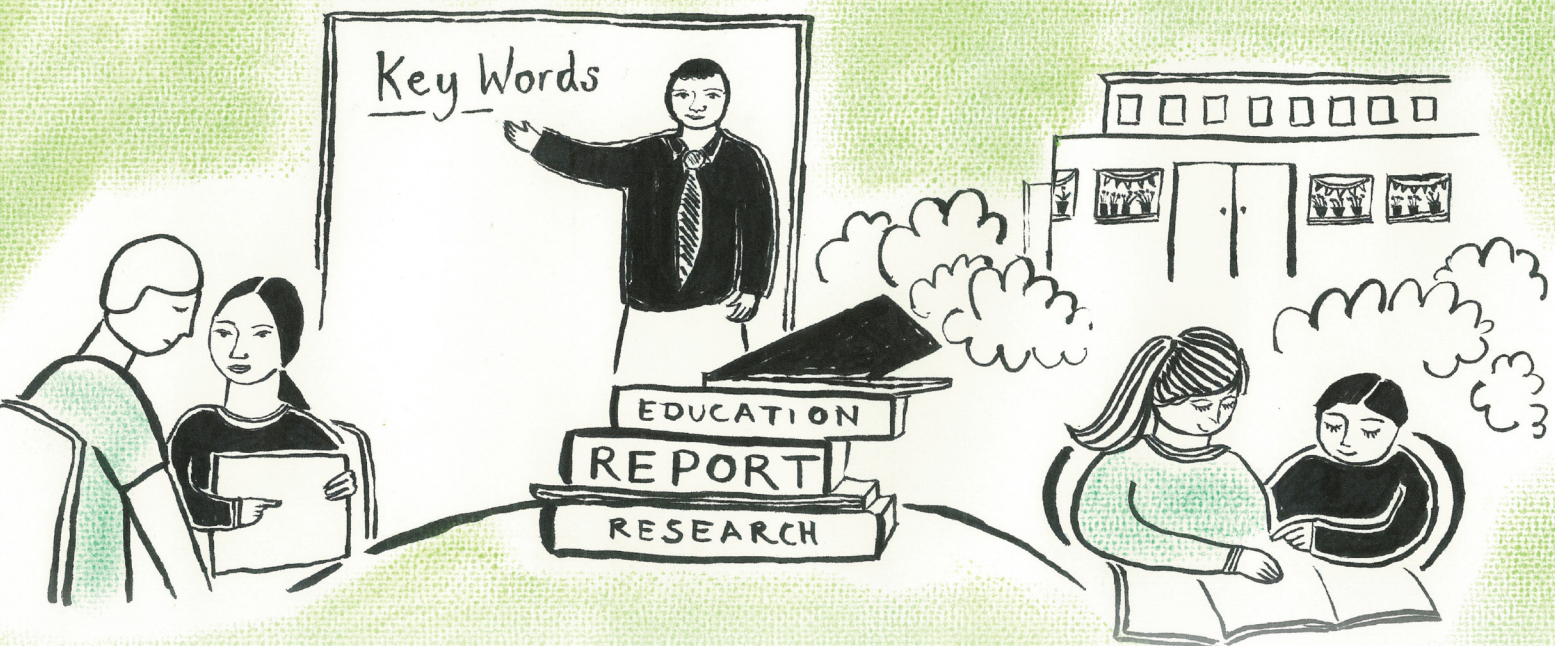# Policy, Pedagogy and Pupil Perceptions: EAL in Scotland and England

AUTHORS

Dr Charles Anderson
Dr Yvonne Foley
Dr Pauline Sangster
Professor Viv Edwards
Professor Naz Rassool

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Rationale

In excess of a million pupils are currently learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) in UK schools. The present small-scale study was commissioned by The Bell Foundation as part of an ongoing programme of research and development activities concerning children with English as an additional language. It sets out to identify gaps in our understanding of the challenges facing teachers and students which merit further in depth study. In particular, it attempts to foreground EAL learners' own voices and to explore ways in which their perceptions could be used to improve learning experiences within UK schooling. A secondary focus is on the views of teaching staff on what they consider appropriate responses to student needs.

The context for the study

In order to provide a context for the present study, relevant literature on policy in relation to EAL in both Scotland and England is reviewed, as is the recent history of migration and its impact on schools. Particular attention is paid to the transitions that EAL students experience as they enter new academic, social, cultural and linguistic environments. Issues identified in earlier studies as potentially important for deepening understanding include: the view of literacy as socially and culturally-situated practices rather than a set of technical skills, and the consequent move to develop appropriate multilingual literacy pedagogies; the role of language in how students make sense of themselves and the need for pedagogies which build on multilingualism; the particular challenges associated with academic language; and the implications of cultural and linguistic diversity for teacher education.

Methodology

The study addresses two main questions: what are the perceptions of EAL learners of their language learning experiences? And how do these perceptions differ from those of their teachers? Three researchers from the University of Edinburgh and two from the University of Reading undertook interviews and focus group discussions at two urban secondary schools – one in Scotland (Albion Academy), the other in England (Anglia Academy).

The teacher samples included the head of English and an EAL teacher at Albion Academy and two EAL teaching assistants at Anglia Academy. Purposive samples of between ten and 12 pupils in each school were divided into two age bands (younger, 11–13; and older 14–16) in order to explore possible relationships between age and perceptions of transition to the new country; a range of countries was included in order to indicate the extent to which experiences might be influenced by the country of origin. Students had arrived in the UK at least two years earlier to ensure that their levels of English would allow them to express themselves adequately without requiring an interpreter.

The focus group discussions and individual student and teacher interviews were audio recorded and then fully transcribed. Patterns, themes, sub-themes, consistencies and exceptions emerging from the data were identified, before members of the research team came together to share, justify and, in some instances, revise first impressions. In this way initial codings were expanded to accommodate the emerging themes and sub-themes within individual transcripts, across transcripts within each school, and between schools.

Findings

There is clearly a need for caution concerning the extent to which the patterns that emerge from this small-scale study may be generalised to a wider population. The findings do, however, highlight a considerable number of key issues and insights that merit: wider investigation; close consideration and analysis; and action at the levels of policy and practice.

EAL student perceptions of learning experiences within UK schooling

In answer to the first of the research questions – what are the perceptions of EAL learners of their language learning experiences? – the following main themes emerged: diversity in migration experience, languages and preceding schooling; the emotional and social challenges of transition; the use of L1 / literacy in L1; identity and fitting in; and linguistic challenges in the classroom.

Diversity in migration experience, languages and preceding schooling

The students originated from a wide range of countries, and brought with them distinctly different cultures, religions and languages. Some could be characterised as *global travellers* while others had only the experience of living in one country of origin and then the UK. For some, coming to the UK also involved a shift from a rural existence to city life, as the following interview extract demonstrates:

> **Interviewer:** So when you came to England did you come to Reading first of all?
>
> **Student 1:** Yes, because London was the biggest city for us. Because in Poland we live not in the city we just live on a farm basically.
>
> **Student 2:** When I came here it was cold and my Dad got here before us like a month or two and it was very different from Sudan because we had like lots of dirt roads and stuff and here they have like pavements and stuff.

While many participants could be seen as permanently settled, the sojourn in the UK of others may be more transient. There were differences also in the social settings that they found themselves in within the UK, with some finding a place within an existing extended family network, and a few being cared for by a single parent. Moving to the UK in a few instances was associated with a difficult family break-up:

> **Interviewer:** and where did you live before you came to the UK?
>
> **Student:** Um – well my mum was here for uh, 7, 8 years and I was living with my father because my parents were separated and my mum just asked me one day if I wanted to see how the school is here and I agreed and that's how I came here.

Some participants had arrived while of primary school age, and others at a later stage, entering the larger world of a secondary school. Some students had parents who could communicate fluently, or at least adequately, in English, while others could not. This could have implications for communicating and keeping up to date with developments at their child's school, as one student explains here:

> **Interviewer:** ...have they [your parents] found it easy to communicate with the school and to know what is going on?
>
> **Student:** No, because my parents do not really speak that much English, like my Mum doesn't know, she can understand it but she can't really speak it fluently and same with my Dad. My Dad can speak a bit but it is kind of like a bit – it is not really that good. So he can communicate with the school if it is really necessary but other than that I don't think he really can that much.

A wide range of languages from many different countries were spoken by the students in the study. These languages differed markedly in form and structure bringing with them different sets of challenges and affordances for the learning of English in terms of features such as writing systems, grammar, representation of concepts, and conventions for structuring written texts. The below exchange is a typical example of the multilingual worlds of many of the participants:

> **Interviewer:** And where did you live before you came to the UK?
>
> **Student:** Italy.
>
> **Interviewer:** So were your parents born in Italy, or did they move?
>
> **Student:** No, they were born in Ghana but they moved to Italy.
>
> **Interviewer:** So what languages do you speak at home?
>
> **Student:** I speak Ghanaian[1], English and Italian.

Participants arrived with varying levels of English. Quite a number had acquired only very basic vocabulary but some had received more intensive exposure to, and teaching of, English. The following extracts give two contrasting examples of a student's knowledge of English prior to coming to the UK.

> **Interviewer:** No, not really any English, so you'd not learnt it at all in Pakistan, no?
>
> **Student:** Like a few words, there was like the nice words like: thank you, welcome, like all the normal words. We only learnt that because I was in P3 when I left there and I never went to P4
>
> **Student:** ... but the lucky thing is in India I was in an English school so were allowed to speak English, in my language if I have subject that's my language I would speak in my language, so I knew a little bit of English from there, so that's why I was OK, I wasn't like stuck all the time.

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1 As is often the case (see, for instance Baker & Eversley, 2000), this student identifies the home language by the name of the country where it is spoken rather than its actual name (e.g. Twi, Akan), presumably because they consider that the interviewer will be unfamiliar with the language name.

Some students were already bilingual on arrival, or at least with considerable facility in more than one language. For example, here is a student from Slovakia recounting his early language learning experiences:

Student: We just speak Slovakian but it depends … speaking Slovakian but if you can find the word – say it in Hungarian, it's like switching between two languages.

Interviewer: Yeah, sure. Yeah, so, so when you were at primary school in Slovakia were you learning Slovakian and Hungarian?

Student: English!

Interviewer: And English, yeah, so Hungarian, um, just from your background Hungarian, not the school?

Student: Yeah. I think I learnt it when I was around five because I was at the nursery at that time and there are more Hungarian kids than Slovakian…. So I learnt it from nursery, also from cartoons.

Where English had been encountered as a school subject, this seemed often to have been text-based, focused on comprehension exercises and underpinned by a grammar-based model of English teaching.

Additionally, participants described how they were faced with the task of learning the language of the very specific locality in which they now lived. This meant that even those students who had received considerable instruction in 'standard' English before they arrived were not at all fluent in the 'day-to-day language'. An understanding of British dialects and accents, along with colloquialisms and slang can be seen as key to social as well as linguistic inclusion, as students explain here:

Interviewer: So when you think about your time here what would you say was the most difficult thing that you had to cope with?

Student 1: Definitely learning the slang they use here. I did not understand a word they said when they were speaking slang. It was so different.

Student 2: Yeah, I agree with Michele. The slang is totally different. Because you just learn like how do you speak it, like the basic ones, like hello, how are you and stuff. But here it is like they use slang as well.

Student 1: OK, when I came over I had no idea when people started talking about celebrities, for example. I had absolutely no idea who they were talking about, like British celebrities. And actually I learned in time but I had no idea what they were talking about when I first came over.

Interviewer: Can anybody else think of an example like that when they really didn't know what was going on?

Student 2: When I came here, like three years ago, my friends were like talking about programmes which were on TV. I was also quite lost because in Germany there are different types of programmes. So I was also like a little confused.

A few participants pointed out the limitations that came from learning English outside of a context of everyday use and where the English that was learned might not be readily deployed in everyday communication:

Student: It was totally different when I came. I did learn some English in Slovakia for one or two years but when I came I never used it because it was totally different. The stuff you learn in Slovakia and – it's like you've been brainwashed because you know like: "Hi! How are you!", you learn these basics but most of the stuff you don't need, you just learn them but you never use them.

The emotional and social challenges of transition

Arriving in the UK, EAL students faced a number of often unsettling transitions. While they presented a generally favourable view of the nature of UK schooling, they described their transition to UK schooling as a stressful or very stressful experience. They commonly faced linguistic and social isolation which could be emotionally challenging; some also expressed fear of making mistakes in English which would lead to them being ridiculed. There was variation in the length of time that this period of linguistic and emotional isolation lasted:

Interviewer: ... staying with when you first got here, was there anything particularly difficult you found in learning English. I know it was all new but were there any very particular difficulties?

Student: Confidence. I was afraid to speak.

Interviewer: Afraid to speak, yeah.

Student: Even if I wanted to say something I was scared if I said it wrong.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Student: Everyone was just going to laugh at me.

Interviewer: Yes. So worried you'd get it wrong ...

Student: I've still got that problem now , but I'm getting more confident.

Student 1: When I came here the first day it was quite scary because no one in my class, I didn't know anyone and everyone spoke English which was very hard for me to understand. I remember my friends talking about it, they asked me "How are you?" and I said "No." Because I didn't understand what they are talking about. But then I learnt English, like it was quite quick – in four months I learnt English

Students observed that teachers displaying encouragement and an attitude of hospitality had helped them to cope with this difficult transition:

Student: Well, because I was new back then most of the teachers were making jokes or they made me feel like, they made me feel good, good inside so I never had the feeling to be shy, or keep something inside me. I could ask the teacher all the time in front of everyone, it gave me confidence. ...

Interviewer: So they made you feel very welcome, gave you confidence?

Student: Yeah... usually if I had trouble with something I would go and ask – either one of my teachers or a different teacher, because they always helped me.

Student 1: My experience was my teacher made me feel good so basically they were like welcoming and they were like giving a warm feeling; and they were quite helpful as well because they were helping me with catching up with stuff ... the teachers were quite good with me.

Student 2: Same here, the teachers made me feel good. They helped me in primary when I came, they were helpful. There was a Polish guy that helped me as well. Polish and Slovakian are a bit similar, so.

In addition to support from teachers, students told us that the presence of an assigned 'buddy' or a supportive friend they had made themselves was central to their entry into the social life of the school:

Interviewer: Was there anything that people did that made it easier for you?

Student: Yeah, it was my friend. She made me learn English, she involved me in every activity. The teachers were supportive, they helped me throughout the whole way when I was in X [primary] school.

I think we do that in our school, we've got a buddy system. I think like every school should do that because it would make it a lot easier for like new people if they know somebody or have somebody who speaks the same language as them.

The use of L1

Use of a first language at home was the norm for participants. However, there were distinct differences in the degree to which L1 literacy was being maintained, or indeed ever had been achieved. A minority were taking examinations in their first language; for these students schools were in effect acting to develop their literacy in that language.

In common with other studies, there was little evidence of the use of L1 either in the classroom or more generally in the school. While some student participants displayed confidence in using their first language in schools, more commonly they did not wish to mark themselves out as different by using their L1:

Interviewer: Right, so first of all tell me how you feel when you're using your own language here?

Student: Uh, I use it in my mind, I don't like speaking it out because I don't want anybody to like hear –

Interviewer: So why do you not like speaking out?

Student: Just, I don't, I just don't like it.

Interviewer: Does it make you feel different?

Student: Yeah.

Interviewer: … So are you able to use your home language in school at all in your classes?

Student: No, it's not used. I just use it in my home … I don't use it at school at all. What's the use if I have somebody I could have used it by helping them but I don't have anybody. And they'll think I'm saying about them in the language, so I don't want them to think like that so I don't use the language.

Quite a number of participants attributed their lack of use of their home language in school to their lack of language-speaking compatriots, as in the following examples:

Student 1: I don't have anybody that's my language, so I am like from the south part of India … so I've never said my language in school before.

Student 2: If there was a Slovakian person, yeah, I could use it in school but there's no one.

Although there was little 'overt' use of the L1 in schools, in the early stages participants were clearly 'thinking' in and coping with a new school environment through their first language, as this student describes:

Student: When I came here, um, obviously when you learn a language you think in that language that you know; but when I came here I was thinking in Romanian but it was English around me, do you know what I mean? Two languages and, um, I was going slow with translations. I was like, I was just thinking how to translate words … that was the hardest thing to do.

Interviewer: Right. And do you think in English now?

Student: Yeah.

Interviewer: So you don't have the big effort of trying to think in Romanian and then translate?

Student: Not any more.

Interviews gave a clear sense of the effortful nature of the processes of 'conscious translation' in which they were engaged and of how these cognitive demands can make it difficult to keep pace with the flow of events in a lesson. (However, for more advanced language learners the ability to move flexibly between languages can be regarded as an aid to thought and expression.) The timescale of the move to 'thinking in English' may vary, possibly to a significant extent, across EAL learners, an issue that merits wider investigation.

Identity and fitting in

Many students faced an *interwoven* set of linguistic, social and emotional challenges. A lack of fluency in English could lead to emotional and social isolation, while a wish not to present oneself as an inept speaker of English could reinforce this situation. To function effectively, EAL students need to develop not simply knowledge of and communication skills in English, but also the confidence to speak. Feelings of isolation were reduced when teachers were welcoming and encouraging, and students felt a sense of connection with an assigned 'buddy' or a friend that they had made themselves. Some students took encouragement from the presence of other 'international people' in their school:

> **Interviewer:** What about the next statement there? 'You learn better when you feel …'
>
> **Student 1:** Maybe not alone. I mean when I came over I thought I was going to be alone, like I thought I was going to be the only person in my classes which was like not from England. And there were many people who were not from here. So I felt more confident because, yeah, I wasn't alone.
>
> **Student:** Well, I was scared [arriving in his English school]. And when teacher was talking to me something in English I didn't understand, so I was thinking about something else. I was like dreaming off. And when there was break time in X school, I went to break – I was like playing around by myself and then I saw someone eating sweets. I said in Polish, "Don't eat sweets!" and he said in Polish, "It is break time, you can eat sweets."
>
> **Interviewer:** So it was another Polish kid? Oh that was lucky.
>
> **Student:** Yeah. And I said: "Are you Polish?" and he said, "Yes" and I said friend and he is a friend, so we started like, yeah, so.
>
> **Interviewer:** Did it really help to have somebody who could speak Polish?
>
> **Student:** Yes, so were helping each other.

However, it cannot be assumed that EAL learners will always act towards each other in a helpful manner.

A key distinction emerged between being positioned by others as different as opposed to claiming a positive identity *for oneself* as different. As one EAL student commented: 'I kind of like to be different and kind of not to be different'. The fact that some participants did not regard being 'similar' to or 'different' from others as binary choices suggests the importance of avoiding over-simplification as EAL students negotiate a complex path between assimilation and distinctiveness.

Teachers' perceptions

The second of the research questions concerns how the perceptions of students differ from those of their teachers. The interviews and focus group discussions revealed both similarities and differences. The main themes to emerge were: responding to linguistic challenges in the school and classroom; how best to support the use of English; curriculum and assessment; school policies, structures and processes; and teacher development.

Responding to linguistic challenges in the school and classroom

Translation between an L1 and English can create demands on students' cognitive resources, possibly making it difficult for them to 'keep up' with the pace of a lesson. *Listening* in class was thus seen as a demanding activity for EAL students, with little evidence in their everyday classroom experience of the kind of scaffolding that would make a difference, as this EAL teacher points out:

> **Teacher:** I actually think that listening, the skill of listening is probably the most challenging for them in terms of making that accessible to them because I think that a lot of the, our practice in the classroom is delivered probably far too quickly. And not standardised in terms of pronunciation, various other things, pace, etc. so I think listening is probably the hardest aspect of the curriculum for them…obviously use of colloquialisms. I think, I think just hearing the language spoken in context it doesn't matter what language it is, I think it's harder to keep pace with someone who is a natural speaker in that language regardless of any of the other factors that come into play.

Some participants displayed initiative in coping with their new language environment by active observation and listening. As well as acknowledging the challenges, EAL teachers spoke about the listening skills development they undertook in classes to help their students make progress in listening:

> **Teacher:** I do quite a bit of sort of listening skill development with my classes and even taking the most – a very slow pace text that has markers and cues in the form of written text to break it and really chunk it down, that's what you really need in order to be able to actually progress and follow what's happening. Now you don't have that when I teach, so you know I recognise that if you take the same ability and translate it into the day-to-day sitting in a classroom it must be extremely difficult.

Speaking in the classroom could be inhibited by a lack of vocabulary and communication skills in English, and, outside of class, by unfamiliarity with 'day-to-day language'. However, such difficulties were not simply the result of a lack of knowledge and skills. Both students and teachers recognised that EAL learners could be reluctant to speak for fear of making mistakes that would cause them to be ridiculed. To make progress, these learners needed to gain *the confidence to speak*, and to feel that they have a voice, as the following statements makes clear:

Teacher: I think there's an initial confidence issue that a large number of EAL pupils take an extended period of time before they feel confident enough to actually verbalise and speak the language, so their understanding of the language in writing or reading is significantly higher than they would be able to demonstrate in speaking and it's purely from the confidence perspective. But once they make those initial steps onto the verbal pathway you see huge progress with them and the confidence really builds.

Teacher: I think they [EAL learners] need to be given the freedom to make the choices and decisions about when they're ready to speak; and I think that's part of it that they feel that they're at the point where they have the confidence that they can actually speak and I don't think it's something that can be forced.

Participants' comments in relation to *reading* highlight the fact that, for secondary school students, effective reading involves not simply the acquisition of general skills but also the ability to cope with different genres of texts in English and to understand the forms of writing that feature in different school subjects. Some teachers were mindful that the translating, communicative function of reading could be 'over-used':

Teacher: Reading, I think is probably, in terms of the classroom, one of the more straightforward ones, in terms of it's something that can be over-used in the sense that you give them a piece of written text and the task is to identify a language that they're less familiar with and then translate it into their own language. So I think that reading can provide quite an easy, what would appear to be, an easy solution to perhaps learning and teaching in the classroom of helping them access your learning and teaching.

However, some students drew attention to the fact that reading within English as a school subject requires close analysis of texts and involves a qualitatively different kind of reading that they had not previously encountered.

In *writing* students were faced with a similar set of demands in terms of understanding and being able to construct different genres of texts without the extensive body of knowledge of the forms and structures of English that a native speaker would customarily possess. It is very well recognised in the EAL literature that writing has a longer trajectory of development than other language modes. It was observed within our study that teachers may not always be sufficiently alert to this fact:

Teacher: Well, I mean obviously there's the complexity of the language in itself [for EAL students writing in English]; but it's also, for example, as an English teacher having – I think a lot of our understanding of the language is so subconscious or inbuilt, or taken for granted that you find it quite difficult to actually then look at a piece of their writing and work out what it is I actually need to teach you in order to make that next step.

It is also worth noting that a number of students expressed concern over limitations that they perceived in their ability to spell in English. EAL teachers also noticed how demoralising this could be for their students:

> **Teacher:** With the teachers' assessments in class I think most of the EAL pupils are motivated and keen to improve and sometimes if they are not improving they do feel discouraged that they are still getting the same level, you know another D, another D, another D. This happened to a girl in my year 10 class and she kept bursting into tears every time she got a D. So it can be a bit demoralising because, as we were saying earlier, if your written language is taking time to come in you're not necessarily going to be improving these levels very rapidly, are you?...

It can be argued that if students are to meet fully the linguistic challenges, they need not only to develop their communication skills *in English* but also to have access to terminology that enables them to communicate *about English*. Some participants in our study had not only received direct instruction in English grammar but also appeared to have acquired a metalanguage in which to think and talk about language.

Some students did not identify *learning another language as a school subject* as problematic; however, others did. For these students the key challenges were: the 'cognitive load' of simultaneously developing English and another language; and the difficulty of learning a language through the medium of English when English itself has not yet been fully mastered.

Curriculum policy and assessment

Teacher participants drew attention to the potential of the current emphasis in the UK on 'literacy across learning' to provide a vehicle for staff across different subject areas to think through how best to support EAL learners. However, in a period of considerable change in curricula, there is a risk that less time will be allocated to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) on EAL-related matters, as this teacher noted:

> **Teacher:** ...CPD, which at the moment is quite difficult to set up with the new Curriculum for Excellence. Schools are not necessarily making EAL their priority for improvement plans.

On the topic of assessment, participants echoed areas of discontent that have featured prominently in the EAL literature. There was a strong consensus among teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs) that both past and more recent arrangements for national, formal assessments disadvantaged EAL learners and did not give an accurate appraisal of their attainment:

> **Teacher:** ... so for me, it's about how do we assess them in a way that we assess their ability and not where they are in terms of their language acquisition at that particular point in time because we have very able pupils with additional support needs coming and ... where they are in terms of their attainment is very much a reflection of where they are in terms of their language acquisition and I don't think that that's fair or reflective of their ability and that's what I find frustrating sometimes.
>
> **TA1:** I think sometimes they are at a disadvantage in exams and assessments because, you know, ... [they go] into the exam like everybody else. But I think there should be some dispensation in the, on the exam, to say this person has only been learning English for four years and this is the level they have got. You can't really expect them to have the same level of fluency as someone who has always been here.
> ...
> they can bring dictionaries into exams now but I still think you are not going to have the level of fluency and the background and the advantages. Making it harder for you to get the A levels and to get to university.

These failings were apparent in listening and reading assessments as well as in written tests. On matters that were more fully within teachers' control, a key role in making the curriculum accessible to EAL learners can potentially be played by skilful *differentiation* of content, activities, and formative assessment.

School policies, structures and processes

There was a marked difference in reported practice between the two sites in our study in the initial assessment of the language of EAL students and in the ongoing monitoring of their progress. In both sites, however, this was recognised as a matter that needed to be addressed.

The importance of co-ordination of the efforts of class teachers and EAL specialists was also highlighted, with one of our participants describing collaboration with, and learning from, EAL specialists as the 'key' to progress:

> **Teacher:** Support and resources in the sense of human resources, EAL support, EAL support is invaluable when it's good, when you can work collaboratively with someone from EAL in terms of looking at your own practice and making developments and resourcing. I actually think that that's the – it is that collaboration between the two so – and I think that bringing their expertise and knowledge in the form of CPD as well. So it's that whole relationship, it's not just the classroom, I think, it's the whole what they can bring to the whole relationship. I think that's the key to making some kind of progress.

Clearly the extent to which such collaboration can be achieved is dependent on the level at which this EAL specialist input is resourced.

The value of schools establishing connections with the parents of EAL students has been noted in previous studies. Here it is worth highlighting an example of good practice in the present study, i.e., the 'boundary-crossing' role that the EAL

teacher played in actively fostering parents' engagement in school language classes and other school activities:

> **Teacher:** We've also offered ESOL to parents here and that was set up working with community education [service in the local authority]. They previously hadn't had a need and so we targeted all the parents who I knew needed an interpreter and as a result we had two classes running this year for ESL for parents. And it was really lovely to see the parents come in during the school day...and it was run as an evening class and also a day class. And I think that's going to continue... they said the uptake was helped by us targeting the parents rather than just putting it up.

Looking in more general terms at questions of policy, participant interviews, and our own analysis of policy documents, leads to the conclusion that EAL students' needs should be addressed much more directly within policies at national, local authority and school levels. Prominence can also usefully be given at school level to providing a 'toolbox' of ways of thinking and acting that individual teachers can judiciously deploy to respond appropriately to EAL students.

Teacher development

Across the UK, schools and teachers face the task of implementing substantial changes to curricula. Our findings brought into focus the fact that CPD in relation to EAL has to compete for time, resource and effort with other priorities in curricular development:

> **Teacher:** Mainstream [teachers] do attend our CPD and they find that useful. I've got one or two colleagues that want to go to a higher level and I've suggested the diploma type courses. I don't know how to further get the message across when they've got so many different areas of need in the class.

At the same time, they highlight the importance of such activity. Teachers have a more secure base for their work with EAL students when their knowledge about, and capacity to communicate about, language is strengthened.

Recommendations

This small-scale study highlights the continuing need to see students of English as an Additional Language (EAL) as a *resource for* rather than simply as an *object of* education. The study successfully draws on a perspective of the pupil's voice, a voice that is seldom heard either in debates about education or in debates about migration and support for children with English as an additional language.

Teachers, researchers and policy-makers all need to consider how to respond to, and best incorporate, EAL students' diverse experience and backgrounds and this is also echoed in recent literature (e.g. Lucas, 2011; Reeves, 2004; Conteh and Meier, 2014). This report therefore makes recommendations both for classroom practices and schools, for policy makers and for academic research.

Diversity in migration experience, languages and preceding schooling

- In line with recent literature on how best to conceptualise migration, there is a need for teachers, researchers and policy-makers to be alert to the diversity in EAL students' migration experience;

- Schools need to be able to access as much information as possible on students' preceding schooling, the student's exposure to English, current family circumstances, pattern of migration and home language(s) and this needs to be recorded and shared in line with existing information sharing protocols (with full regard to questions of confidentiality);

- More consideration can be given to assisting EAL students to gain 'survival' knowledge of the day-to-day language needed to interact within specific local contexts.

The emotional and social challenges of transition

- All school staff from the receptionist through to the Head Teacher can make a difference by displaying an inclusive and welcoming attitude to new arrivals and all EAL students. This can include assemblies, signage, use of language, an inclusive attitude and recognition of cultural and language differences. Above all, it is about creating an inclusive environment where mutual tolerance is expected as a foundation for the learning and integration of EAL students.

- The emotional and social challenges faced by EAL students sometimes persist over an extended period of time. It would be useful to commission large-scale research that explores the degree to which the longer-term challenges reported by some participants in this study are also found among the wider population of EAL students.

- As previous research has shown (e.g. Conteh and Meier, 2014), an effective school buddying system can be seen to be key to easing EAL students' integration into the social life of a school.

The use of the L1

- This study, in common with other work in this area (e.g. Cummins, 2007), has found limited use of a student's first language in schools. Remedying this situation requires, in part at least, a move in EAL development activities away from general encouragement to use L1, to providing teachers with strategies, activities, and exemplars of good practice that will allow them to make effective use of L1.

- Relatively little attention has been paid to date to the question of EAL students' literacy in their first language. More research on this topic is desirable. This would give greater insights into the levels of literacy in L1 that students bring to the process of learning; and enable investigation into the ways differing levels of literacy in an L1 may impact on the learning of English. Furthermore, there is limited research capturing the voices of pupils themselves. Further research that explores EAL students' interactions in schools and their own wishes to identify themselves, or not, as linguistically different should be encouraged. This could include further ethnographic studies of EAL students' sense of identity, and enactment of self within schools should be supported.

- EAL learners in the early stages perform many acts of 'conscious translation' between their first language and English. Teachers need to be alerted to the effortful nature of these 'translanguaging' acts at this stage of development and the demands that they make on a student's cognitive resources.

- There is a clear need for research that examines these acts of translation more closely. In particular, it would be desirable to undertake studies that focus on how EAL students understand translation between their first language(s) and English and their conceptions of the nature of language and differences between languages.

Linguistic challenges in the classroom and school: how to respond?

- The findings of this study highlight the need to support each of the language modes of: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers also need to be made aware of the longer development trajectory of writing, compared to the other language modes. Students also need to understand the specific genre features, and underlying structures, of the texts they will encounter across the curriculum.

- It is helpful for EAL learners to be provided with a *metalanguage* (a set of terms that are used when language itself is being analysed or discussed) in which they can communicate about English. This will enable them to analyse texts that they read and to discuss their own language choices when writing.

Curriculum and assessment

- The policy of 'literacy across learning' is a useful means of unlocking access to the whole curriculum for all pupils and particularly those who have English as an additional language. Given the importance of learning how to use language within this approach, it would be helpful to see more emphasis on its benefits for EAL learners.

- Given that current formal assessments are not well attuned to EAL learners, there is a need for continuing research on this matter.

- 'Good practice' in classrooms is not enough. There is a need for highly differentiated classroom practices that are designed to take into account the distinctive learning and assessment needs of EAL students. Such finely-tuned pedagogic practices will provide access to the curriculum for EAL students and enable them to integrate fully into the life of the classroom. Activities that have a specific language focus and actively draw on the varied cultural and linguistic resources within the classroom foster an environment that gives voice to *difference* and deepens an awareness for students learning EAL about the ways that language is used to make meaning.

School policies, structures and processes

- To allow for good practice that is consistent across schools in the *initial* assessment of language and monitoring of progress, it is recommended that clear national guidance on tests and testing processes is provided. This recommendation is particularly relevant to the Scottish context.

- Policies need to be in place that recognise the value of effective collaboration between class teachers and EAL specialists; and which establish structures that allow this collaboration to take place.

- Parental involvement and engagement can be particularly challenging for both schools and parents of EAL students. Sending out information to parents/guardians of EAL students may have little impact. However, schemes which 'draw in' parents to school activities can foster meaningful engagement in children's learning and with the wider community. An example of good practice can be seen in the Renaisi Bilingual Advisors scheme. Recent research (Arnot et al, 2014) demonstrates the importance of developing parental engagement, where it is also recommended that there is a greater sharing of successful initiatives and models for parental engagement for this group of learners.

Teacher development

- At a time when teachers face pressure to develop their practice on a number of fronts, there is a need for effective, well-targeted Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) for all teachers.

- Given that EAL-related CLPL needs to cover a range of aspects of practice, it is best seen as requiring a sustained programme of development rather than a limited number of 'one-off' events. Providing teachers with systematic professional learning opportunities would help to inform their knowledge, beliefs and practices, thus resulting in the provision of better opportunities for EAL students in their development of the language and literacies of schooling.

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