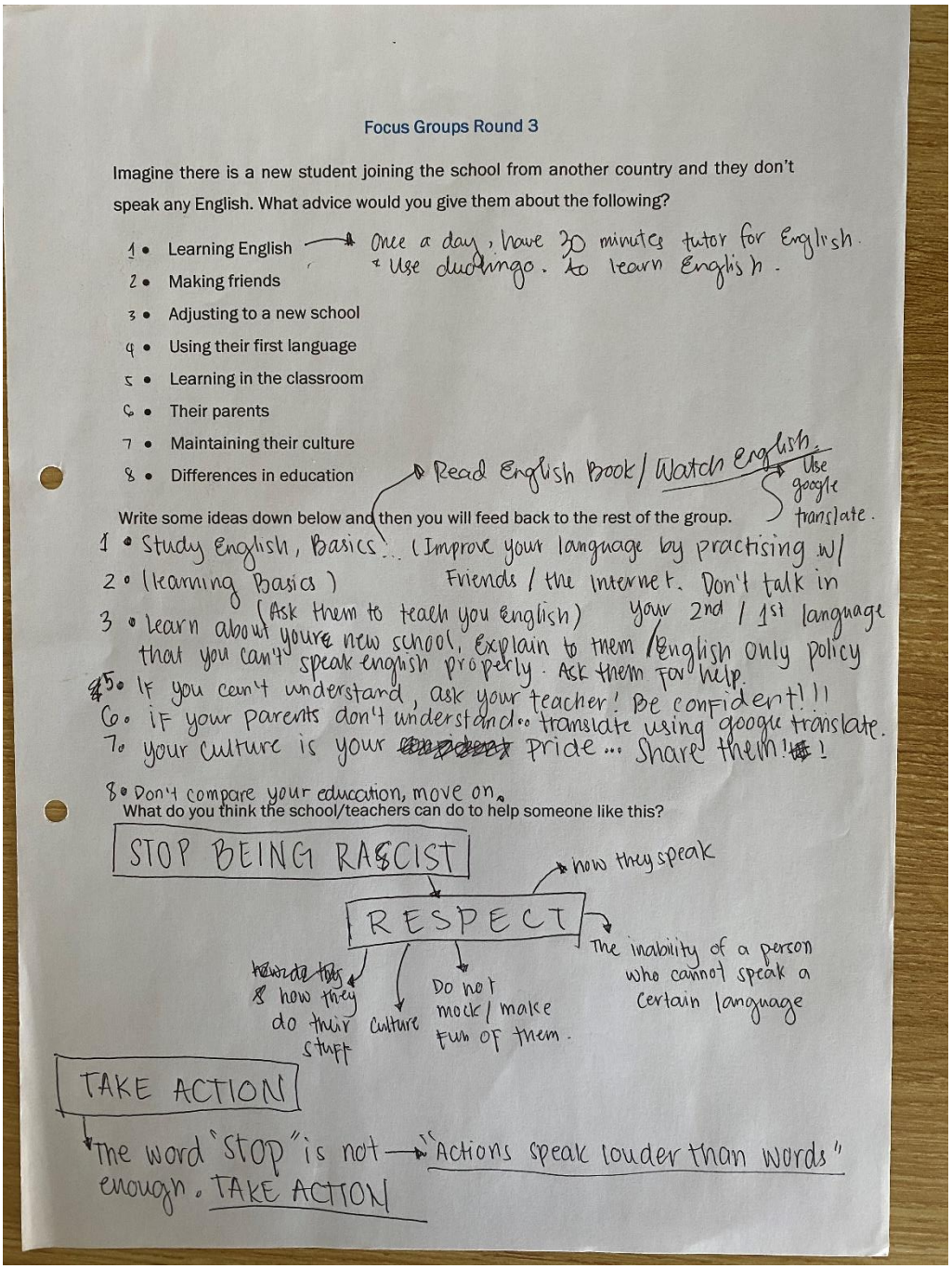
Imagine there is a new student joining the school from another country and they don't speak any English. What advice would you give them about the following?

- Learning English
- Making friends
- Adjusting to a new school
- Using their first language
- Learning in the classroom
- Their parents
- Maintaining their culture
- Differences in education

Write some ideas down below and then you will feed back to the rest of the group.

What do you think the school/teachers can do to help someone like this?

Appendix 10: Student Focus Group Episode 3 Completed Worksheets



Focus Groups Round 3

Imagine there is a new student joining the school from another country and they don't speak any English. What advice would you give them about the following?

1. Learning English → Once a day, have 30 minutes tutor for English. * Use duolingo. to learn English.
2. Making friends
3. Adjusting to a new school
4. Using their first language
5. Learning in the classroom
6. Their parents
7. Maintaining their culture
8. Differences in education → Read English Book / Watch english. Use google translate.

Write some ideas down below and then you will feed back to the rest of the group.

1. Study English, Basics... (Improve your language by practising w/ Friends / the internet. Don't talk in your 2nd / 1st language
2. (learning Basics)
3. Learn about (Ask them to teach you english) your new school, explain to them that you can't speak english properly. Ask them for help. / English only policy
5. If you can't understand, ask your teacher! Be confident!!!
6. if your parents don't understand.. translate using google translate.
7. your culture is your ~~[illegible]~~ pride... Share them!!!
8. Don't compare your education, move on.

What do you think the school/teachers can do to help someone like this?

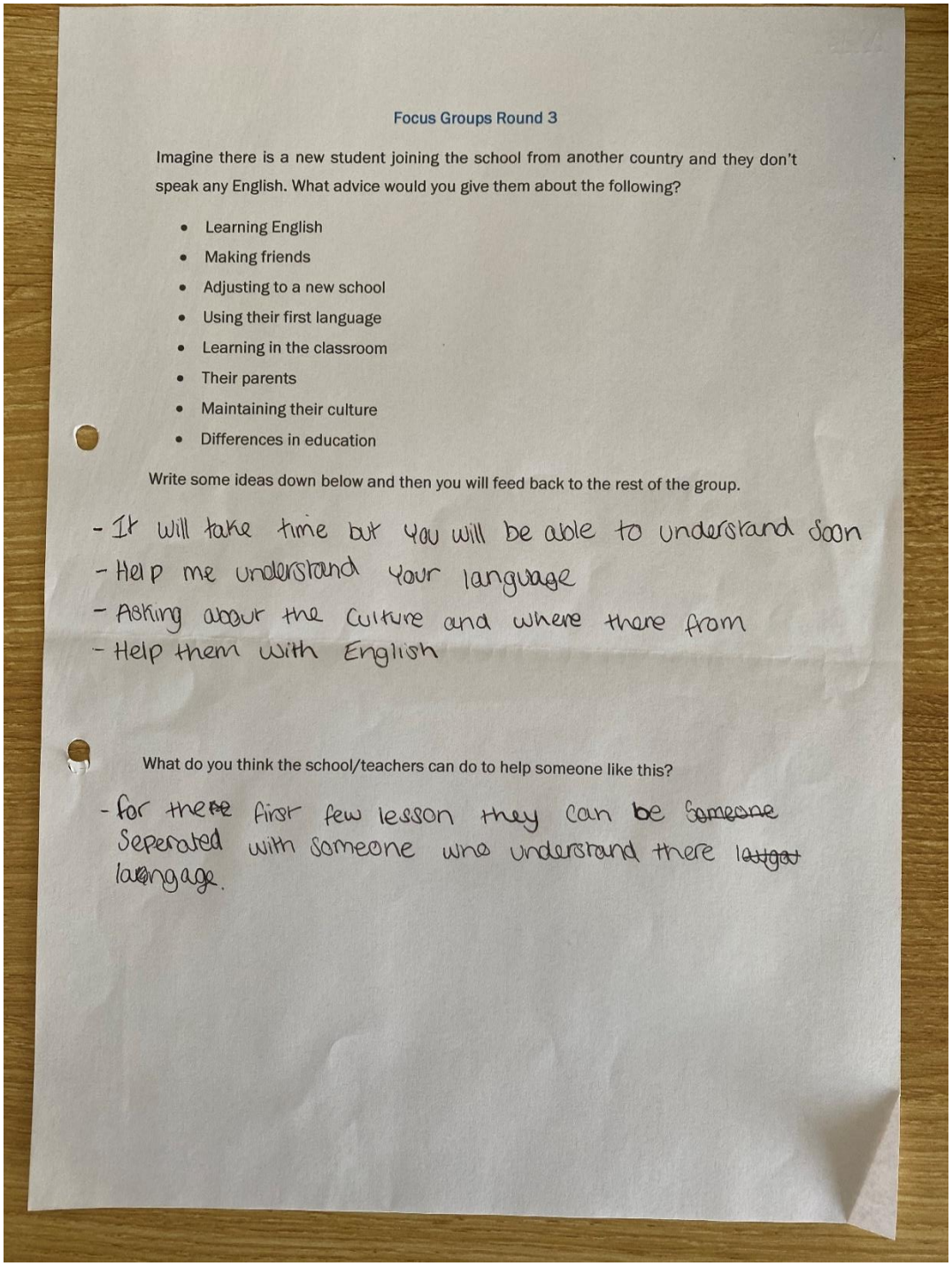
STOP BEING RACIST

RESPECT

- how they speak
- The inability of a person who cannot speak a certain language
- ~~[illegible]~~ how they do their stuff
- culture
- Do not mock / make fun of them.

TAKE ACTION

The word "STOP" is not enough. → "Actions speak louder than words" TAKE ACTION



Focus Groups Round 3

Imagine there is a new student joining the school from another country and they don't speak any English. What advice would you give them about the following?

- Learning English
- Making friends
- Adjusting to a new school
- Using their first language
- Learning in the classroom
- Their parents
- Maintaining their culture
- Differences in education

Write some ideas down below and then you will feed back to the rest of the group.

- It will take time but you will be able to understand soon
- Help me understand your language
- Asking about the culture and where there from
- Help them with English

What do you think the school/teachers can do to help someone like this?

- for the~~re~~ first few lesson they can be ~~someone~~ seperated with someone who understand there ~~lagge~~ language.

Focus Groups Round 3

Imagine there is a new student joining the school from another country and they don't speak any English. What advice would you give them about the following?

- Learning English
- Making friends - simple greeting as hi / or your name.
- Adjusting to a new school
- Using their first language
- Learning in the classroom
- Their parents
- Maintaining their culture
- Differences in education - rules, uniform, language (foreign and when to use it)

Write some ideas down below and then you will feed back to the rest of the group.

- watching tv in english or youtube tutorials on the basic steps of learning english.
- ask a teacher, friend or ~~sister~~ family member (who speaks english) to teach you.
- try joining their language with english like using a translator.
- read and try to pronounce words from books or online.
- try joining some clubs.
- buddy.

What do you think the school/teachers can do to help someone like this?

- try to sit down with the student and have a few minutes of trying to pronounce and spell words.
- small 5 minute classes on basic words such as greetings, personality, trying to say feelings in english.
- translate their words in their language.

Focus Groups Round 3

Imagine there is a new student joining the school from another country and they don't speak any English. What advice would you give them about the following?

- Learning English
- Making friends
- Adjusting to a new school
- Using their first language
- Learning in the classroom
- Their parents
- Maintaining their culture
- Differences in education

Write some ideas down below and then you will feed back to the rest of the group.

* Learn English with the help of friends, ask help and don't feel low self-esteem.
* Carry Dictionary (small) or use translating device.
* Make notes (the word that might be difficult for you to understand)
* Text them by translating into English.
* Tell them how you feel when you can't speak English to your friend and they will help you.

What do you think the school/teachers can do to help someone like this?

* Extra lesson on English
* Be with them (Translator)
* Talk to them about problems
* Make them feel it's alright
* Allow those student to use translating device.
* Translated their work into their language so that they can understand.
* Would be better if teacher arrange that student with another language speaking student or the same language. So, that they can feel relieve bit hanging out and share how they feel. It will help them to build trust & confidence.

Appendix 11: Staff Participant Consent Form

Department of Humanities
Northumbria University
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8ST
Email: [redacted]
Telephone: [redacted]

Dear staff,

My name is Louise, and I am a PhD student within the Humanities Department at Northumbria University.

For my PhD research project, I am investigating the school experiences of secondary students who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL) in schools in rural areas. Therefore, I am going to be conducting case studies of two schools in North Yorkshire, [redacted] Academy and [redacted] School, over the Autumn 2019 and Spring 2020 terms. The project hopes to find out students' own views about their English language needs and priorities, and their language-related experiences in school. Ultimately, the aim of the project is to understand 'school life' for students who speak English as an Additional Language in rural areas and help schools and teachers to give students the best experience possible.

Every member of staff at the school is invited to participate in this project. I aim to observe some of the EAL students in their classes and 'shadow' them around school. The students will be required to keep a diary to record their experiences and take part in focus groups. Some teachers will also be asked to take part in one-to-one interviews to discuss their experiences of EAL practice and provision. The project is only to 'observe and understand'. Students and teachers will not be judged or examined, all information (seen and heard) will be confidential and remain anonymous, and the whole process will be as open and friendly as possible. All participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any point.

As part of the project's design, it is clearly important that all participating staff understand the project and its aims and agree to take part. I would be extremely grateful, therefore, if you could complete the form below to indicate whether you understand the aims of the project and give permission for me to attend and observe your class. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details above, or contact my supervisor, Graham Hall, by email: g.hall@northumbria.ac.uk.

Best wishes,
Louise Howitt

Northumbria University
NEWCASTLE

EAL Student Research

Teacher Consent Form

please tick or initial where applicable

I have carefully read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.	☐
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study and I have received satisfactory answers.	☐
I understand I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason for withdrawing, and without prejudice.	☐
I agree to take part in this study.	☐
I also consent to the retention of this data under the condition that any subsequent use also be restricted to research projects that have gained ethical approval from Northumbria University.	☐

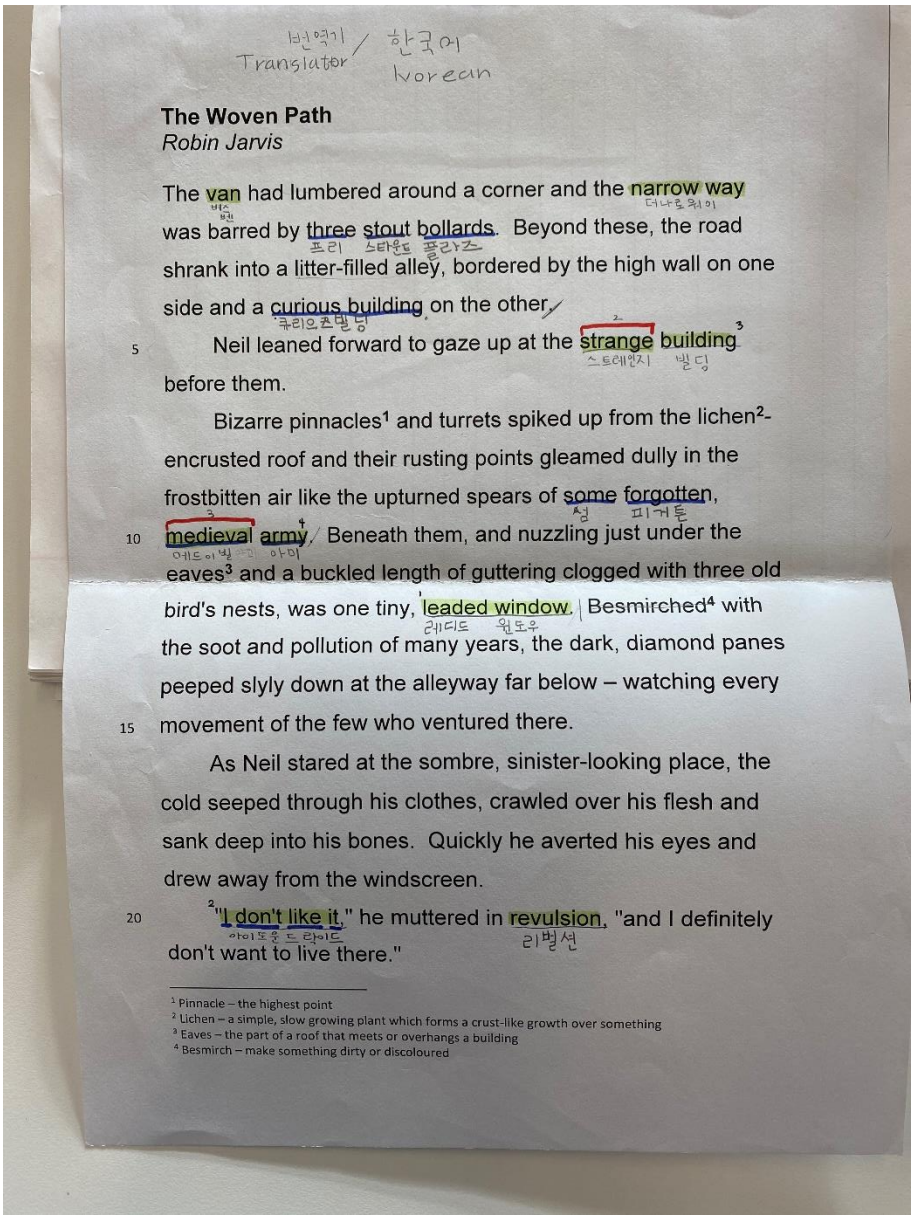
Signature of participant..... Date.....……..

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS) .....…….

Signature of researcher Date

Name:

Appendix 12: Photograph of Mi-Sun's use of Korean in her classwork



번역기 / 한국어
Translator Korean

The Woven Path
Robin Jarvis

The van had lumbered around a corner and the narrow way was barred by three stout bollards. Beyond these, the road shrank into a litter-filled alley, bordered by the high wall on one side and a curious building on the other.

Neil leaned forward to gaze up at the strange building before them.

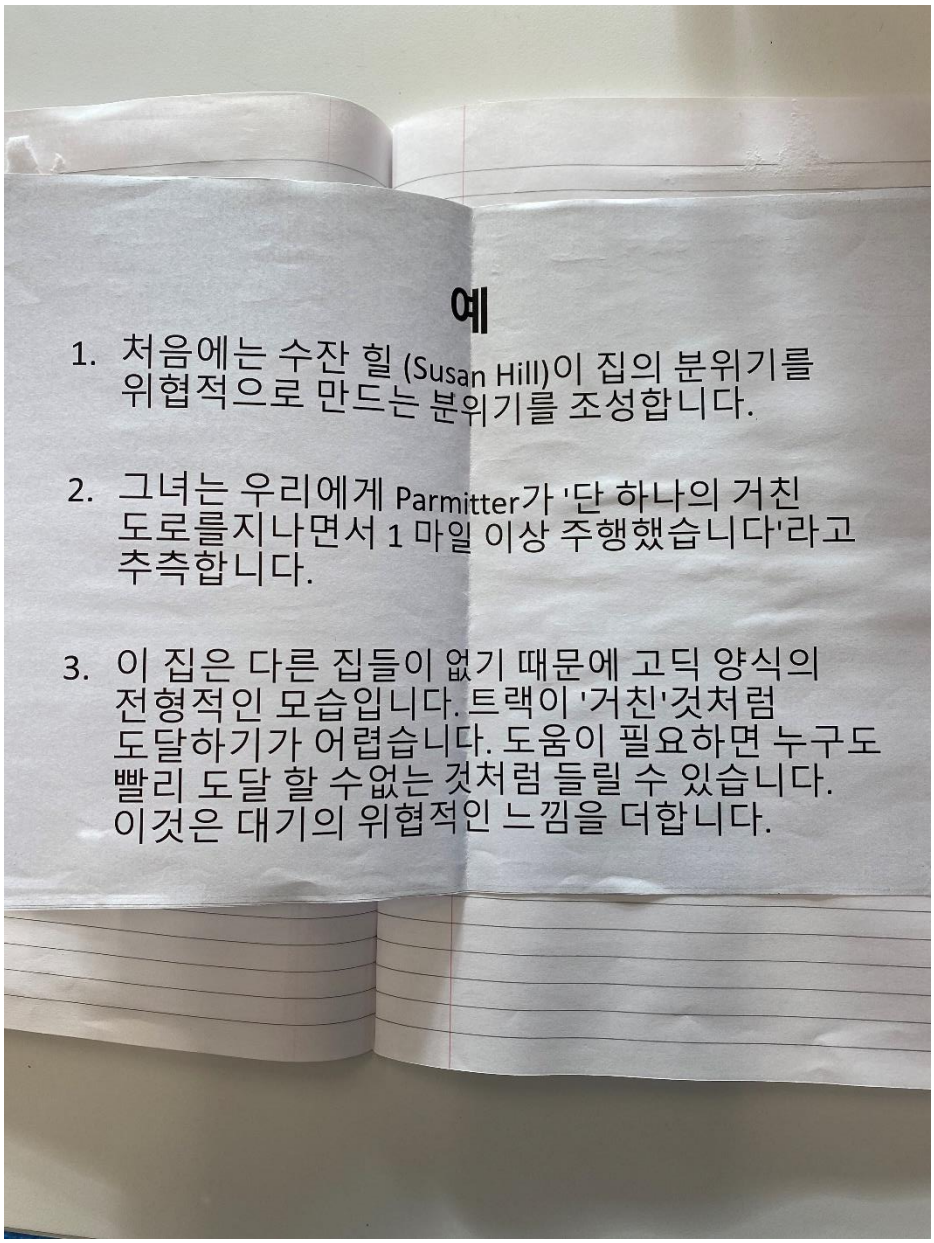
Bizarre pinnacles[1] and turrets spiked up from the lichen[2]-encrusted roof and their rusting points gleamed dully in the frostbitten air like the upturned spears of some forgotten, medieval army. Beneath them, and nuzzling just under the eaves[3] and a buckled length of guttering clogged with three old bird's nests, was one tiny, leaded window. Besmirched[4] with the soot and pollution of many years, the dark, diamond panes peeped slyly down at the alleyway far below – watching every movement of the few who ventured there.

As Neil stared at the sombre, sinister-looking place, the cold seeped through his clothes, crawled over his flesh and sank deep into his bones. Quickly he averted his eyes and drew away from the windscreen.

"I don't like it," he muttered in revulsion, "and I definitely don't want to live there."

[1] Pinnacle – the highest point
[2] Lichen – a simple, slow growing plant which forms a crust-like growth over something
[3] Eaves – the part of a roof that meets or overhangs a building
[4] Besmirch – make something dirty or discoloured

Appendix 13: Photograph of translated resources in Korean



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