

**Understanding the experiences and engagement of
children labelled as having English as an additional
language in different school contexts:**

The case of primary to secondary school transition

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Abstract

This thesis aims to understand the multi-layered experiences of children labelled as having English as an additional language (EAL) in changing contexts by focusing on academic and social experiences in their transition from primary to secondary school. Although from a school perspective EAL is often linked with knowledge and proficiency in the English language as a means to access learning, this study builds on the complexity underlying the term that incorporates background, culture, agency and power in the ways children navigate their schooling. This is achieved through in-depth longitudinal accounts of children's experiences and engagement co-constructed with participants and triangulated through interactive qualitative methods and theoretical lenses. The main focus is the active role of children in finding and embracing opportunities for social and academic engagement as part of their educational trajectories, identifying their agency in processes of change in the contrast between formal academic contexts and informal research discussions. In order to learn more about young people's academic and social experiences, the study is theoretically informed by two perspectives. The first perspective is Bourdieu's field analysis and the concepts of habitus, dispositions and agency. The analysis emphasises how and where children use their agency to engage with and manage expectations and options highlighted by institutional discourses and teachers. Looking at children's experience and engagement explicitly, the research highlights overlooked agency of children too easily categorised as EAL in the school field. The second analytical perspective explores engagement and trajectories in a classroom context and draws on Bernstein's constructs of classification and framing with the aim to explain how children engage and reflect on their experiences across differently structured classroom contexts. Drawing on theoretical constructs and research in the area of EAL and diversity more widely, I present six case studies of children's experiences. I demonstrate that in the case of children categorised as having EAL the social and academic aspects of learning highlight invisible agency, misinterpreted engagement and active negotiation of positioning. Learning English to access learning was not a central feature of the cases. I argue that in the light of gaps in teachers' understandings of children's experiences, theoretical interpretations, practical adjustments to classroom processes and communication could provide better understanding of the wider scope of children's experiences of schooling. In this study, children labelled as having EAL are the group whose transition stories are voiced, and EAL had only a limited role.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

Explanations are provided in the text where appropriate

| | |
|--------|---|
| AI | Analytic induction |
| BICS | Basic interpersonal communicative skills |
| CALP | Cognitive academic language proficiency |
| DfE | Department for Education |
| DfEE | Department for Education and Employment |
| DfES | Department for Education and Skills |
| EAL | English as an additional language |
| ESL | English as a second language |
| GCSE | General Certificate of Secondary Education |
| ID | Instructional discourse (Bernstein) |
| KS | Key Stage |
| NALDIC | National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum |
| NC | National Curriculum |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OFSTED | Office for Standards in Education |
| RD | Regulative discourse (Bernstein) |
| SAT | Standard Assessment Tasks (National Curriculum Assessments as the end of KS2) |
| SEN | Special educational needs |
| TA | Teaching assistant |

Chapter 1:

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the experiences of children labelled as having English as an additional language as they navigate between different educational contexts. The term English as an additional language (EAL) is used to refer to children and young people who speak more than one language but are educated in a predominantly English language medium and are categorised as learning EAL by schools and teachers. Typically, these are children whose families have migrated to the UK from other national and cultural contexts. The growing numbers of children learning EAL in British schools over the last decades have put their educational needs and achievement at the forefront of teachers' minds and practice, particularly in urban areas (NALDIC 2012). The major concerns from a school perspective, however, are about catching-up academically with peers and narrowing the achievement gap. Research has been carried out looking at children and young people's experiences of different aspects of the curriculum in comparative settings (e.g. Welply 2010), at primary school level (Conteh 2003, Gregory 2002), in relation to particular academic subjects (Haneda & Wells 2010, Cohen 2011) or in relation to learning English and coping with schooling (Pagett 2006, Walters 2007). However, little has been written about the agency and engagement of children learning EAL, leaving a gap in understanding how these children manage in changing school contexts.

The notion of agency is particularly important as it can be easily overlooked in school-based research in favour of language support and integration practices. In order to understand how agency operates, I look at the engagement of children, the decisions they make to negotiate or establish particular identities to reflect their positioning in

the classroom and equally in informal school contexts. I adopt series of interactive qualitative research methods to build understanding of children's experiences as they navigate between different school contexts. I adopt sociology of education theoretical lenses to analyse children's experiences from a wider perspective and in relation to particular theoretical understanding of the function and organisation of education. I achieve this by bringing together a framework influenced by Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein.

To be able to position the research theoretically, I begin by outlining the historical context of EAL and diversity in schools alongside barriers and opportunities for effective teaching and schooling as a major factor shaping children's experiences. This is necessary in order to understand the complexity in defining EAL from the point of view of schools and teachers, however, the main focus of the study remains the understanding of children's engagement and experiences in different contexts. This chapter sets the background for my research, the rationale and approach to addressing the topic. I then describe the research questions summarising the main argument. The chapter concludes with an outline of what follows.

1.2 Rationale

Much has been written about teaching and learning from a school and policy perspective but there is an apparent gap in understanding children's experiences as active agents in schooling. My interest in EAL arises from my personal story of developing as a bilingual initially in French and Bulgarian, and later grappling with the UK context, and my professional background as a former teacher in a bilingual school and ongoing research at Masters level.

My initial encounters similar to the experiences of newly arrived children learning EAL in the UK, are situated in the Belgian context. When I was eight years old my family moved from Bulgaria to Belgium following job opportunities for my parents. I attended

a French speaking school as a new arrival with no French. I still remember the first day when I only managed to stay calm for an hour before I started crying. I was distressed by all these people saying things that I could not understand, surrounded by desks and equipment so different from what I was used to. I was convinced that after crying my eyes out my parents would bring me back home to where I belonged. Later on I caught up with the language and made friends. I kept asking my mother about the meaning of new words and we looked them up in the dictionary together, the whole family worked through my homework, I learnt the language and became confident at school. When we returned to Bulgaria after a year my newfound bilingualism was subject to admiration of my fluent French. I was always asked to read out loud the texts in lessons and the teacher kept saying: 'Listen to her!' I was showcased to other teachers and older students as a miracle. When I transferred to an English speaking high school, there was no French option so I continued my education in English.

As a teacher, I experienced first-hand the learning and development of bilingual learners through an intensive language immersion programme. Working in the bilingual school for two years prompted me to ask questions about children's backgrounds, and how they ended up where they were. Some of the parents were keen to raise their children in the intersection of languages and cultures, while others were more interested in pursuing English as a source of capital and advantage in a world where language awareness and competence are increasingly important. As the school was set in Bulgaria, knowing many languages was important because Bulgarian could be viewed as having a perceived lower status in comparison to other widely spoken languages.

Although the term EAL is not used in Bulgaria, many of the children I worked with had similar experiences to learners of EAL in the UK. The school's immersion programme meant that only English was used during lesson and play times and the majority of children were from families where other languages were spoken at home. Although the

cultural and social context was different in the sense that the school was private and served particular social circles, there are similarities with the UK in different aspects of learning English. My role as a classroom teacher involved teaching all subject areas in English and also communicating with children on less formal matters, e.g. on the playground. As a teacher I have certainly developed an idea of how children learn English when fully immersed and I had developed some understanding of the fine line between EAL and bilingualism in the sense that the distinction is not clear cut. Oftentimes schools identify bilingual students as having EAL based on flexible criteria around fluency and language use. This makes the negotiation of a working definition of EAL a difficult task, especially in the intersection of bilingualism and relative fluency. As a professional, but also personally, I have struggled in positioning myself and children at the more advanced stages of learning and using English as either EAL or bilingual. Surely, EAL is a UK specific term, but I am using it in relation to my Bulgarian experience as a label for coherence highlighting that children were learning English alongside and in addition to other languages. My passion about raising independent and confident children prepared for the challenges of a complex globalised world combined with curiosity about how children experience the formal and informal processes of education in their schools form the foundations of this study. Through my teaching practice I became more sensitised to the different status of languages and cultures, how some backgrounds were more advantaged than others and how some people and their children had to work harder to be on par with those whose children spoke two languages at home.

As such, my primary interest during my Masters studies was to identify how EAL and language learning are framed in the UK. I carried out research in the south of England and explored a different shade of bilingualism and EAL. From a teacher perspective, speaking two or more languages in that context was more of a consequence rather than an aim. English was a prerequisite for children to be able to access learning and their other backgrounds did not matter as much. My interests started shifting towards the

support children were getting to access the primary curriculum and schooling more generally. My own transition to the UK was not straightforward. Although much older than the school students I researched, I experienced perhaps similar cultural, linguistic and academic barriers to understanding the full social complexity. Reading back some of my first notes I smile about the progress I have made - grappling with multiple languages, cultures and identities to be able to finally know I can belong and be myself in many different places.

The rationale for this study stems from my personal and professional development and experience of EAL and bilingualism. It also results from a review of the literature that explores diversity, its impact on education and the education of children characterised as EAL. Addressing the gap in understanding children's experiences of EAL and schooling is important as it will provide a fresh and practical perspective for teachers and others involved in education. I argue that giving voice to children's experiences and stories of navigating schooling would lead to better understanding of children as agents. The resulting knowledge of how children navigate schooling through different contexts and stages would be useful for teachers who may disregard agency on the part of children as seeing themselves in control of the classroom. In what follows, I outline the argument of my thesis and the steps I will take.

1.3 Diversity

Attention to diversity and its place in British values have been growing in schools in recent years. An increased awareness of the importance of enabling students to develop skills and gain appropriate knowledge for life in a multicultural society (Cummins 2001, Reay et al. 2011) has led to the introduction of specific policies and strategies. Policies have highlighted a focus on developing children's skills and learning for a future in a fast-paced world while demanding preparedness for unpredictable social and economic circumstances (DfEE 1999a) by making classrooms more welcoming to the diverse

characteristics of students, including (dis)ability, gender, background, religion reinforcing an intention of appreciation (Gillborn 1998, Tomlinson 2005). However, such guidance can be problematic as historically there are complex issues of understanding incorporated in society and the education field. My research experience and involvement in the education of children from diverse backgrounds and provision for those who have little or limited knowledge of English have presented me with inspirational stories about valuing diversity on the one hand, and rather disappointing statements of abandoning it for the sake of standards, testing and achievement, on the other hand. My own engagement with such ambiguities and literature in the field (see Alexander 2010, Cummins 2000, 2001, Tomlinson 2008) has pointed to tensions in the proposition of valuing diversity on a practical level. This is not an isolated British issue and there are examples of its international dimensions (Cummins 2001, Lyons 2010). The OECD in particular highlights that students from immigrant backgrounds tend to have negative experiences of schooling because of unequal expectations and culturally shaped educational practices (2010).

A brief historical overview would clarify the reasons and processes that have shaped understandings of diversity, multiculturalism and difference in British society today and in relation to current political debates around immigration. As argued by Cole and Blair (2006) social perceptions of difference stem from the complex historical context and relations in the past. Britain developed as a multicultural state as a result of imperial rule and subsequent waves of migration in the 1960s and later from the European Union expansion in Central and Eastern Europe. Negative attitudes towards newcomers and difference fostered continuous tensions and search for assimilation aiming to close the gap between immigrants and the local in favour of the majority. These processes favoured the idea of 'becoming and being' British as the desired outcome (Tomlinson 2008). However, there is a perceived difference between 'becoming' and 'being' as processes of identity shifting and negotiation in social and cultural places (Rassool 2004a). While becoming implies a different starting point and

a process of change and adaptation, being is associated with sameness and submissiveness in relation to dominant cultures. A timeline that explains the major changes in discourse and attitudes in relation to migration is provided below.

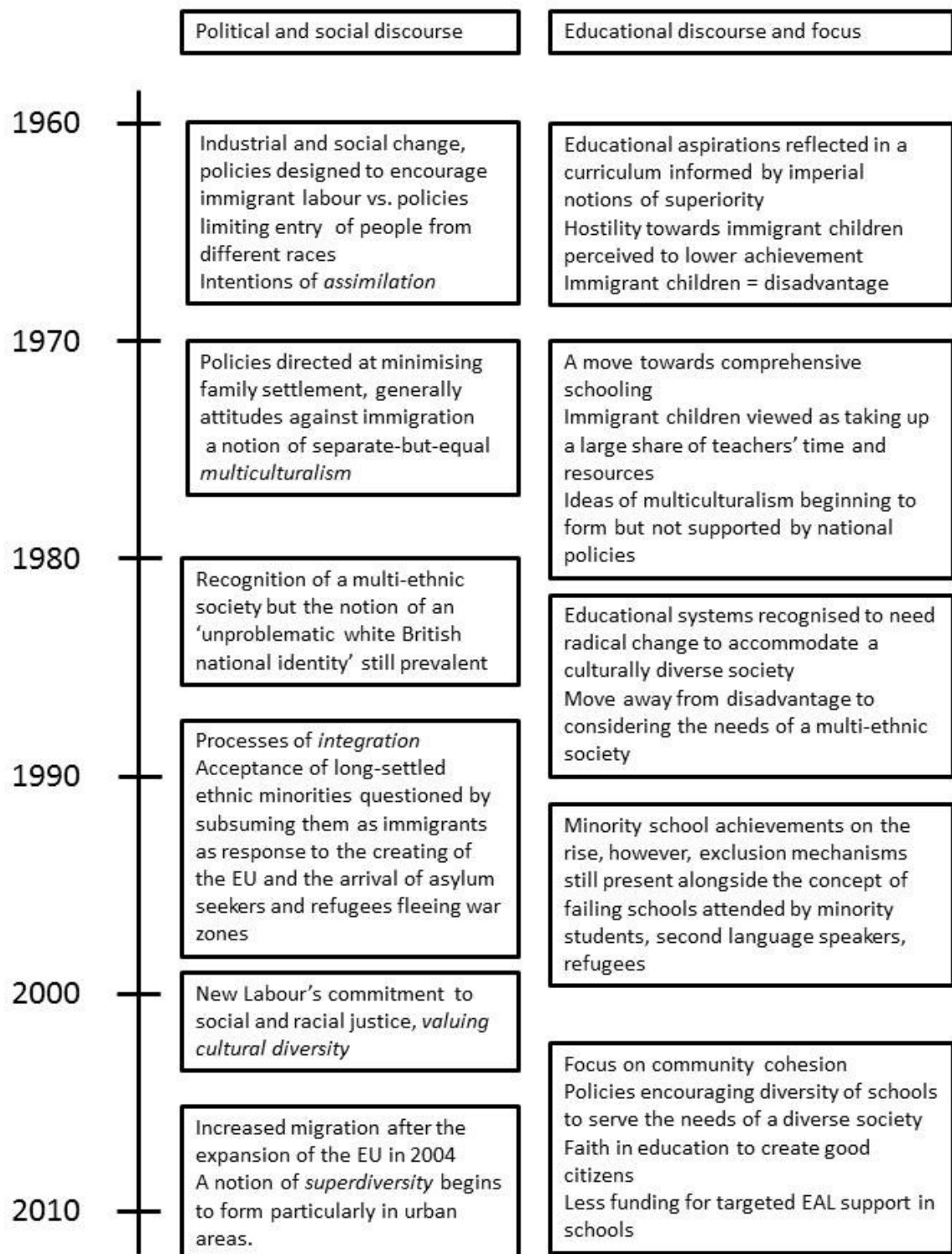


Figure 1.1: Timeline of the development of integration practices (Tomlinson 2008)

The table illustrates changing discourses and attitudes to the settlement and education of children from immigrant background. In the 1960s and 1970s the changing settlement patterns led to a widespread concern among parents that ethnic minority students and those who did not speak the language would consume disproportionately large amount of teachers' time and consequently lower the standards (Cole & Blair 2006). Proposed solutions to the general expectations of shifts in teachers' attention and time ranged from ideas of separate education to attempts for scattering minority students across a number of schools by 'bussing', a practice applied in the US context (Tomlinson 2008). Such practices, however, were not successful for several reasons. Firstly, the resistance of closely-knit minority communities played a major role. On the grounds of shared language, community cohesion, support and mutual understanding, immigrant families tend to cluster together resulting in the development of highly organised and effective communities aiming to preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage (Conteh 2012b). This could be explored from a perspective of overcoming the feeling of otherness fostered by unwelcoming general attitudes and resolved through belonging to a familiar environment where blending in and being ordinary can be achieved. Secondly, jobs concentrated in large cities and in smaller industrial towns, have reinforced specific patterns of settlement which consequently changed the demographics of the country (Tomlinson 2005).

The move towards child-centred and comprehensive schooling in the 1970s meant that ideas of multiculturalism largely began to form, but lack of support on policy level led to local authorities, schools and teachers trying to find their own contextual solutions based on local changes and innovations (Tomlinson 2008). A push towards demonstrating that minority cultures are valuable was present in schools, however, there was still an educational focus on the particular needs of immigrant children and positioning in relation to disadvantage and deprivation. Since the 1980s educational practice and policy has moved towards a mainstreaming approach where all children, irrespective of linguistic and national backgrounds were educated in their local schools

and with peers defined through the right to equal treatment and opportunities (Cole 2006, Costley 2014, UN 1948). The issue of equality of opportunity demands the construction of a just society where inequalities on individual and institutional level are questioned and resolved and diversity is seen as a resource rather than a barrier (Cole 2006). Cooper (2004) addresses issues of resources, power and expression pertinent to minority groups arguing that the concept of valuing diversity is linked to social and cultural differences in a way that these are not subordinated. She presents diversity in the light of equality of opportunities and resources. This is highly problematic as the idea of equality depends on the values and culture of those who recognise the difference and resource allocation (Cooper 2004). This is particularly relevant in the context of education where discourses and practice have shaping and reproductive functions (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990, Bernstein 2000). Therefore, equality is somewhat fluid, it is not fixed, and its dependence on power and social justice makes it more difficult to be effected.

More recently, the question of whose diversity can be valued became even more important in the debate of difference and its perceived advantages. For instance, in the field of disability studies, Benjamin (2005) concludes that teachers are generally more positive towards students whose behaviours are less or not disruptive at all. As a result, the value placed on diversity is dependent on teachers' capacity to tolerate certain behaviours and their own assumptions about society, the classroom and learning in particular (Bruner 1996). This instance maintains an assertion that some differences would not be celebrated, or supported (Cooper 2004), and such beliefs are based on the perception of a norm.

Widespread assumptions and stereotypes about the learning characteristics of students from ethnic minority backgrounds exist historically, regardless of their status as first or second and third generation (Walters 2007, Tackey et al. 2011, Tomlinson 2008). Cole and Blair (2006) look at the experiences of 'marginalised groups', such as students

from Afro-Caribbean heritage who are widely considered as demonstrating aggressive and violent behaviours, and Asian students viewed as 'passive' and in this sense 'ideal' students (Ibid, p.77). While historically Black students have suffered negative attitudes and social and educational exclusion on the most part (Garcia 1999, Tomlinson 2008) more positive attitudes towards Asian students highlight that diversity could be seen as a positive or negative characteristic in different circumstances. As a result, some groups of ethnic minority students could be favoured upon others. As such, stereotypes are 'complex and difficult processes that do not affect all ethnic minority groups in similar ways' (Gillborn 1998, p.722).

Another interesting point is the assumption that ethnic minority students are likely to experience underachievement compared to their peers (Tomlinson 2008, Walters 2007, Reay et al. 2011). Originating in the 1970s and 1980s, this notion is still evident to date. Despite government initiatives for improvement of educational outcomes such as Excellence in Cities (DfEE 1999b) and Aiming High (DfES 2005) research highlights discrepancies on a practical level (Butcher et al. 2007, Costley 2014). Walters (2007) argues that the variation in achievement results from differences in expectations due to stereotypes rather than unequal academic potential. Even though such views are detrimental to the development of children and lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy for low attainment and lack of motivation (Rosenthal & Jacobson 1968), it proves to be difficult to act upon them as they are deeply rooted in social and historical development, embedded in culture and not explicitly understood or visible (Bruner 1996, Jenkins 2002).

Language teaching is perceived as a strategy to improve league tables and academic results for accountability reasons (Tomlinson 2005) and fails to recognise the benefits for students growing up with more than one language (Cummins 2001). Furthermore, social understandings remain under the shadow of historical events and perceived hostility to newcomers, as illustrated in Figure 1.1. Rassool (2004a) explains the racial

discourse in Britain as discriminating in the conceptualisation of 'otherness' framing immigration as problematic. This is a cautious explanation of the common processes which children, young people and adults endure as part of their transition to a different country/cultural environment. Cultural identities which have been developed over time shift in the adaptation and integration into a new context but some aspects are retained. Perhaps, this is what the educational system fails to capture and use as an advantage.

A more recent term reflecting the effects of globalisation in the face of increased migration, easier travel, the expansion of the EU and increased numbers of people seeking asylum or refuge in the UK is the notion of superdiversity. Superdiversity adds new dimensions to the issue of diversity bringing into consideration additional factors such as where and how people live, migration status and purpose of residing in the host country (Vertovec 2007). These are significantly different from the predominantly economic waves of migration in the 1960s and 1970s. In addition to our increased understanding of migration and immigration as global phenomenon, Wessendorf (2014) points out Vertovec's concern with the increased variety of characteristics constituting minority backgrounds in addition to origin and language, adding length and circumstances of staying and economic positioning. The UK has seen an increasing number of superdiverse communities and 'circular migration' after the EU A8¹ in 2004 (Conteh 2012, p. 11) with people from very different backgrounds, cultures and religions living alongside each other. Such migration is complex in the sense that new migrants join and leave. Therefore, settling long-term may not be an option as in the past when migrants joined communities with long-term establishment intentions with people from similar backgrounds as a support network.

In relation to schools and education, this means new categories of students who happen to be in the UK for different reasons. Those fleeing war zones enter as asylum

¹ The A8 nations, short for "accession eight", the eight former ex-communist European countries in Northern and Central Europe that acceded to the EU in 2004: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia.

and refugee seekers (Hamilton & Moore 2004) and some arrive through European migration routes (Conteh 2012b). Others arrive as a result of their parents' occupation. Conteh draws attention to a new category of children– sojourners, whose parents are working or studying in England for a limited period of time (2012b, p.13). Superdiversity emphasises the changing nature and instability of student populations in schools in terms of education and support for those entering and leaving the education systems at different and oftentimes unpredictable points. In this respect, Rassool (2004b) highlight that the predominantly monolingual education discourses in the UK face a challenge in responding to the needs of superdiverse communities. It is also stressed that superdiversity carries notions of contradiction and tension in pursuing inclusion for some, while exacerbating the inequality of others (Rassool 2004b). The debate around inequality and 'the other' is historically defined and there has been limited evidence in policies actively tackling such issues, however, social attitudes and discourses around globalisation have contributed to more palpable social justice and an awareness that multilingualism in addition to multiculturalism is being perceived increasingly as social capital.

With respect to the perceived achievement gap between students from different ethnic backgrounds, research evidence suggests that albeit the achievement of learners at GCSE level has improved, there is still a considerable gap between the results of bilingual learners and monolingual peers (NALDIC 2012). Gillborn (1997) argues that achievement and experience are socially constructed categories; therefore, the continuously observed patterns of underachievement of ethnic minority students could be interpreted as resulting from a complex interrelation with social attitudes and expectations where low expectations predetermine low achievement (Rosenthal & Jacobson 1968, Walters 2007). Along with continuous processes of identity construction and shifting, especially in the case of recent arrivals in the country, ethnic minority students are exposed to an unwelcoming environment which shapes social groups unfairly in terms of opportunity, access and understanding. In this case social

practices function as an invisible process of assimilation allowed by ambiguous policies about diversity (Cooper 2004, Gillborn 1997). In recent months and with the approaching general elections, public concerns with immigration and difference are growing further as a result of political discourses around the impact on schools and fears of overcrowding. Such inflammatory discourse is not helpful as it alienates different populations and cultural groups while at the same time educational authorities seek the promotion of British values around tolerance and understanding (Monaghan 2014). As a result, misunderstanding of what EAL means for British schools and failing to position the concept beyond language leads to complications and attitudes that challenge difference instead of learning from and about it.

1.4 Outlining the argument

The key motivation for this research is personal but also emerges from the brief historical overview of the realities of current EAL practice and the need to explore children's experiences in the context of school and changing environments. Transition between primary and secondary school was a strategic choice to enable me to capture the experiences of the same group of children in two or more different contexts while having the opportunity to study each of these. This meant more concrete and holistic understanding of the changes in schooling that children experience, a good insight into the ways they engage in different contexts alongside the barriers and enablers of this, and an understanding of the different fields of practice and interactions inside and outside the classroom that shape children's positioning. I attempt to build this understanding through series of qualitative case studies.

Although the research is carried out in an area where the school population consists predominantly of children labelled as having EAL, their diversity and EAL is not the main focus. The exploration is concerned with the experiences of this particular group of children and not their linguistic development. In this sense, EAL is used as the term

that bounds a particular group of children in English schools who come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This diversity influences their social and school positioning where language is an aspect of their background and culture. Exploring experiences could point towards the importance of identity and diversity beyond spoken language. However, evidence points out that in schools the major concern for students learning EAL is not their overall adjustment and inclusion in the dominant context but a focus on language in order to catch-up with learning and peers. My view is that children's diversity contributes to a wealth of experiences and ways of doing which explored through the lenses of language or background in isolation are reduced to mismatches between the dominant and immigrant culture. EAL incorporates a holistic picture of the child/young person with all their experiences and influences that make them who they are. Nevertheless, this notion is problematic in the sense that it adopts a holistic perspective named with a reductive term. The reason for this is the need for terminology that could be used consistently in relation to EAL while addressing the lack of clear definition in both academic and practice fields.

I develop the argument of the thesis in relation to the sub-questions that will enable me to answer the main research question:

How do children labelled as having EAL express agency, engagement and negotiate positioning as they navigate through different contexts in the school field?

The sub-questions are:

1. How do children labelled as having EAL act on their positioning, agency and engagement in informal educational contexts?
2. How do children labelled as having EAL navigate through their formal schooling (meaning positioning, agency and dispositions in formal educational contexts)?

3. How does positioning in the informal contexts of schooling relate to/play out in the context of lessons?
4. What are the implications for schools in the light of my research?

The sub-questions aim to provide an exploratory framework for answering the main question. They are focused on the different contexts of schooling I aim to understand before being able to present children's experiences in their complexity. All of the research questions are focused on both primary and secondary stages of education with transition between Year 6 and 7 being the lens to capture change while maintaining specific focus and developing in-depth knowledge of the different institutional contexts. I collate the answers of these questions through research engagement with a group of Year 6 students categorised as having EAL attending the same primary school. Shadowing them into their new secondary schools I continue to capture their engagement, agency and identity shifts both academically and socially but in different circumstances.

The first sub-question is concerned with the informal or personal aspects of education and focused on what happens in schools in general. This question explores children's experiences while away from formal interaction and lessons – in break, lunch times, on the playgrounds, on the corridors. Through Bourdieu's theoretical tools, which I will introduce in Chapter 2, I explore the habitus, dispositions, and capitals that children make use of in positioning themselves in informal contexts and in relation to peers. My initial assumption is that I will be exploring tacit ways of being and doing where children rely on social capitals in an informal environment which will be considerably different from the official schooling context. My argument is that in this process, the cultural and social capital of children learning EAL plays out in a more natural way as they act on/engage with their experiences as an individual with accompanying history, dispositions, identity and agency.

The second sub-question shifts the attention to understanding experiences of the structured classroom and lesson context. Bernstein's pedagogic discourses, classification and framing, again to be introduced in Chapter 2, are used to understand the role of interactions and ownership of classroom control and management. I focus on children's engagement with the pedagogic text and role of teachers and their responses seeing the classroom as a place of shifting interactions. In order to obtain a comparative view, I look at two core curriculum subjects – English and Science representing different discourses and types of knowledge. Evidence from classrooms aims to uncover children's understanding of pedagogic discourse and how they use it in lessons and beyond. Contrary to children's informal experiences, the curriculum experiences are expected to be centred on more formal interaction which implies navigation and negotiation processes.

Having explored both formal and informal contexts of education, the third sub-question is linking the two in analysing children's positioning in the different contexts which have different significance for teachers. My main focus will be on how children's habitus and dispositions shift in different contexts enabling or preventing them from regulating their behaviour and engagement in accordance with the pedagogic expectations of teachers. There will be emphasis on explicit pedagogic discourses as opposed to implicit and cultural knowledge. Obtaining an understanding of teachers' views of children and their educational journeys will provide a notion of expectations and assumptions embedded in the pedagogic discourse. With this in mind, my role as a researcher and as someone who has shadowed children for a substantial period of time will play out as an advantage in interpreting and giving voice to children's experiences through theoretical lenses.

The last question is a consequential question about the impact of the research project and dissemination of findings. A guiding question in relation to teachers is: What do we need to pay attention to in terms of changing school contexts more broadly, but also

in the case of children learning EAL? I intend to trial a method drawn from conversations in schools as a support tool with the potential to make the transition process more favourable for children learning EAL. The most important feature of this effort is to come up with a tool that can be easily incorporated in busy classrooms to supply teachers with first-hand knowledge about children's experiences. These ideas are further discussed in the methodology chapter.

I now return to the overall question which aims to explore processes of negotiation of positioning, engagement and agency as children labelled as having EAL move between different contexts. Through focus on primary to secondary school transition I capture the change of contexts and its impact on children's agency and positioning in several different ways. I look at both formal and informal contexts of schooling – the classroom and out-of-lesson activities and engagement. I also assume that classroom engagement is not the same across all subjects and stages of education, hence the focus on two subject areas as points for contrast. In addition to this, the backgrounds of children provide another layer of complexity and ways to look at their experiences and schooling altogether. Although these conditions may seem complex, through them I aim to capture the intricacy of children's experiences, agency and engagement rather than a static view of EAL as related to language and the curriculum. This research is intended to shift the focus away from the individual experience as a descriptive account and to prompt a more critical analysis of the data in relation to theory. The wording 'positioning, agency, engagement' have broader implications than experiences as narration. An exploration of these requires a critical look at the data beyond the immediate words of participants and includes my active participation as an interpreter of children's accounts and advocacy in conversations with teachers. My close engagement would be a crucial element of my research in terms of positioning and knowledge of the children, their background and transition stories.

The thesis is positioned as a project that questions currently adopted understandings of children's experiences of schooling and the notion that teaching and learning are to be orchestrated by the teachers. Drawing on theoretical constructs, the story I tell is about invisible agency, misinterpreted engagement and positioning negotiation much more complex than the notion of two cultures, two languages, two personas (Garcia 1999). In this thesis, I argue for the importance of curiosity about children's experiences and their usefulness in understanding engagement and transitions between different schools and contexts. If teachers could seek and then incorporate understanding of their students' experiences in their practice or opportunities for students to reflect and make use of those experiences in classroom contexts, this will make the classroom a more transparent and collaborative environment. Children might then benefit from not being marginalised through good/bad, same/other discourses but seen as active agents. Engagement could be interpreted more widely and in relation to identity and cultural options for children which may not always be immediately visible. My research is an attempt to begin addressing experiences through creative use of theories that complement each other to uncover more precise analysis and understanding.

1.5 Thesis structure

Chapter 2 sets out the theoretical framework for the study. It begins with my own theoretical positioning journey which has impact on finding a productive way to work with the two frameworks. I describe Bourdieu's field analysis as the main framework used to understand the social context of schooling and the informal experiences of children. I then turn to Bernstein, whose pedagogic discourses, framing and classification are used at the classroom level to unpick children's experiences and interactions with each other and their teachers. The chapter concludes with an argument about the complementary role of the two theoretical frameworks.

Chapter 3 brings together relevant literature on EAL and diversity in order to situate my research. The literature review considers the meaning of EAL and then narrows the focus to schools, the curriculum and transitions. It then explores the perceptions of teachers and children in turn in order to capture different stakeholders in schools focusing on enabling practices in relation to EAL that move away from the notion of language as a marker of school success. The chapter concludes by reiterating the importance of considering first-hand student perspectives in understanding schooling experiences.

Chapter 4 describes the research methodology and processes that took place in preparation for and during the fieldwork. I outline my analysis strategy in the light of expected evidence. The chapter concludes with considerations around research ethics and quality criteria for the study in terms of credibility and rigour, triangulation, coherence and transferability.

Chapter 5 introduces the context of the primary and secondary schools involved in my study. It then moves on to tell the stories of the children in a case study format and concludes with teachers' conceptualisation of children and their transition experiences. This sets the basis for my analysis as evidence that teachers' perceptions are not always an objective reflection of the experiences of children.

Chapter 6 brings the full complexity of transition experiences through the stories of Eyaz and Hani. It begins by illustrating the theoretical framework with data. Children's experiences are then presented chronologically from Year 6 into Year 7 and analysed with the two frameworks. The two stories are very different in the way children use their agency and negotiate positions in primary and secondary schools and with peers. They also lead to a different set of outcomes and implications in their schooling.

Chapter 7 continues the theoretical analytical journey by adding four more cases – Ayanna, Taj, Subira and Hakim. The aim of this chapter is to illustrate how the

theoretical framework could be applied to understand children's experiences in different contexts and collate meanings that are useful to teachers in making decisions in their classrooms. The chapter concludes with a consideration of different perspectives of transition and the implications for individual children in terms of navigation and agency.

Chapter 8 presents the findings from the case studies and discusses these in relation to wider EAL and diversity debates.

Chapter 9 draws the thesis to a conclusion reflecting on the research process and restating the answers to the research questions. It highlights the implications of the research, its contribution to knowledge and further research possibilities.

Chapter 2:

Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

EAL is only one aspect of the education of children from diverse backgrounds and there are many other factors that shape their experiences. In order to investigate these, the use of theoretical lenses is crucial because they can situate the study in broader social terms, before linking it to other literature and reveal the complexity of children's experiences.

I use two social theories to assist with unpacking children's experiences and EAL-ness as part of a much wider picture. The integration of two theoretical strands is an aspiration to generate a thorough understanding of different aspects of children's experiences – social positioning and developing relationships as well as the formal academic experiences of classroom contexts and interactions. This will provide a coherent and embedded use of terminology around EAL and schooling in line with the major theoretical strands. The theoretical language established in this chapter will be used in making sense of the data and referring to specific 'thinking tools' for explaining the generated evidence. The chapter sets out a theoretical framework acknowledging my broader theoretical positioning and then focusing on the theories. I describe selected concepts from Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein, before finally discussing the symbiosis of the two theories in relation to my research aims.

2.2 Theoretical positioning

In educational research, theory can have a practical role in providing thinking tools to develop systematic analysis of complex issues and reflexivity (Ball 2010). Theory has played an important role in my development as a researcher and refining the direction

and shape of my work. Throughout my studies I engaged with a number of theories explaining different aspects of education and society. The starting position of my PhD was to explore EAL experiences from the narrow perspective of language and achievement, however, in the course of the pilot study and engagement with highly diverse schools through other university projects, I began embracing the bigger picture and how EAL fits into this. I realised that EAL was at times a label to enable differentiated teaching and access to learning, but there were uncertainties as to what constitutes EAL and no uniform definition of the term. Is EAL only language related? Does it mean not being able to speak English? Or is it a marker of a much more complicated positioning within a wider context?

Through the work of Cummins (2000, 2001) I engaged with issues around empowerment and disempowerment, vulnerability and culture in relation to bilingualism and ethnic minority students. This enabled me to see EAL experiences as stretching beyond language knowledge and access to learning. I then began to engage with social theories aiming to explain how society functions and the role of culture, upbringing and values. Linking this to the cases of children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds started shaping my thinking towards the bigger picture of schooling experiences. Although some of Cummins' work looks beyond the school gates (2001), I became more interested to explore experiences of moving between different school contexts from a wider perspective and at two levels – social and academic. I was keen to look at positioning and interactions as shaping factors and discover the role of EAL and culture in the way children experienced their schooling. The use of transition between primary and secondary school was a strategic decision allowing me to capture changes between contexts and track children's stories in their making.

My starting point before narrowing down to individual experiences was theorising culture and learning in a social context. Societies operate with sets of beliefs, traditions and practices originating in the past but embedded into day-to-day life as tacit

knowledge, or implicit ways of being and knowing (Erickson et al. 2008). Essentially, they act as the glue that keeps a group together but differentiates them from outsiders. Involving people in research, therefore, draws upon asking them about their social world and the positions they occupy in it. However, participants often present ‘official accounts’ based on the implicit knowledge about their social grouping and order (Jenkins 2002). In this respect, a theory explaining society at large and educational principles has the potential to uncover what is going on beyond learnt discourses.

Part of child development is the individual accumulation of socially recognised sets of beliefs and traditions. Accounts of the world are constructed from a collective and individual perspective simultaneously because of our social existence. There is a suggestion that tradition relies on reproductive processes of transmitting already existing knowledge and beliefs (Bernstein 2000, Bruner 1996). These transmissions are a source of objectified truths for the members of a particular society and of crucial importance when analysing educational contexts and the engagement of children from diverse backgrounds. In the context of increasing international migration, the values and beliefs of individuals who become dislocated from their original locations may require revision and shifting in relation to the change of context (He et al. 2008). This is not an easy or straightforward, conscious process. My thesis focuses on this very process from the perspective of children who find themselves alternating between different national, cultural and organisational contexts. Children experience the shaping and reshaping of their worldviews from a unique perspective of navigating between such contexts on a daily basis. So then, what is it that they experience and engage with in school and how is that shaped by their backgrounds? More importantly, I am interested in how children understand and interact with the experience of being ‘in-between’ different worldviews and values.

Understanding the accounts of positioning and engagement of children learning EAL could be problematic in terms of identity and processes of decision making. These

children balance between different contexts while adopting certain practices and knowledge and rejecting others for the purposes of creating an environment which works in their complex social situation. Every social situation is multi-layered which requires significant time investments into building understanding of it. Becoming familiar with a social context is not only about obtaining membership; it is much more about the ongoing relationship and interaction between the context and the participants or the practical logic which may not be immediately visible (Jenkins 2002, p. 70). As a result of this initial theorisation, it could be summarised that the knowledge funds of children living with several languages and cultures are much more complex than usual as they consist of coexisting cultural capitals, fields and practice in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts. I explain further how this complexity is addressed using the two frameworks and selected concepts.

2.3 Bourdieu at the social context level

Bourdieu's work is concerned with practice and the complexity of the world (Ball 2010). His thinking tools situate what people do daily within the wider patterns of social life where practice is located in both space and time (Jenkins 2002). The argument is that understanding events, situations and actions requires a look at the wider space where related interactions take place. According to Thomson (2012) this includes locating the object in question in its historical and local context and examining the construction and purpose of any previous knowledge about this same object. Bourdieu summarises these relations in the following way:

$$[(\text{habitus}) (\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice}$$

(Maton 2012, p.50)

A closer look at the concepts of habitus, field and capital can enable understanding of the broad context of children who represent different cultural heritage and languages. These concepts will provide a systematic language to outline the social issues that lower barriers or contribute to education at large and in the institutional level of schools. This

is related to identifying key points about the sense children make of their schooling, transitions and relationships, the way they talk about their experiences as they navigate through the educational system and the actual meaning of their experience for themselves and teachers.

Part of the preliminary task in defining key terminology is to look into the language used by Bourdieu to explain the ways in which human beings engage with social contexts, both as individuals and as part of society. The concepts that I adopt in my framework are habitus, capital, field, agency and misrecognition. I briefly review them here and summarise their application to my study by looking at navigation within schooling as evidence of experience.

Habitus

The habitus is a complex system of dispositions, patterns, ways of knowing and doing which are shaped by past and present experiences. It does not exist in isolation but in and through practice and interactions with others. As well as being a structured system, the habitus has an explicit structuring function in terms of present and future practice operating in a systematic and patterned way (Maton 2012, p. 50). The habitus develops through socialisation in childhood but it is constantly readjusted as the individual grows and interacts with different fields. As such, the habitus could be described as an accumulated knowledge fund of ways of talking, moving, and encoded in social and learning processes (Jenkins 2002). The habitus is both an embodiment and internalisation of behaviours and ways of thinking. Bourdieu describes it as ‘an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted’ (Bourdieu 1997, p.95).

Reay (2004) explains habitus as the ongoing and explanatory link between practice (agency), social capital and the field (structure). This view of the habitus as a mediatory level between the individual and their practice and the group understandings or cultural models is an important one. Habitus has an active role in facilitating the

expression of individualism within a socially constructed environment but also integrating the most common social constructs within the individual and regulating practice in this way. In this respect the habitus is:

‘A socialised body. A structured body, a body which has incorporated the immanent structures of a world or of a particular sector of that world – a field – and which structures the perception of that world as well as action in that world.’

(Bourdieu 1998, p.81, in Reay 2004, p. 432)

The habitus has a dual function in accumulating ways of doing and being from a social perspective as options on the one hand, and realising these options as actions or practice, on the other hand (Reay 2004). There is a notion of reproductive power associated with the habitus - ways of being and doing are socially constructed and transferred to successive generations which in turn inherit these patterns and adopt them in their behaviours.

However, Reay (2004) and Mills (2008) look for understanding beyond reproduction bringing attention to the potentially transformative possibilities of the habitus which generate choices related to individual practice. These choices are seemingly restricted to the range of opportunities and constraints from the external environment, and the appeal of internally conceived options. Generally speaking, the possibilities for action could be classified as either implausible or desirable where ‘the most improbable practices are rejected as unthinkable, but, concomitantly, only a limited range of practices are possible’ (Reay 2004, p.433). Individuals recognise possible actions through the prism of the habitus and act on them according to their level of plausibility. The choice of actions could define their course as constraining, hence reproductive, or transformative and leading towards change. Apple discusses the transformative aspect in Bourdieu’s theoretical framework and what he calls conversion strategies related to capital (2001). These are explained as a mechanism that brings together the different forms of capital to create new options for action. In this respect, conversion strategies

are linked to the transformative potential of the habitus and how the capitals and fields are positioned within the wider social field.

Combining these ideas with EAL, the habitus is formed by practice and interactions within different cultural and social fields. These contexts are not on par even though they co-exist. Let us assume a simplified version of the contexts of children learning EAL. The dominant culture is represented in schooling, social institutions and interaction with members of this culture, while the original (home) culture remains somewhat subordinated in the context of the dominant one. The habitus of children learning EAL who are experiencing different cultures and levels of interaction simultaneously highlights different educational success options and positioning (Reay 2004, Thomson 2002). The habitus is shaped by previous experiences and collective histories, cultural views and shared knowledge which interact with other values in a school context where particular types of capital are recognised and promoted. The habitus of children learning EAL consists of socially competent performances developed under different conditions in the form of tacit knowledge. In a situation when a child is separated from their original context, their practice or habitual manifestations may seem incomprehensible within the dominant context in terms of their conceivability as decision-making is framed by the habitus (Jenkins 2002, p. 77). This is further explained through the concepts field, capital and misrecognition to illustrate what sense schools make of such manifestations.

Field

A field is the social context where practice takes place. It is a structured system of interlinked social positions that can be occupied by individuals or institutions (Jenkins 2002, p. 85). The positioning depends on a network of power relations between social positions in the field and rules of dominance and subordination in terms of access to resources (Maton 2012). Bourdieu explains the field as a social space with:

“a set of objective power relations that impose themselves on all who enter the field and that are irreducible to the intentions of the individual agents or even to the direct interactions among the agents.”

(Bourdieu 1985, p. 724)

Grenfell (2012) clarifies the objective defining principles of power relations with their dual pre-constructed and evolving nature within the social domain – ‘they are the product and process of what already-has-been’ (p.45). As such, they offer objective regulation of ways of being and doing based on collective habitus and capital. In schools the objective power relations regulate the use of resources, capital and expectations to define roles in the field. Children learn to conform to such relations from a very early stage, but the particular power relations may differ in other cultural contexts. In this case, children accumulate forms of capital relevant to their particular contexts and circumstances but need adjusting to new contexts (for instance in the case of transitions to another school or country).

A commonly used metaphor to describe Bourdieu’s field is the playing/football field (Nolan 2012, Thomson 2012). As such the field could be likened to a game with associated rules. Each field operates under specific rules or forces that guide the positioning. In the school field the rules result from the dominant cultural and social power relations and the positioning of actors within institutions. I use the idea that the school field is structured by the expectations of teachers and schools, along with the dominant discourse around socio-economic status and ethnicity. These powerful social discourses externally shape individual and collective expectations and positioning options for children from diverse backgrounds based on their language, ethnicity, ability and gender (Black 2007, Walters 2007, West et al. 2010).

Children, teachers and support staff have different positions and sets of rules they follow in the schooling game. However, adherence to the rules operates through the actors’ individual habitus and dominant discourse; therefore actions and agency are influenced by the interests and dispositions of these same actors. Bourdieu states that

‘there will be as many senses of the game, as many practical understandings of interest as there are games’ (Bourdieu 1990, p. 110 in Thomson 2002, p. 138). The games, taking place simultaneously, are orchestrated by particular interests, circumstances, locations, actors, experiences. In my study, it could be argued that part of the teachers’ role is providing teaching that reflects the dominant discourses through to their students but also their own positions around contexts and circumstances. Students in the school field are in constant interaction with the dominant discourse and capitals which provide grounds for using their habitus and dispositions as part of the game in which they seek to acquire capital as means of negotiating positioning.

Capital

Capital is used to describe the resources exchanged in the field (Jenkins 2002, p.85):

- Economic capital as goods, economic status and resources;
- Social capital as relations with significant others and positioning in relation to members of the field;
- Cultural capital as recognition of different types of legitimate knowledge and practice;
- Symbolic capital as ‘prestige and social honour’.

Bourdieu defines social capital as ‘the sum of the resources... that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 119 in Spaaij 2012). Thus, positions in the field exist in relation to different forms of capital and their perceived value within the specific context. They create a scope for struggles within the field or relations between positions and forms of capital because of their different significance:

‘A field is, by definition, ‘a field of struggles’ in which agents’ strategies are concerned with the preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining capital of the field.’
(Jenkins 2002, p.85)

In terms of EAL in the school field, important forms of capital are social, symbolic and cultural as they influence the position of children in relation to the dominant discourse. There may be mismatches between the host culture and new capitals which create tensions, rejections or alignment when the dominant group recognises the forms of capital demonstrated by children from minority backgrounds leading to reproduction. When the capital is not recognised, there is symbolic violence and misrecognition on the part of the dominant culture.

However, capital is not always consciously pursued; it may arise from engagement and practice in the field. Spaaij (2012) deconstructs these forms of capital in relation to the experience of Somali migrants in Australia:

- ‘Bonding social capital’ based on similar ethno-cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Ibid, p. 1526);
- ‘Bridging social capital’ creating links between different social environments while focusing on perceived similarities within groups, e.g. religious identity and race as important markers that inform bridging efforts (Ibid, p. 1528);
- ‘Linking social capital’ with institutional agents and a notion of developing ‘knowledge of the system’ emphasising the ways in which minorities can generate social capital for others (Ibid, p. 1531).

Social capital as a concept is operationalised in Chapter 7 with data in the context of EAL and children’s positioning in the field. Their importance is in illustrating how through conversion strategies children learning EAL seek other forms of capital not necessarily pursued by those from the dominant culture.

Agency

Bourdieu does not explicitly talk about agency but explains the active positions of agents in the field. Agents are able to change their habitus and positions through

accumulating relevant capitals. A key idea is that the field requires fitting into its formally recognised rules (Thomson 2002). Bourdieu puts it that ‘at the risk of feeling themselves out of place, individuals who move into a new space must fulfil the conditions that the space tacitly requires of its occupants’ (Bourdieu 1999, p.128). This is particularly relevant to children learning EAL in the light of the dominant view that language learning would enable them to access schooling and fit in, or other similar assumptions.

Mills (2008) draws attention to the fact that disadvantaged students ‘may feel constrained by their circumstances’ (p.82) and thus fail to recognise their individual agency and its transformative potential. Accepting the world the way it is indicates a passive role at the individual habitual level. On the contrary, students with similar circumstances may capture opportunities to experiment and initiate change of the status quo. Mills suggests that these actions are ‘an attempt by some students to *make things happen*, rather than have things happen to them’ (p.83, original emphasis). The active element in transformative practice is of immense importance. Nonetheless, in the context of education, schools need to create conditions for students to foster change and make it happen. In terms of educational policy and research, this approach relates to the School for All idea (Ainscow et al. 2006) and the notion of including student voice in school processes (Ainscow et al. 2012). However, it is not a straightforward approach to apply and there are a number of theoretical accounts that confirm the reproductive structure of education systems despite attempts to focus on transformative practices and pedagogies (Apple 2001).

Navigation

Having established that a large number of children learning EAL have a non-standard entry into the English educational system, their introduction to school could be potentially challenging in terms of introducing different environments, rules and expectations. These may differ from what they know at home or previous educational

experiences (Gregory 2002) requiring a process of adaptation, negotiation and development of strategies to manage the new context. What constituted their daily activities may no longer be acceptable or practiced which prevent their usual ways of being, knowing and interacting with the environment and others. Being in a new context requires navigation between shifting conditions and practices in making sense of the new field. Navigation is the process of making sense of past and present fields through the habitus and its durable dispositions, relevant capitals and agency that offer options for positioning in the new context.

Once children are introduced to the English educational system with their habitus developed in past experiences and practice, the rules of the new field pose challenges to their understandings. This leads to changes in behaviours to accommodate the differences or resistance as individuals' habitus are constructed in social contexts and practice leading to searching and redefining positioning and identity (Packer & Goicoechea 2000). The interactions of children learning EAL in the new field in relation to prior experiences require careful analysis in order to capture both the obvious and less evident changes in their dispositions and positioning. Membership in a social context or a community may be a problematic process in terms of adopting a different culture or 'enculturation' (Packer & Goicoechea 2000) but there are different ways in which people can relate to communities and social sub-groupings in addition to variations in the processes of recognition and acceptance.

It is important to note that these processes are characteristic for both children born in the host country and those arriving at a later stage. The case of children born and raised in the host country or those who have arrived at a very early age may not be as visible to teachers due to children's fluency in everyday speech and functioning masking potentially poor academic and language skills (Cummins 2000, p. 69). Nonetheless the adaptation process takes place in parallel with ongoing engagement

with the home environment which denotes a rich habitus in the intersection of cultures and contexts.

Misrecognition

Misrecognition is a less commonly used concept from Bourdieu's framework, but considering the focus of my research, it can be a powerful way to understand the experiences and positioning of children learning EAL in their complex schooling environments. It provides a way to look at children and their EAL-ness holistically in terms of backgrounds, cultures, social classes and individual characteristics. It is related to symbolic violence which Jenkins defines as imposing value systems and meanings upon others in a way that they are perceived as legitimate:

‘...the process whereby power relations stand not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder’

(2002, p. 104)

Earlier on I presented the idea of fitting in in school contexts as a prerequisite in the transitions of children learning EAL. However, as Jenkins clarifies, this is achieved through power relationships and the ways in which children understand them as factors shaping attempts to fit in. Teachers' interpretations of these attempts are related to their own culture (dominant) and ways of seeing leading to misrecognition. This is an almost natural process that they do not operate consciously, teachers see things in particular ways. However, misrecognition and agency go together in the fact that agency may not be recognised as legitimate because of misrecognition. Schubert (2012) highlights that students could be disadvantaged through pedagogic action and language as these reflect the dominant interests and culture. In this respect, children who possess the right capital at the beginning of their schooling are privileged, while others have their agency misrecognised as means of reproducing the current social order. Jenkins identifies this as a general theory of socialisation (2002), which in the case of children learning EAL means socialisation in the UK context by implying

particular ways of being and views on children. However, misrecognition operates on the part of students too when they seek to apply behaviours in the dominant context through their own interpretation. It could be argued that in this case, by producing utterances deemed not relevant by teachers, children misinterpret the rules of the game and context. This could be described as misrecognition, or ‘the process by which people fail to see the social origins of social and cognitive categories’ (Schubert 2012, p. 193). Schubert (2012) argues further that as categories are socially constructed, such misrecognitions can indeed be actual recognition in the sense that agents’ understanding and intentions are in line with the particular field.

Next I turn to the theoretical constructs of Bernstein to provide a framework for understanding classroom experiences and teachers’ talk.

2.4 Bernstein at the classroom level

Earlier I used the wording formal aspects of education to refer to academic learning in school. Adopting a socio-cultural perspective, Deng and Luke (2008) maintain that the curriculum taught by teachers is embedded in a selective tradition within the interplay of history and culture, ways of knowing and ordering which are based on the distribution of power in society. From this viewpoint, the structure of the curriculum seems invariably similar to Bourdieu’s proposition of social reproduction and importance of particular types of knowledge. However, Bernstein’s theoretical framework has a particular role in this research and analysis. While both Bernstein and Bourdieu are concerned with social reproduction through education, Bernstein’s thinking tools provide more explicit understanding of the operation of pedagogic structure. As discussed in the previous section, Bourdieu’s framework is useful in understanding wider social contexts and implications of reproduction and transformation through the habitus, however, it provides little insight into specific structures, such as schools and classrooms. Bernstein, by contrast, addresses the how

of pedagogic practice by providing a language and framework to understand the specific structuring of social relations and contexts (2000).

Bernstein's pedagogic and learning discourses will be useful in analysing interaction and practice at the classroom level in order to understand the formal educational context and use of knowledge. Bernstein refers to official knowledge as constructed at state level and distributed through the practice of teachers but what is significant is the role of the curriculum as means of reproduction through different pedagogic identities (2000, p.65). To clarify his framework further, Bernstein provides a typology of pedagogic discourse and talk that take place in the classroom impacting students through power and control relations and the curriculum.

Pedagogic discourse

Pedagogic discourse 'selects and creates specialised pedagogic subjects through its context and content' (Bernstein 2000, p. 31). Bernstein separates pedagogic discourse as two discourses: regulative discourse (RD) and instructional discourse (ID). RD is the dominant discourse that translates the official values of society by creating order, relations and identities. In schooling and curriculum, the regulative discourse is produced by agents operating in the official knowledge field, e.g. government and related agencies (similar to Bourdieu's objective rules). ID refers to the skills and competencies that are transmitted and the relationship between them. While RD is largely invisible, the use of explicit teaching objectives, guidelines, sequencing rules and activities assist the creation of a more visible pedagogy which serves to regulate the actions of the teacher and guide the student. In this respect, RD dominates ID because it tells children what to do and how and so on in terms of producing order but it is largely invisible. RD only operates through ID (Bernstein 2000, p. 32).

The two curriculum areas which are the focus of my research (English and science) exemplify two distinctive classroom discourses. Both start as a more horizontal discourse where students enter the education system with significant segmentally

organised and culture specific knowledge acquired at home and in the community. Children gradually add up curricular knowledge in the subjects but the process begins before formal schooling. With progression science becomes more vertically oriented because of the increasing complexity and abstractness. In the case of EAL this may be problematic because children have not been exposed to the English language from an early stage and they may not be using it at home. This means that some of the perceived difficulties associated with EAL and learning are rooted in the lack of previous contact with the dominant context or RD. Students are introduced to academic science and its more abstract principles in a formalised school environment. The study of science does not require the same cultural and linguistic prerequisites as the study of English because it relies on specialised language to communicate meaning and knowledge and this language is mastered at school.

English and science have the potential to reveal substantive differences in ID through classroom talk and teaching approaches. RD links classroom practice to the official knowledge field establishing the expectations of all children including those learning EAL. In this respect, RD is the same for everyone, but a focus on ID can demonstrate differences in the learning and coping strategies of children learning EAL because they may have different perspectives from the dominant groups. For example, when it comes to new arrivals and learners of EAL in school there is emphasis on developing appropriate language skills and proficiency which means that the attitudes of teachers may be different with respect to the main goals of the lesson/subject area (Conteh 2012b). The ways in which teacher manage this in practice will be interesting to explore and relate to children's experiences.

Classification and framing

Classification and framing are concepts that relate to the organisation, boundaries and interaction in pedagogic contexts - in subject areas and in the transition stages – primary and secondary, which in turn provide different engagement opportunities for

children. This is linked with the organisation of individual schools and their culture, but also the discourse around transition. It is through pedagogic discourse that certain values are transmitted into the classroom and identified as desired while others remain in the background as non-important or undesirable (Deng & Luke 2008).

Bernstein (2000) differentiates between classification and framing in the following way:

‘[T]he principle of the classification regulates *what* discourse is to be transmitted and its relation to other discourses in a given set (e.g. a curriculum). The principle of the framing regulates *how* the discourse is to be transmitted and acquired in the pedagogic context.’

(p. 100)

Classification relates to the relationships between different categories in the pedagogic discourse. Bernstein (2000) explains that as a ‘degree of insulation’ between categories (p. 99), meaning that strong classification points to clear and explicit categories with their own strong identity, while weak classification indicates less specialised and distinctive categories. For instance, there is classification between curriculum subjects as they only exist in their opposition to each other. In this sense, classification is a general theoretical tool to explain arrangements in educational contexts which allows its use in making sense of contemporary educational systems beyond the timespan of Bernstein’s work. There is evidence that strongly insulated subject areas dominate some educational contexts (e.g. academic focus), while others strive for weakly organised links between subjects and generally a competence-based model of education (Atkinson 1985).

Framing is about the control of talk and communication taking place between different participants in the educational process – for instance, parent – child; teacher – student and so on. Framing is concerned with how meanings are put together and what messages are transmitted. In the same way as classification, framing could be strong or weak with varying control over the communication and messages. In school contexts, in strongly framed interactions the control lies with the teacher, in weakly framed instances the control lies with the student. Therefore, weak framing allows a

participatory and active role of the student. Hasan (2002) argues that children from the dominant groups are more likely to engage with weak framing in the 'correct' expected ways which is important evidence to look for in this research.

Further, Gregory et al. (2004) point out that Bernstein's work provides language for distinguishing between two types of pedagogy – visible, exemplified in classrooms with a strong classification and framing or 'a formal mode of schooling', and invisible pedagogy where there is weak classification and framing or 'informal approaches' (p.99). The visible aspects of pedagogy are particularly useful to children learning EAL as a scaffolding mechanism how to do schooling, while the invisible aspects and weak classification and framing may pose barriers in finding out what are the acceptable rules and ways to engage. The different types of framing and classification can be used to enhance children's learning experiences and to enable them to apply knowledge of curriculum principles across subjects and contexts as illustrated by Bernstein (2000, p. 21).

Figure 3.1 situates Bernstein's construction of pedagogic discourse at the macro, meso- and micro-levels in relation to schooling and education. The macro-level is the level of RD, or invisible pedagogy that orchestrates learning discourses as part of the wider social context. At the meso-level is the school and classroom where RD is transmitted through ID and respectively, classification and framing in organising and communicating subject categories. Lastly, the micro-level is individual students and their experiences of the pedagogic discourse through the use of recognition and realisation rules, which are explained in the next section. At the bottom of the diagram is the fundamental question about the experience of children learning EAL and how it is different to the experience of the other children.

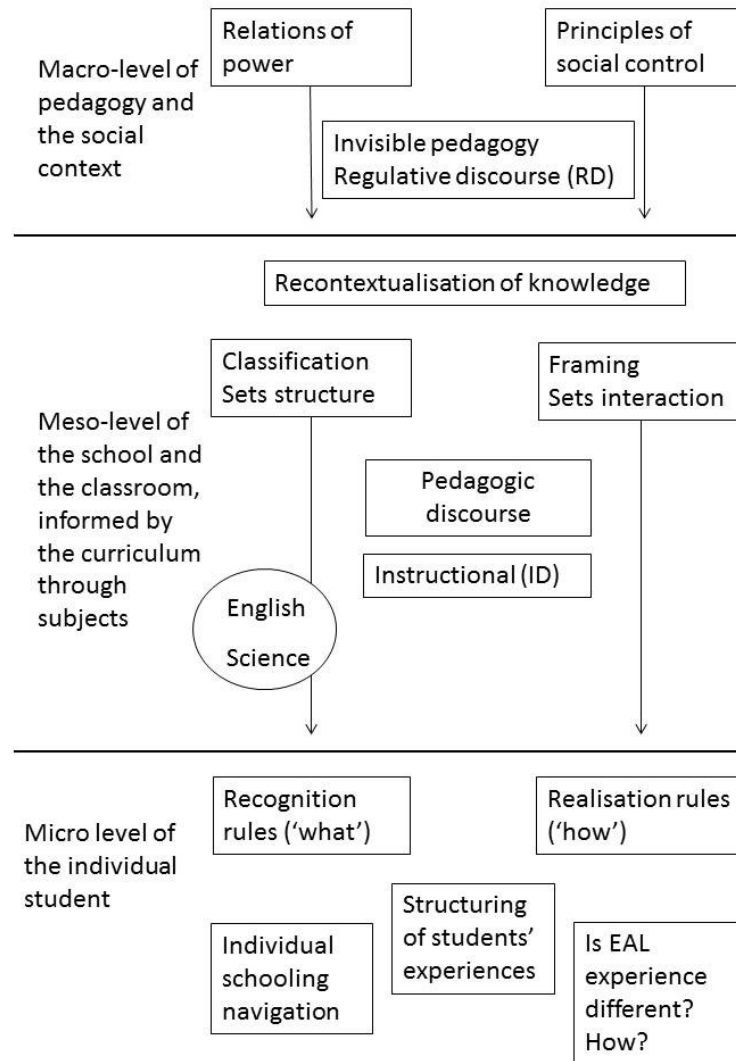


Figure 2.1: Pedagogic discourse construction and transmission (adapted from Tsatsaroni et al. 2013)

Looking at the classification and framing of different lessons in both primary and secondary schools will enable me to build better understanding of the classroom at different levels. Utilising concepts such as RD and ID, recognition and realisation rules will provide the lenses linking the classroom level with the positioning and experience of individual students.

Deng and Luke (2008) highlight potential processes of transformation involved in schooling. These take place at the meso-level where knowledge is recontextualised in being communicated to children who in turn make use of recognition and realisation rules in making sense. The teacher's role is to 'lift' the knowledge (Ibid p.78)

redesigning it in a pedagogic form that reflects the interests, backgrounds and capabilities of students in order to be effective at the classroom level. But it is through recognition and realisation that children make sense of it. The recognition rule relates to the ability to distinguish and interpret the context and the realisation rule refers to how the recognised meanings are assembled and communicated (Bernstein 2000, p.17). In other words, recognition rules enable children to make sense of pedagogic discourses and content in their minds (e.g. listening), and realisation rules enable them to do something in response to this understanding (e.g. speaking). These concepts come into life in classroom and schools contexts through their explicit links with classification and framing which were already discussed. Recognition rules and their focus on 'what' are related to classification, while the realisation rules relate to 'how' and hence framing.

2.5 A symbiosis of two frameworks

Harker and May (1993) discuss the similarities and differences between the main concepts in Bourdieu and Bernstein's theories. In the context of education the two theories can have a complementary role in analysing children's experiences from different perspectives. From their perspective, this is especially valid as Bourdieu's practice theory is much broader in conceptual terms with the habitus incorporating active weaving through history and experience while Bernstein is distinctive in providing thinking tools which apply directly to pedagogic contexts (Harker & May 1993). Maintaining the role of Bourdieu's work in establishing the school field and children as agents within that field is crucial. Robbins (2012) argues that theory is a powerful tool to understand practice, particularly when used to theorise the practice and experience of agents in social activities. This gives Bourdieu's theoretical framework a perceived strength in analysing social experiences over Bernstein's more structural approach to pedagogic contexts. For instance, Bourdieu's ideas of habitus, agency and navigation in different fields will be used to add socially informed dynamic

to Bernstein's pedagogic discourse and explain children's interaction with pedagogic discourses from a wider perspective. Bourdieu states that children are active agents in their education through their habitus and dispositions, despite the structuring restrictive role of pedagogic discourses at school:

'Social agents ...are not automata regulated like clocks, in accordance with laws that they do not understand. In the most complex games ...they put into action the incorporated principles of a generative *habitus* ... This 'feel for the game', as we call it, is what enables an infinite number of 'moves' to be made, adapted to the infinite number of possible situations which no rule, however complex, can foresee.'

(Bourdieu 1990, pp. 9-10, in Harker & May 1993, p. 175)

Using the notion of habitus to explain pedagogic interactions demonstrates how the two theories can work in combination to provide a holistic understanding of children categorised as having EAL in schools. Bernstein's pedagogic discourse is focused on educational contexts and classrooms in particular - a lens missing from the work of Bourdieu (Apple 2001). In relation to the education and classroom context, Bourdieu's framework indicates that there are different fields and subfields (e.g. schools and subjects) with different rules where individuals are positioned accordingly. Their habitus is shaped in these conditions and as they cross between different fields and subfields, their actions are misrecognised in relation to the power discourse. So if students do not recognise the ID, in Bernstein's words, this might lead to misrecognition of these students by their teachers. However, in Bourdieu's work there is little to correspond to how this happens at the practical level as he is only concerned about the difference in positioning. To address this, the realisation rule and framing in Bernstein's framework explain how the actions of children affect and interact with pedagogic contexts.

Both Bernstein and Bourdieu maintain that patterns of inequalities in society and the distribution of power are communicated and reproduced through education. The curriculum is a selection of knowledge that counts in terms of an ideological dominant

stance. As a result, school education seeks to transmit specific pedagogic discourses, capital and dispositions (Deng & Luke 2008). Teachers can be seen as communicators of official knowledge (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990, Grenfell 2009), however, they do so through RD which informs classroom instruction (Bernstein 2000, p. 34). Teachers' limited knowledge of other ways of doing and being can lead to symbolic violence, reproduction of the dominant discourse and misrecognition of students' diversity and prior knowledge, but also other versions of misrecognition on the part of students in making sense of classroom contexts. However, the use of habitus and agency challenges views that education only has reproductive functions and adopts the notion that children are active agents in the context of schools, therefore shaping practice, interactions and learning.

Adopting the discourse of Bernstein and Bourdieu provides an understanding of the process of knowledge reproduction in its wholeness. The practice of teachers does not happen in neutrality as it bears the marks of background, values and cultural assumptions about the world. A logical direction in answering the question what counts as knowledge is a focus on teaching practice and recognising the selective nature of curriculums based on cultural practice and traditions, methods, ways of knowing and doing while paying close attention to how these implicit features interact with and affect children's experiences of schooling and agency. Given that the dominant ways of knowing are objectively constructed and taken for granted (Jenkins 2002), perhaps Bourdieu's field analysis and Bernstein's pedagogic discourse will take me a step further in understanding children's habitus and subjectification of pedagogic knowledge at school.

Application of the theory

Seeing the school as a field is important in understanding transition experiences in their longitudinal aspect. Field theory applied to the individual schools will be a model to track shifts and adaptations to different contexts. The transition schools can be

analysed as different fields with different games – a useful strategy in tracking differences or similarities. Bernstein's concepts then come in at the classroom level of deconstructing pedagogic experiences.

My theoretical journey was as an important stage of my development as a researcher. Engaging with the two theories as a recursive process of making sense of my data enabled the development of the theoretical framework as a coherent whole. I did not have an established theoretical position at the beginning of my research, although I was clear in the attempts to adopt a wider sociological perspective. As a result, I began planning my research theoretically with caution and awareness that the theoretical framework could be fully developed and operationalised iteratively, in conjunction with the analysis of my data. I planned the research activities (described in Chapter 4) in relation to the research questions and aims to explore the transition experiences of children labelled as having EAL seeking more information about children's agency and navigation in the process through aspects of their formal and informal education. I generated data with an open mind, focusing on both individual and group aspects of transition experiences. Once I had the data, I was able to clarify my theoretical positioning and develop the two frameworks through applying them. I demonstrate this in Chapters 6 and 7.

2.6 Summary

There is an explicit and undeniable link between the way in which patterns of social inequality and power distribution are framed in society and subject knowledge is classified and framed in school curriculums (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990, Bernstein 1973, in Deng & Luke 2008). Adopting a socio-cultural perspective these theorists maintain that the curriculum taught by teachers is embedded in a selective tradition within the interplay of history and culture, ways of knowing and ordering which are based on the distribution of power in society (Deng & Luke 2008). From this viewpoint,

the structure of curriculum seems invariably similar to Bourdieu's proposition of the socially acceptable reproduction of particular types of knowledge over others. It is also similar to Bernstein's idea of unbalanced class-regulated distribution of power (Harker & May 1993). In this respect, the described framework would enable the exploration of what counts as knowledge and subject matter in schools as both are concerned with normative and ideological selection of knowledge in the shadow of the dominant sociocultural discourse. Bernstein (2000) makes a claim that schools are a powerful transmitter of inequality in terms of attitudes and access to knowledge and this is also evident in the ideas of Bourdieu (Grenfell 2009). The transmission of official knowledge is realised through the curriculum as a tool for conveying 'legitimate' discourses. Bernstein's pedagogical discourses and the notion of ID will be useful in analysing language and practice at the classroom level in order to understand the formal educational context. Bernstein provides a useful typology of pedagogic discourses and talk that take place in the classroom and their impact on students. His structuralist approach is based around the ideas of classification and framing which need further interrogation with the data.

The use of two sets of thinking tools is beneficial in building an understanding of the complex social situation of children from different backgrounds learning EAL. This approach provides different perspectives and tools to address issues related to power, social order and positioning, reproduction and transformation in a complementary way.

Chapter 3:

Literature review

3.1 Introduction

Children's experience, positioning and engagement through schooling comprise a multi-faceted topic that is shaped by theoretical, social, policy and practice dimensions. In the light of the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2, here I aim to situate children labelled as having EAL and their school experiences in relation to key concepts such as EAL, the curriculum, the role of teachers and education more widely. I begin by looking at the conceptualisation of EAL from a policy and practice informed perspective and specifically what this means for teachers and children in schools. Building on various definitions of EAL in the literature, I argue that the concept carries more significance than a focus on language learning. I then look at the curriculum as the formal structuring mechanism in school and subjects, particularly English and science as two areas that could potentially provide different experiential and engagement opportunities for children learning EAL. I explore other structuring mechanisms, such as primary to secondary school transition as means to capture changes for children in different contexts but in relation to the curriculum and learning. Through this discussion I aim to uncover disabling and enabling practices in classrooms in relation to children categorised as having EAL. Exploring teachers' views of children's experience, which are directly linked with curriculum discourses and standards, I provide a map of how such practices may affect children. I then summarise children's experiences and positioning beyond the label of EAL. Comparing these with teachers' perspectives I raise questions about potential mismatches in experience and engagement understandings which could have implications for both children and teachers.

3.2 What does EAL mean?

EAL is subject to debate because of the diversity of children who fall under this umbrella term. As outlined in Chapter 1 the growing numbers of children learning EAL in schools in England present disproportionate challenges in understanding and utilising the diversity of this group of learners. Diversity by itself is a problematic concept incorporating aspects of culture, values and characteristics that may be recognised as ‘otherness’ in relation to the notion of monoculturalism and monolingualism. However, the changing ethnic, cultural and linguistic landscape in Britain requires a long-term rethinking of diversity and EAL as a holistic concept including but not limited to language, culture, background and different ways of being and doing. This means normalising the idea that a large number of children in schools are from various backgrounds and schools are responsible for providing relevant educational and social experiences as well as further prospects. Immigration is a local phenomenon, therefore it is difficult to predict and address systematically quickly enough through educational provision (Costley 2014, Murakami 2008). Ensuring consistent and robust provision in terms of teacher sensitivity to diversity and difference in aiming to address the challenges and opportunities that arise in highly diverse schools is crucial. The OECD suggests that school provision should consider that students from migrant backgrounds may face very different challenges in comparison to mainstream peers (2010). This makes understanding the backgrounds and specific circumstances of children a prerequisite for providing relevant and engaging educational experiences. Nonetheless, unpicking individual circumstances is not a straightforward task because of the complexity of schooling and teachers’ practice and potentially limited understanding of other backgrounds and contexts.

As outlined in the introductory chapter, the inherent complexity of understanding EAL and the idea of EAL-ness beyond language is rooted in historical and practical considerations. In order to continue unpacking this, the following aspects need further attention:

- The landscape of diversity and ‘otherness’ has rapidly changed over the past 50 years;
- The growing numbers of migrants contribute to an ever-changing and diverse school population;
- A new concept of superdiversity is making its way into the field of EAL;
- Defining EAL carries both professional and personal implications which is a barrier to a uniform definition;
- EAL is not just about language and accessing the curriculum.

Each of these points requires further interrogation to understand EAL-ness and the way I use the term in my study. In the following sections I review the literature in relation to the points above and conclude with a definition of EAL.

Diversity and ‘otherness’ – a changing perspective

Diversity can be explored from several viewpoints. While contemporary perspectives focus on the notion of constant change and fluidity between space and identities, diversity could also be understood as a static concept. In the past, difference has been intentionally used to provoke fear and anxiety adopting a negative discourse and over-emphasising the separation of people from immigrant backgrounds and white British population (Cooper 2004, Tomlinson 2008). Associations could be made with the current UK political context around immigration and its perceived negative impact on the education system, health and employment opportunities (Iredale 2014). In this case, dealing with diversity can lead to damaging implications and segregations as discussed in Chapter 1. It is important, in this respect, to seek the positive aspects of diversity without focusing too much on difference borne by background or ethnic origins. Cole and Blair (2006) argue that despite the ambitious intentions to address students from ethnic minorities in a sensitive and positive way, curriculum adjustments have resulted in simplistic learning about culture reducing it to information about customs in terms of food rituals, dress and celebrations as

manifestation of multiculturalism in the 1970s. They conclude that this approach emphasises inequalities at individual and institutional level:

‘the exoticization of minority ethnic group cultures and customs merely served to reinforce the notion that these cultures were indeed ‘Other’ and drew the boundary more firmly between ‘Them’, the ‘immigrants’ or ‘foreigners’ and ‘Us’, the ‘real’ British”.

(Cole & Blair 2006, p.80)

The case of not recognising diversity as a resource in multicultural educational and social contexts could be explained in relation to dominant cultures and associated perceptions of a norm. The norm then provides one side of the story shaped by the dominant culture (Bruner 1996). As such the notion of normality operates as a powerful social construct that influences processes of decision making and building understanding. Clarke (2008) makes a useful distinction between the norm and otherness:

‘defining your own self by another often leads to a strong sense of who we are not, or more likely who we do not want to be. This necessarily leads to the denigration of the other and the idealisation of ‘us’

(p. 527)

The power of the norm is that it provides convincing explanations, even prescriptions, of how things are to be done linked with lived tradition and the collective experience of generations (Bruner 1996, Jenkins 2002). On the contrary to a perceived ‘normality’ and the comfort of it, difference is challenging, raising questions and issues of self-exploration. Social and political discourses also contribute to reinforcing the notion of the other and difference. Particularly in England, the emphasis has been not on migration as the movement of people but on issues of ethnicity and difference with a negative connotation. In this respect, ethnicity separates people into categories by labelling them and attaching certain expectations and perceived characteristics (Cohen 2012, Swann 1985, Tomlinson 2008).

Defining difference broadly as the characteristics that emphasise people's distinctiveness from one another implies that difference is embedded in social life. Migration, increased mobility and relocations have contributed to superdiversity in particular localities and what Savage et al. (2005) describe as mobile and transient identities. Belonging and fitting in become fluid concepts that incorporate unstable positioning because of their social construction coupled with lack of suitability of any given space. In such processes of migration, people tend to try and fit in into the norm through shared practice because difference may pull them into a separate hierarchically subordinated field. According to Garcia (1999) this results in mixed cultures and identities. However, new forms of ordinariness influenced by fitting in create further distinctions and hierarchies which remain implicit rather than public (Savage et al. 2005). The invisibility provides opportunities for becoming part of the norm through evident similarity on the one hand, while preserving implied value systems and differences, on the other hand. In the context of migration, this is a powerful strategy to survive and thrive in changing circumstances, becoming part of more positive discourses around diversity as a benefit rather than distinctions.

Such considerations have contributed to rethinking of traditional educational practices (e.g. monolingual and monocultural) to reflect the changing student population (Rassool 2004b). Since the 1980s England has moved towards the idea that schools ought to prepare children as citizens to live in a multicultural society by revising and improving the curriculum to reflect the increasing diversity (Costley 2014, Swan 1985). However, schools catering for diverse populations tend to be located in communities facing disproportionate social inequalities and pockets of disadvantage characterised by lack of economic wellbeing or integration. Gillborn (1997) argues that disadvantage and social inequalities related to ethnic minorities resulted from a political discourse remaining silent about the real issues and the economic factors behind segregation. He goes further to suggest that policies recommending schools to be more responsive and engaged with diversity are ambiguous in establishing the meaning of the term and have

failed to introduce explicit strategies of how disadvantage could be addressed at the practical level of the classroom (Gillborn 1997). Although I agree with the issues around ambiguity in definitions and personal understandings of diversity and EAL in educational contexts, Gillborn's criticism of the failure to introduce explicit strategies should be treated with caution. There is evidence of schools that have very successfully addressed inequality in extremely challenging circumstances (e.g. Ainscow et al. 2012, Corbett 2001) and teachers dedicated to support learners of EAL despite the inconsistency of formal provision across schools (Chen 2009, Flynn 2007, Gregory 2002, Gregory et al. 2004).

Diverse school populations

As a general principle, the population of the local area is reflected in school in terms of student profiles. The diversity at community level seems to foster different attitudes towards ethnic diversity in schools across the country. While over 15 percent of primary schools and 11 percent of secondary schools in inner-city areas report their EAL populations being well above national average (NALDIC 2012), many schools in suburban and rural areas remain with a distinctively uniform middle class white British student profile. Recent government guidance highlights the importance of teaching fundamental British values which include appreciation of difference and cultural diversity and tolerance (DfE 2014). Consequently, a number of schools were sanctioned by OFSTED for failing to grasp the importance of teaching about diversity (Patton & Hall 2014). Such failure could be due to a preconception that issues related to diversity are not relevant because they do not exist in the school. Teachers there tend to take little notice of social changes in diversity, multiculturalism and inequality leaving them with a common understanding limited to ethnicity and language without recognising aspects such as culture, religion, gender, sexuality (Black 2007). Conversely, there are particularly successful teachers responding to diversity based on their experience and knowledge combined with positive and nurturing attitudes. In most cases they are based in schools catering for extremely diverse students (Ainscow

et al. 2010). As a result, there is a widespread assumption in inner-city schools that every teacher is a teacher of EAL and not just those whose students do not speak English or who have trained to teach EAL (Costley 2014, Kaneva 2011, Shatz & Wilkinson 2013).

The differences in practice and understanding in different localities complicates the drive for creating curricula that are responsive to diversity as some teachers teach increasingly diverse students while others maintain that the issue is not relevant to their context. The picture is further complicated by parental views and aspirations with regards to diversity and the heterogeneity of identities and positioning in existing structural divisions. Reay et al. (2011) examined a perceived interest of white middle-class parents on the difference and otherness of ethnic minorities as a mechanism of adding a social benefit and capital in learning how to thrive in diversity. Experience of multicultural schools is claimed to foster resilient and adaptable children and young people equipped to understand and respond to diversity more positively. However, this process of cultural capital acquisition (Reay et al. 2011, p.89) in fact reinforces the hierarchical separation of dominant and migrant groups where the migrant groups are still in a subordinated position with their background used to benefit and enrich the dominant group. This is far from a notion of valuing diversity for the benefit of ethnic minorities but more concerned with valuing diversity for the benefits it delivers to the majority. Another issue with this notion is the idea that not every minority accrues such benefits and some are seen as 'ideal' with common interests while others are used symbolically to reinforce existing hierarchies (Reay et al. 2011, Tomlinson 2008, Walters 2007).

The contestation over class and capital could be an advantage particularly to economic migrants who are able to adopt middle-class values to education regardless of their objective class positions in their original locations as a result of identification with dominant cultures (Reay et al. 2011). The shared values, practice, aspirations

mentioned by Savage et al. (2005) lead to acceptable and accepted positioning in the social field. The issue of how EAL and diversity are understood impacts attitudes to an extent that education for diversity may not be recognised as a commonly shared necessity unless teachers are directly engaged with students from various backgrounds in their classes.

Definitions of English as an additional language

EAL is an umbrella term for children who bring to school a range of experiences and knowledge of languages, cultures, schooling and literacies (Conteh 2012a). Their diversity is remarkable and includes varying language proficiency from early arrivals with no English through to bilinguals and second and third generation.

A distinction should be made between EAL and English as a second language (ESL) meaning the explicit consecutive nature of English as a result of intensive language teaching on the basis of a well-developed first language (Mohan et al. 2001). With EAL, the emphasis is on the simultaneous development of two languages in an English speaking medium which become intertwined, leading to bilingualism. It is a common characteristic of children with more advanced level of EAL to use their languages simultaneously and in a variety of contexts and situations where the choice of language depends on the type of situation or type of communication (Gregory 2002, Pagett 2006). For instance a girl may speak Urdu to her parents, but mix English and Urdu while speaking to her siblings and speak only English at school (Parke et al. 2002, Kenner 2004). The choice of language depends on the situation and talking partner as well as the content of the conversation and cultural background. Cummins explains this as one of the effects of bilingualism and adds that it may positively influence academic and intellectual development (2000).

Alexander (2010) suggests that the title EAL denotes the barriers for children from diverse linguistic backgrounds schools which could be addressed through additional support. However, he modifies this view quoting the underlying research report

(Ainscow et al. 2010) and the conclusion that the barriers to successful inclusion and achievement of children learning EAL results from the oversimplified assumption that language support will solve the problem and provide access to the curriculum. In this respect, it is important to notice cultural aspects and implications and refrain from using language as the only marker of EAL-ness.

EAL beyond language

Fanshawe and Sriskandarajah (2010) oppose the idea of labelling children according to ethnicity arguing it is not a precise process of identification. They express a strong view that labelling and the resulting prejudice are associated with ‘cruel reductionism’ of stereotyping human beings (p. 8) where in reality there are nuances and intergroup differentiations and conclude that people cannot be ‘put into boxes’ (p.36) for the purpose of facilitating an understanding of their being and experience. The question then is: how to come up with a definition of EAL, which is not another label? Careful consideration and crafting are needed to capture the positive dimensions and nuanced nature of the term and use it in empowering ways to reflect children’s agency rather than marginalisation.

While in the past perspectives have been focused on language capacity and proficiency needed to access learning in school, other sources take a broader look into the social aspects of living with two or more languages (Costley 2014, Cummins 2001, Conteh 2003, Parke et al. 2002). The first explanation is language deficit driven as it makes EAL classification dependent on children’s language abilities in English dismissing their knowledge of other languages and literacies. In this case, addressing EAL seems to be related to language intervention and support for those new to the language to enable them to catch-up with peers at National Curriculum (NC) level leading to a skewed understanding on the part of mainstream teachers (Alexander 2010, Ainscow et al. 2010). This approach fails to recognise the social aspects of EAL-ness and the benefits of living with several languages and cultural contexts. It also dismisses

previous academic knowledge and school experience as valid in the new context because children learning EAL do not fit neatly into the spiral-based NC (Sood & Mistry 2011).

The second perspective is more open to social interpretations and the idea that the individual is part of a social context which in turn is historically and culturally entrenched (Packer & Goicoechea 2000). Understanding and educating children learning EAL as individuals whose knowledge, values and beliefs have emerged in interaction with different cultural contexts requires a focus beyond language. In this respect, EAL is a phenomenon related to the interaction of two or more different cultures and sets of values which presuppose a wealth of experiences. The experiences of children categorised as having EAL are interesting in terms of identifying cultural and linguistic influences and behaviours from their varied upbringing. Their knowledge funds integrate educational and cultural contexts on the basis of active interactions and symbiosis between the two. Some learners of EAL coming into English schools carry different types of knowledge and experiences which should be recognised as valid. Building on students' daily experience and existing knowledge is a major expectation of educational professionals although there is no explicit teacher training in this area (Costley 2014).

There are collective elements inferred from the mixing social and cultural contexts which interact on a personal level with individual interpretations and characteristics as being manifested in practice. Pagett (2006) identifies the importance of choices children learning EAL make in terms of language use, linking the fact that they seem to avoid speaking home languages at school even when they have the opportunity to do so with Bourdieu's notion of capital and power in social contexts. Often the educational system fails to recognise the linguistic capital of children labelled as having EAL and to look beyond the number of languages they speak (Parke et al. 2002, Walters 2007). This in turn leads to a power imbalance where dominant linguistic capital is valued

more than minority one (Pagett 2006), particularly in the case of minority languages with a perceived lower status.

Having considered the historical aspects of understanding diversity and EAL and more recent focus on celebrating the cultural and experiential contribution of these children in schools in the UK, has brought together the elements of a sensitive and empowering definition of EAL. In this thesis, the term EAL or children with/having EAL refers to those who live with more than one culture and use languages other than English at home. They may have been born in the UK or elsewhere, but I will be focusing on first generation children categorised as speakers of EAL meaning that their parents have lived most of their lives abroad in a different cultural and linguistic context before migrating to the UK. This attempt at definition is consistent with explanations in schools, policy and statistical data (e.g. Alexander 2010, Leung 2001, NALDIC 2014) in determining what percentage of children in English schools are learning EAL.

In the next section I focus on the curriculum as a vehicle for bringing structure and dominant values into the classroom and how this relates to the school experiences of children learning EAL.

3.3 EAL in the curriculum and classrooms

School curricula structure educational instruction and experience through the selective tradition of the dominant culture (Bernstein 2000). The importance of the curriculum is in narrowing the focus to the processes that lead to particular outcomes for children linked to learning, engagement, and positioning at the classroom level. I am interested in both the broader school and the classroom context where subject areas and EAL come together to inform learning and engagement.

To understand how the curriculum works for children learning EAL, I use the three levels of curriculum implementation by Deng and Luke (2008):

- Institutional at the policy level;
- Structural at the subject and syllabus level; and
- Classroom, including teachers' and students' mediation of the curriculum and field.

The first level is influenced by the dominant social and cultural context in terms of what is important in education and what values are transmitted through schools (Bernstein 2000, Bourdieu & Passeron 1990). The second level relates to the subject operation, content and skills taught to students. The third level is the implicit interpretation of the preceding levels through classroom practice. These three levels emphasise the different structures of knowledge and how they intersect with culture and social norms. Subject areas can be viewed as acts of reproduction of one type of knowledge over others, more specifically the knowledge imposed at the institutional level. In relation to EAL, the most common teaching approaches of immersion, withdrawal and mainstream support come at the structural and classroom level as a practical way to deliver curriculum content. Teachers' responsibility is to transform subject knowledge into a pedagogic form that responds to the interests, backgrounds and abilities of students. How does this happen for children learning EAL? Although there is policy guidance around planning (DfE 2013), there is less consistency in using the strengths of EAL learners and individual schools have developed their own approaches to respond to linguistic, academic and pastoral needs. Some schools operate dedicated EAL classrooms where trained staff are preparing children to get into mainstream, while others adopt a fully inclusive immersion process where children are placed into mainstream classes right away (Chen 2009). In highly diverse schools, the latter is more evident as separate EAL provision could cause disruption in the movement of children between classes and interrupt consistency. Engagement and active participation of students is crucial in the education and learning support of children speaking EAL alongside the principles of high expectations and progression across key stages and curriculum areas (DfES 2002). While these values should benefit

the whole school, in the case of children learning EAL they have a particular significance in seeking appropriate opportunities and environments to ensure engagement in a different context.

The curriculum needs of children learning EAL are perceived to be different and the discourse of 'additional' points towards support with language and access. The diversity of this group makes the task of responding to their needs neither easy nor straightforward. With the steady increase of children learning EAL, specially trained teachers are an expensive resource for schools. EAL becomes everybody's responsibility but in some cases teachers may not be backed up with enough training or awareness about language and culture as illustrated by Leung (2001) and Wallen and Kelly-Holmes (2006). In order to assist teachers in making decisions about supporting students learning EAL, the DfES (2005, p. 5) identifies three main groups 'at particular risk of underachievement':

- New arrivals with little or no previous schooling and educational experience;
- Children learning English with limited exposure to their home language;
- More advanced bilingual learners, specifically those with several years of education in a primarily English speaking environment, whose specific needs have been overlooked.

There is a fourth category of children who have had sound prior education and some English language exposure in their home countries (Vazquez 2010). These students need to develop different sets of skills in adapting to the English language medium and transferring their existing knowledge. In this case, the teacher has an important role in identifying prior knowledge and finding ways to integrate it in learning. The difficulty is finding out due to the limited language proficiency. However, the knowledge of such children is very important as they already have the educational and subject matter foundations and it is the case of utilising these in the new educational context. While the first two groups are not surprising because of the link between access to the

curriculum and achievement, the third group draws attention to advance bilingual learners who may be in disadvantaged positions in relation to academic support and perceptions of achievement. As this is policy guidance, it is important to bear in mind that the type of language and framing may be different from the practical level of the classroom in terms of straying away from deficit-laden perspectives and focusing on children's positive achievements.

At the classroom level, successful strategies for children learning EAL are context dependent – what works in one school may not necessarily be successful in another one (Ainscow 1998). However, there are common characteristics of good practice for children learning EAL including clarity of learning goals and scaffolding, the use of visual materials and cues and opportunities for meaningful interaction (Ferlazzo & Hull-Sypniewski 2012, Shatz & Wilkinson 2013). These immediate strategies can make the curriculum more accessible and are often present in classrooms. Conteh (2012b) draws attention to planning and delivery approaches that focus on uncovering and making use of children's prior knowledge and experiences and it would be interesting to see how much such approaches are used in the research schools, particularly in the process of primary to secondary school transition. Others focus on the development of language, partnerships and encouraging environments through buddying and classroom cultures (Coffey 2013, Mistry & Sood 2010). None of these strategies alone is the key to what works for children learning EAL.

A perceived difficulty in addressing EAL in discrete curriculum areas is the issue of integrating language and content (Barwell 2005a, b, Harper 2010). Exploring the teaching of mathematics to children learning EAL, Barwell (2005a) adopts a socio-cultural perspective of learning where individuals have access to multiple contexts reinforcing the adoption of different identities and seeking of meanings. The research looks at the ways in which children learning EAL devise mathematical problems and find solutions to them supported by talk with partners. It seems that mathematical and

linguistic meaning is constructed in a process of discussion. Therefore the two cannot be separated and examined in isolation. This is an interesting insight that shows how meaning-making overlaps with understanding of a particular subject area. Children do not learn language and maths separately, they learn language through the subject. On the other hand, Barwell describes the problems as presenting a quasi-real world or an opportunity for students to reflect on their personal experiences and include them in the process of learning. There are a few examples where students use their personal experiences in their attempts to write up word problems (2005b). This is an example of making children's learning meaningful by building on their personal experiences and the resulting learning.

In the next section I narrow my curriculum focus further to English and science to explore the pedagogic discourses and interactions in these subjects and the implications for children learning EAL. As outlined in Chapter 1, these two subject areas pose specific challenges in terms of language, context-specific and abstract knowledge. They provide an academic focus and consistency for this study across the different stages of education and schools and particular focus on understanding in terms of access to the curriculum, engagement and participation.

English and science

Making children's learning meaningful and experiential rather than isolated and highly abstract is one of the suggestions He et al. (2008) make in relation to EAL in the curriculum. The underlying idea is that negative school experiences resulting from disempowering curriculums and unresponsive teachers could be addressed through a framework of valuing what students have to offer. Conteh (2003) suggests using children's bilingualism and languages as a resource in the classroom:

- To accrue cognitive and cultural benefits;
- Valuing and respecting children's home languages and cultures by actively including them in schooling;

- Encouraging the use of the child's stronger language with the intention to provide a holistic language experience. Additional languages should not be viewed as a barrier, but a resource because they contribute to the development of English knowledge and use (Cummins 2000).

These suggestions are particularly relevant to English and science as they rely on knowledge and experiences children bring to school. Bernstein, whose broader conceptual framework will be explored in the next chapter, makes a differentiation between knowledge discourses in school subjects (2000, p.157). His use of vertical and horizontal structures of knowledge can be applied with English and science. Linking to Nash's (2009) explanation of horizontal discourses as continuous learning processes from the home environment to English makes sense in the fact that children bring literacies and skills from home and the school curriculum never begins on a blank canvas. Arguably, this is also the case for science, however, according to Nash (2009) as school progresses science becomes a vertical discourse because of its increasing abstract nature. Yet, at the beginning of schooling, science knowledge builds on horizontal knowledge structures making use of children's understanding of practical everyday science ideas. In horizontal discourses knowledge is segmented across time and content and in vertical discourses knowledge is organised in stages of accumulation where a missing foundation may actually prevent children from accessing more complex and abstract concepts (Nash 2009). In this respect, the subject English is more reliant on experiences out of the classroom while science as a subject begins formally at school and knowledge advances through stages before reaching its full complexity. However, the discourse differentiation is not clear-cut as the foundations of science principles emerge in the homes of children as horizontal discourses. The distinction between different subject areas at curriculum and practical level is important because it denotes different attitudes to knowledge and learning that are part of the repertoire of teachers and children. Considering this, expectations of children in English and science are likely to be different, as well as their engagement

and positioning. The two subjects would also be framed differently at primary and secondary school because of the organisation of the curriculum and increasing abstraction of knowledge as students move through the system. Therefore, a focus on these two subjects is likely to provide different perspectives on teaching, conveying and constructing knowledge, expectations and engagement that represent different personal and organisational values.

Another set of articles (Haneda & Wells 2010, Flynn 2007) look at the benefits of incorporating dialogic learning in order to enable children learning EAL to take part in class discussions and to improve their self-esteem and confidence. Haneda and Wells (2010) explore the use of dialogue in science lessons to foster understanding and stimulate children to become active learners by engaging with planning their own learning and problem solving. Again, emphasised is the importance of relating students' experiences to real life situations which leads to a more practical orientation of the subject taught aligning it with horizontal discourses reaffirming the somewhat unclear differentiation. They conclude that learning and teaching science is most effective when:

- a) Connections are made between EAL students' out-of-school experiences and the content of the curriculum;
- b) An inquiry approach is adopted;
- c) Students are provided with opportunities to engage actively in mastering subject language in conjunction with practical investigation.

(Haneda & Wells 2010, p. 12)

The last point related to the language of science is of paramount importance. Science is a subject which is reliant on specific terminology as a distinctive language using different meanings of everyday words (Vazquez 2010). For instance words like tissue, power and cell have another meaning in the science classroom. Some suggestions for mastering science language with a specific focus on EAL include the use of visuals;

developing reading and understanding strategies focused on reworking texts and defining concepts in a variety of ways in order to reinforce learning; use of home languages at word, sentence and text level to ensure understanding but also develop greater sense of literacy in the home language.

These are useful ways of thinking about the curriculum and subjects exploring what it is that children learn and how it relates to their daily experiences and home values. It is clear that Haneda and Wells (2010) report individual aspects of teacher practice which may not be the same in other contexts. However, it definitely raises questions about the organisation of teaching and learning and its impact on students' engagement. English, which is directly concerned with speaking, writing and using the language of the dominant group is a particularly relevant focus in the case of EAL as language is the prime focus. Science, on the other hand, is perceived as a subject that conveys a different type of knowledge alongside English literacy. The horizontal and vertical discourses hint at a complexity in the organisation of knowledge in different school subjects which in turn would be present in teachers' practice in the classroom, more so at different levels and key stages. Focusing on these two different subject areas across the curriculum and primary to secondary school transition will provide multiple perspectives of how children are taught and how they engage in the process. In order to set the context further, I explore primary to secondary school transition and the changes associated with progression through schooling.

3.4 Transitions

Transition refers to changes of contexts which happen for most children learning EAL. Construction of knowledge and practice in the daily complex contexts of children is beneficial in terms of having different lenses through which to observe the world (Cummins 2000). In this study I use transition as a lens to capture children's navigation in different contexts and environments socially and academically. Transitions between primary and secondary school provide a unique perspective in

children's experiences in processes of change and adjustments to schools and relationships. I refer to lens as I see transitions as the time of schooling allowing an exploration of pre- and post-change aspects of children's experiences in addition to their diversity and uniqueness. By getting to know the two contexts and their interaction in school, the dominant context versus different home cultures, aspects of schooling that are taken for granted may be revealed in the settings. Looking closely at the experiences of children in their context involves understanding before interpreting and naming, and providing a different point of view from the experiences and observations of teachers. In this respect, transition is the case through which I look at issues of engagement, choice and agency of children categorised as having EAL in school.

Primary to secondary school transition

Transitions from primary to secondary school are an important period in children's lives. The field of primary-secondary transitions is well-researched although there is disagreement on the quality and types of studies available (Waters et al. 2014). There is indicative evidence of the perceived experiences as children transfer between primary and secondary school related to a dip in achievement, forming and maintaining friendships, psychological adjustments, academic expectations (e.g. Rice et al. 2011, Riglin et al. 2013, West et al. 2010). Although a number of reports aim to explore experiences, there is limited evidence on experiences from an active point of view in terms of agency and engagement (Osborn et al. 2006) and comparisons of the perspectives of children and teachers (Topping 2011). More in-depth and primary data oriented approach is needed to investigate children's experiences of agency and positioning in transition.

Schools' transition practices are also well-documented. Evangelou et al. (2008) report a range of practices used by schools to facilitate transition, which could be summarised as:

- Working collaboratively with feeder schools;
- Visits by prospective teachers or by children and parents;
- Booklets, talks; and
- Taster days and social events.

A successful transition achieved through these strategies includes the development of independence, confidence and new friendships, settling and fitting in the new context and experiencing continuity from primary school (Evangelou et al. 2008, West et al. 2010). Osborn et al. (2006) explore the value of knowledge transfer between the school and families as a resource in making a more successful and seamless transition focusing on additional resources in parental involvement to ensure a successful transition and support of identity changes. However, as with EAL support there is no consistency across schools and transition support is organised at the discretion of individual clusters of schools.

In addition to the perceived dip in attainment, the academic aspects of transition include changes in learning environments and school contexts, along with teaching styles and expectations for mature student behaviour (Green 1997, Tabor 1993). In terms of discontinuities, Muschamp (2009) points out the shift in the organisation of teaching as children meet a number of teachers on a daily basis. Other changes include types of work in class, the more regulated aspect of lessons and perceived growing independence of children (Bloyce & Fredrickson 2012, Muschamp 2009). At a social level transition proves to be equally challenging. Children's social networks are put to question as friends may be enrolling in different schools. In these cases children in high school face a process of identification with newly forming peer groups but also finding a place among already established friendship groups transferring together (Waters et al. 2014, Weller 2007). The latter may lead to a renegotiation of friendships and positioning due to the different structure and organisation of secondary schools and the reduced amount of socialising time during the day. However, Evangelou et al.

(2008) highlight that children who are well-supported in their secondary schools and have time to adapt evaluate their transition as a positive experience.

Transitions may be challenging experiences when the familiar nurturing environment is replaced with a larger secondary school, more academically orientated learning and strict expectations (Brewin & Statham 2005). However, EAL experiences of transition have often been explored in relation to socio-economic status or race where the distinction between EAL and native peers is not as clear (e.g. Anderson et al. 2000).

The instability of transition in the process of 'moving from the known to the unknown' (Green 1997, p.67) and the psychosocial implications of this have the potential to uncover overlooked agency. In researching the experiences of children learning EAL, the explicit stages of transition associated with different school contexts, interactions and relationships serve as different fields of practice that may require different types of engagement and hence modify children's agency and positioning. Bloyce and Fredrickson (2012) report that children learning EAL experience higher levels of school concern in their transition although they do not provide a definition of EAL so it is unclear what group of children they refer to. The level of concern reduces with time and adaptation to the new school which is consistent with Evangelou et al.'s findings (2008). However, Bloyce and Fredrickson (2012) conclude that further research is needed to consider the experiences of this particular group of children.

For children, the feelings most frequently associated with transition include fear and anxiety, especially in relation to widespread myths and beliefs about high school, bullying and attitudes of the older students (Muschamp 2009). Other concerns are around social networks, relationships, bullying and organisation of the classroom (Topping 2011, Waters et al. 2014). Muschamp analyses the reasons behind these concerns which point to moving from a familiar environment into the unknown, requiring processes of re-identification and adaptation to start anew (p. 192). However, after transition, there is a consensus that children's anxiety and fear subside (Rice et al.

2011, Topping 2011). Transition is associated with positive expectations and hopes for the following year, too. There is rare nostalgia towards the primary school and often students seem ready and eager to make the jump to high school (Evangelou et al. 2008, Muschamp 2009).

Adopting a socio-cultural view, expectations of transitions can be explained with what children have already encountered in their lives (Jenkins 2002). In this respect, the process of transition depends on individual memory and remembering which inevitably leads to comparing the experiences of these different stages in education. There is a desire to replicate or preserve past experiences from the old school context by 'wishing to remain with own teacher' (Tabor 1993) as opposed to the relative anonymity of the secondary school where children meet several teachers on a daily basis. Braund and Driver define this process as 'a change in learning culture that pupils find hard to adjust to' (2005, p.78). In addition to individual factors, socio-economic status and ethnicity also have significant impact on the process of transitions shaping expectations and adaptation along with attainment on the teacher side of the process (Weller 2011, West et al. 2010). Topping (2011) emphasises that there are differences in the expectations and perceptions of transition between teachers and children with the latter focusing on socio-emotional aspects and factors that relate to changes in positioning. In this respect, focus on children's experiences reveals a different view of transitions, building on the constructivist perspective that experiences are shaped by individual histories and social capital.

As a result of academic and social shifts, there is persistent evidence that around 40 percent of high school students fail to make the desired educational progress during Year 7 (Evangelou et al. 2008, West et al. 2010). In relation to children learning EAL, there are additional issues around academic achievement. A DfES report (2003) examined the Year 7 entry levels of students learning EAL in a number of schools in

England that demonstrated a tendency for entry results being below national average. The main areas of weakness included (DfES 2003):

- Low verbal reasoning;
- Understanding of academic work set in abstract contexts;
- Reading comprehension, extended writing and expressive skills;
- Proficiency in spoken English which masks difficulties with written reasoning and analysis;
- Language in specific curriculum areas, such as science.

In the light of previously presented arguments, these points are not surprising. They replicate perceived difficulties experienced by children learning EAL at all stages of their education. However, the transition context raises barriers in relation to areas of weakness by changing the support environment and teachers and creating discontinuities (Osborn et al. 2006). Hence, an important part of the induction to secondary education is the role of teachers in getting to know their students and accessing data about their backgrounds and previous learning. Overlooking these aspects of the education of children learning EAL and by providing a ‘fresh start’ in high school, teachers would fail to build on earlier achievement, to recognise previous work (Muschamp, 2009). There is a second danger that important aspects in prior education could be missed and hence wrong conclusions about children’s primary schooling may be made. For instance, if a child learning EAL has joined primary school in Year 3 with no prior schooling or literacy skills in any language, by Year 7 s/he may appear fluent in BICS but still lack knowledge and skills academically due to the limited language exposure (Cummins 2000). Such children may then be mistakenly identified as having learning difficulties by the secondary school due to their seemingly low progress. However, the cause of lower rates of learning may be rooted in the amount of prior schooling they have had and not their abilities. Therefore, careful assessment of

children's learning and needs should be carried out and a desire to find out about their backgrounds should be initiated before making assumptions and decisions about learning. As much as the secondary school provides a fresh start, this should be considered with caution.

In this section I presented important aspects of primary to secondary school transition, including the perceptions of teachers and children and the socio-cultural constructivist perspective explaining how experiences can be different. In the next two sections I focus specifically on the differences in perceptions of teachers and children highlighting potential mismatches of views in the school field. I argue that the differences in perceptions shape two different pictures of what schooling and transitions are like for children learning EAL, each informed by individual, social and cultural factors. These mismatches set the scene for my theoretical choices.

3.5 EAL through teacher lenses

Teachers' perceptions of children who have EAL, whether at the initial stages or advanced bilinguals, play a role in shaping the education of these children, even more when coupled with academic expectations about achievement. Teachers' understanding of EAL is of utmost importance because of their dominant role in deconstructing knowledge and orchestrating learning in classrooms (Cummins 2001). A number of researchers have discussed a gap in the development of a structured and shared approach to educating students learning EAL across England (Conteh 2012b, Costley 2014, Leung 2001). Mistry and Sood (2010) suggest that the lack of consistency also limits the opportunities for staff professional development and training which in turn reinforces the gap. The reasons can be sought in the diversity of learners of EAL, the need for context specific practices that reflect the ethos of the particular school, and the diversity of the immediate area.

Wallen and Kelly-Holmes (2006) identify four common approaches in teaching children learning EAL, summarised as:

- 1) full immersion in the mainstream class with no language support;
- 2) withdrawals from a mainstream class for additional classes and help with a support teacher;
- 3) support in the mainstream class through a dedicated teacher; and
- 4) bilingual education where home languages are used for instruction.

Some of the literature clearly favours the bilingual education approach coupled with education for diversity and considers withdrawals as a temporary measure. Evidence of successful EAL practice (see Flynn 2007, Gregory 2002, Parke et al. 2004) relies heavily on case study classrooms with exceptional, dedicated and supported teachers. The specifics of these and the distinctiveness of the particular context make it difficult to replicate or adapt practices to new contexts.

Another aspect worth considering is the ethnic composition of teachers in England. The majority are still from white middle-class backgrounds, even in highly diverse schools (Sleeter 2004) which often does not reflect the profile of students making it difficult to relate to children from very different backgrounds. This could potentially deepen the gap in understanding. Teachers may fail to recognise the strengths of minority EAL students due to their unfamiliarity with the culture and lack of experience of being in the same position which is a valued prerequisite by students (Price 2009). At the same time, the profile of teaching assistants and EAL support staff is much more diverse and equipped to bring insider perspectives alongside linguistic and communication benefits (South 2012). Next, I explore the mismatches and difficulties created by inequalities in teacher backgrounds and lack of consistent practice.

Potential gaps in teaching EAL

Many children learning EAL do not have a standard entry into the English educational system arriving mid-term or without prior education. In addition to this, transferring schools across national boundaries and contexts can bring series of issues related to adaptation, fitting in, accessing relevant funds of knowledge (Conteh 2012b) and the appropriate level of the NC (Sood & Mistry 2011) regardless of English language proficiency. From the perspective of schools and teachers, such transfers raise issues around staff preparedness to accommodate new learners and knowledge of strategies to address the learning needs of children, a growing class size and the disruption caused by mid-term arrivals in terms of cohesion and catching up with learning (Quinn & Wakefield 2009). For children having EAL, these may mean more disruptions and support needed to access everyday communication and the education field before looking at learning (Cooke 2008). Cummins (2000) uses the idea of basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) to denote the difference between everyday communication and academic proficiency. It is suggested that while children tend to develop BICS fairly quickly through their immersion in the language and classroom environment, CALP may take up to seven additional years to be on par with monolingual peers. This is a potential interpretation of the persistent gap in EAL achievement despite numerous attempts to narrow it and generally improving results of those learning EAL (NALDIC 2012). It also sheds light on some of the challenges teachers face if they fail to recognise that EAL is about more than language development in order to access learning.

Sood and Mistry (2011) discuss the structure of the NC and the challenges it poses to newly-arrived students who have been educated in a different medium abroad or have limited prior schooling altogether. Arguably, they view the NC as spirally-based where students upgrade their knowledge and skills at each stage/year cycle of education (Sood & Mistry 2011). However, this view fails to recognise the wider context beyond the curriculum that may impact children's learning, such as socio-economic and

cultural background, family and individual aspirations. It also presents knowledge as a somewhat static concept of filling in the gaps in children's educational background. A number of researchers (Wardman 2012, Turkan & Liu 2012, Callahan 2005) argue that inequality in terms of academic performance and achievement may be due to the format of testing which unintentionally puts linguistic minority students at disadvantage in relation to the formal curriculum. Additionally, the lack of understanding of the knowledge, skills and experiences students learning EAL bring in class reinforces the long-term negative outcomes through replicating disadvantage. Children's background should not be a marker of their learning and a limitation to opportunity. Even with the development of BICS and CALP the process of catching-up would take longer or take a different direction in terms of positioning in relation to schooling. Further to assumptions about the presence of prior knowledge, the NC is culturally constructed with the dominant educational values and expectations being encoded. These may not be immediately visible and consciously reiterated by educational professionals as they are rooted in social order and traditions (Bruner 1996, Bourdieu & Passeron 1990, p.7). For children labelled as having EAL the cultural and social may be different, hence they will not possess the same expected home basics, or capital, to begin with (Thomson 2002). This need not be viewed as a negative. If handled sensitively, the integration of learning and experiences occurring in children's homes and communities creates conditions for meaningful learning exchanges at school. This in turn will develop and strengthen home-school relationships in a positive way and develop knowledge, skills and capital. Outlining bilingual work with science students, Warren et al. (2001) demonstrate a similar approach. Through case studies of bilingual sense-making, they argue that everyday language is as valid as scientific language in making sense of the world which links to horizontal and vertical discourses of knowledge. By the time children start school, they have already experienced concepts and ideas that will be taught at school so they are able to explain the basics in their own words (and languages) and through their cultural perspective. Such

experience and knowledge should not be dismissed at school but often it is, being classified as invalid, not scientific or academic, or because teachers are unable to create such conditions in their classrooms due to their backgrounds and misrecognition of other ways of knowing. This theoretical position was explained in Chapter 2 and the classification principles in education will be illustrated through the case studies in Chapters 6 and 7.

In consideration of the abilities of children learning EAL, there are mixed reports. While some teachers hold negative perspectives describing students as 'not bright', others may adopt a more positive stance seeing children as gifted as they are users of two languages and understanding 'more than you would think' (Mistry & Sood 2010, p. 112). The last quote, although positive, still incorporates disabling language of prejudice. These findings are very similar to Walters' in terms of describing EAL learners from particular ethnic backgrounds as 'lazy' or less able while others are recognised as 'ideal students' (2007, p.92). Associating particular minorities, for instance black students with dysfunctional family lives and segregated communities, lack of ability and motivation is a reality for many children, but teachers claiming to be objective are denying the importance of diversity and difference making the understanding of it a static one-faceted concept (Sleeter 2004). Is this implied objectivity even possible given that people are socially constructed and culturally moulded? The cultural differences and individual characteristics of children learning EAL/minority backgrounds are interfering with the view of adaptation to a dominant system and oftentimes call for teacher-led accommodation of differences, but these differences once again emphasise otherness and not fitting in the norm. These interact with the formation of identity and positioning for children. Ethnic minority and EAL identities are co-constructed in the school environment and they reflect the interaction of the attitudes and understandings of all people involved in schools (Cummins 2001, Walters 2007). Teachers' attempts to categorise students so that they can manage their learning and lessons may be opposed to students' behaviours to construct their own

identity. Such interactions consciously understood or not, turn the classroom and school into a battleground for power struggles over positions of dominance and subservience. Black (2007) discusses a number of studies as a reference point for the different types of interactions and talk which teachers have with groups of children based on their language, ethnic background, ability or gender. From this perspective, it could be established that a number of widely spread assumptions and norms in society exist as ideological conventions which are an integral part of schools as social institutions and hence are reflected in the curriculum that schools teach. Having a particular role in societies, schools can be considered to convey and at least partially reproduce the dominant discourse (Black 2007).

In addition to academic barriers to EAL, parents and home environments need consideration too. Gregory (2002) points out the expectations that teachers hold for parental involvement often differ from realities at homes living with different cultures. Many parents believe that it is the responsibility of the school to educate their children and provide them with relevant experiences, or that they do not have the relevant capital and skills to support their children (Conteh 2012a). These examples are clear representation of missed cross-cultural communication and misinterpretations which affect the student experience on the first place, but also teachers' attitudes.

It is perceived that some ethnic minority parents may have different expectations for the education of their children (Reay et al. 2011). The reasons may be cultural predisposition, such as high value of education, compensations for missed opportunities in previous generations, or a transformation mechanism in Bordieusian language of breaking reproductive power relations (Mills 2008). Nonetheless, these comprise a strategy to accumulate relevant social and educational capital. Reasons for migration play a part too. Their multitude makes the conceptualisation of the EAL group difficult as the experiences and stories are rather heterogeneous. Quinn and Wakefield (2009) raise the issue of migration as experienced by refugee students

describing them as ‘forced migrants’ (p.112). Therefore, this groups of students is likely to require different support and have different experience in comparison to children whose families are economic migrants. For instance, children learning EAL from refugee related backgrounds and zones of humanitarian conflict may need more pastoral and social support before being able to cope with academic aspects of learning and the demands of a new environment and language (Hamilton & Moore 2004). Economic migrants may already be equipped with relevant skills to succeed academically (Conteh 2012b).

Gaps are apparent in relation to teachers’ professional adaptability to EAL. Researching language support teachers in secondary schools in Ireland, Lyons (2010) identifies the already mentioned lack of consistent training and lower status of the profession. Such discourses inevitably impact the esteem of EAL learners as they are receivers of the perception that EAL is a burden rather than a valuable asset. Lyons (Ibid.) also identifies a reluctance of staff to engage with the wider debate about power, language and identity which can be interpreted as a barrier to creating understanding of EAL as an issue related to socio-cultural factors rather than language and understanding.

Having outlined some emerging gaps in the understanding of EAL and teaching practices such as reproductive discourses and pedagogic framing, in the next section I look at literature that addresses these.

Bridging the gaps

Some of the issues could be addressed through better understanding of multiculturalism and its impact and interpretation in schools in England. Lovern (2012) summarises that definitions of multiculturalism focus on promoting the strengths and importance of cultural diversity, human rights and aspirations for equality in the distribution of power among different social and cultural groups. Although these reflect a positive discourse in theory, in the potentially reproductive discourse of education

(Apple 2014, Bernstein 2000, Bourdieu & Passeron 1990) their practical side may face the rigidity of policy documents and good intentions. For instance, the use of first/home languages is officially promoted in national policy and guidance on EAL (DfES 2002, DfE 2013), but reality is different. Bilingual resources are generally underused and there is a lack of understanding of their value. Although research provides a number of fascinating examples (see Conteh 2003, Kenner 2004), several authors are concerned with the negative impact of the lack of understanding exhibited by teachers of children learning EAL with regards to language use and cultural difference (see Warren et al. 2001, Walters 2007). Learning about other cultures in school should be exercised with caution in order to prevent oversimplifications to traditional/spiritual elements and 'exoticization' of the other (Cole & Blair 2006, Lovern 2012).

In order to overcome a deficit driven understanding of EAL students Mistry and Sood (2011) suggest the integration and use of multiple cultures as a resource to support learning but Pagett (2006) cautions that students' cultures and languages can be used in the classroom only if they agree and feel comfortable in doing so. Another proposed strategy is to address the problem of devaluing EAL at a whole-school level by identifying existing barriers to learning such as low expectations, assumptions, unawareness of background, home language skills and literacies, lack of effective partnership with parents. In the Index for Inclusion, Booth and Ainscow (2002) suggest this happens through improving home-school relationships, developing effective communication between teachers and parents as well as between all staff and continuous professional development. The benefits of staff preparedness to address the needs of all learners result in better achievement and enjoyment of school. Quinn and Wakefield (2009) emphasise that support needs to be measured and temporary because the main aim is to enable EAL students to cope with learning independently without making them reliant on it.

Acknowledging cultural differences in a positive way would lead to success because it empowers children to use their full potential. Bilingual teachers, community members or parent volunteers can be a resource (Sood & Mistry 2011, Parke et al. 2004). Inclusion can be facilitated by existing ethnic communities within school where appropriate, including peer support, and simply more attention could be paid to students' experiences and the factors that make them positive.

Focus on experience

In addition to the teacher's role in utilising children's experience and knowledge, there is a perceived research task to enable children to articulate that experience in appropriate ways which are often overlooked in classrooms (Welpy 2010). It is the process of articulation this provides valuable feedback and forward planning in terms of improving teaching and learning. Experience as a summation of knowledge and practice could provide useful insights into the construction of children's world. In this respect, teachers and researchers should focus on what else children learning EAL know and have experienced that could be brought into school. It is important to note that experiences are what differentiate individuals and hence children learning EAL have unique perspectives based on their different experiences with potential to enrich classroom and peer interactions and learning. It is clear that schools, teachers and peers could benefit from having access to and actively using this knowledge (Garcia 1999, Nieto 1999). In addition, such openness can bring about transformation in terms of challenging discourses, assumptions and power relations in terms of dominant cultures, accepted and questioned knowledge and practice (Mills 2008, Reay 2004).

3.6 Considering children's experiences

All of the issues discussed in the previous section are significant, but arguably there is a pressing need which the curriculum discourse ignores, namely the experiences of children. Children learning EAL should be active participants in their education

because this is an important part of their social positioning and navigation. There is a difference between the knowledge of adults and children within the same context and understanding the classroom through the eyes of children requires consideration and use of their knowledge and experience (Robinson & Kellett 2004, Topping 2011).

Feelings about schools are an important source of information to consider when pondering about the experiences of children labelled as having EAL. Their perceptions and accommodation in a new learning environment could be influenced by a multitude of factors ranging from personal learning preferences and behaviour styles through acceptance of peers and teachers to achievement and the academic aspects of being a student as evidenced in transition literature (Waters et al. 2014). Furthermore, individuals perceive the change of schools and culture differently depending on personal traits, prior experiences and aspirations (Cooke 2008). A way into the successful adaptation of children to different contexts is when the teachers become familiar with their worlds so that they can develop effective support systems but also encourage greater independence.

Bhatti's exploration of what children from minority backgrounds define as good teaching and learning experiences maintains that a good teacher is one who provides clear instructions, controls the class appropriately and keeps the children on task at all times by providing engaging and stimulating tasks reflecting their experiences and interests (2007). The good teacher uses praise effectively, s/he is helpful, caring and attentive to the needs of all children, not only the most demanding or visible ones. In this respect, the extent to which practice and learning will be successful is dependent on the individual teacher. Inclusion of these rules is not unproblematic. The point about visibility is important as often children labelled as having EAL who have a more advanced use of English remain outside the immediate focus of teachers (Wallen & Kelly-Holmes 2006). This also relates to engagement as visibility fosters active participation and particularly in the case of children learning EAL who may not be

aware of the normative behaviours unless stated explicitly (Erickson et al. 2008, Welply 2010).

Agency and engagement

‘Children as agents’ is an idea that promotes involvement in the educational process beyond the immediate lesson and the concept of active engagement and visible participation (Osborn 2006). It is about taking part and being given the opportunity to opt out of engagement. Just as there are different ways of participating in school activities and different levels of engagement, so there is more than one way to measure student agency (Erickson et al. 2008). One effective strategy is teachers finding out how their students learn best and adapting their practice accordingly.

Going back to Bhatti’s good, bad and normal teachers (2007) one of the points raised was about teachers treating differently new arrivals and established EAL learners assigning them identities based on background. Among the most notable were issues about (in)visibility in relation to diversity, and the higher aspirations of minority families to overcome lower socio-economic status transforming educational experiences into relevant social capital (Bhatti 2007). Although this particular research demonstrated children’s active engagement and agency due to the research methods, other research (Chen 2009, Kaneva 2011) demonstrated that some children learning EAL tend to develop passive attitudes to learning and education manifested in an expectation to be provided with support. The provision and availability of language and learning support for all children, irrespective of their language proficiency level, is crucial indeed. However, it has to be measured against the development of the child as an independent and self-sufficient individual. Passive attitudes on the part of children are sometimes unintentionally encouraged by teaching approaches and support arrangements, putting the teacher in a dominant role and in charge of orchestrating learning without active use of children’s agency. This is an example of how power imbalance and knowledge gaps in the classroom can negatively influence children’s

positioning and engagement. Children learning EAL are even more vulnerable in such situation because of their reliance on the context to compensate their lack of knowledge of the power relations (Cummins 2001). Studies show that some children learning EAL do not reach the level of their monolingual peers or develop the skills and independence needed to cope within mainstream environments (Cohen 2011). These observations pointed me in the direction of exploring children's engagement and agency in their learning and schooling in general. It seemed apparent that some of the children who were mere recipients of support had made conscious decisions to stand back and receive rather than engage and seek help (Kaneva 2011).

Engagement and agency are difficult concepts to unpick as they are contested across disciplines and philosophical traditions (Emirbayer & Mische 1998, Sugarman & Sokol 2012). Nieto (1999) views education as a political, social and pedagogical process where all students bring valid experiences and worldviews. Engagement is currently a buzz word within the education field as teachers seek new ways to increase student engagement with learning in the dominantly correct ways:

‘Engagement signifies an attitude of alignment with and acceptance of the terms of one’s position in the classroom; resistance signifies an attitude of opposition to and rejection of the authority of the teacher and the position of the student, often in a way that instead seeks status in the eyes of peers – the second source of recognition in the classroom’

(Packer & Goicoechea 2000, p.237)

This understanding of engagement in pedagogic terms highlights the unequal distribution of power in defining what constitutes positive engagement. However, it recognises that engagement could be related to both teachers and peers suggesting that disengagement perhaps accumulates relevant positioning with friends. This is a notion that will be further explored through the theoretical framework and research analysis later on.

The OECD defines engagement as ‘the extent to which students identify with and value schooling outcomes and participate in academic and non-academic school activities’

(2003, p. 8) and points to variations across countries and contexts. Engagement is a fluid concept where children act upon choice, expectations, and types of support available alongside the notion of belonging (Chui et al. 2011). I argue that children are constantly working out their positioning and self-image which could be captured through specific focus on formal and informal aspects of schooling. Engagement in school is a continuous process and very much relates to children's role in education and how it is structured by adults. Teachers' expectations are of crucial importance in terms of predicting, restricting or motivating specific outcomes, behaviours and learner identities. Exploring the engagement of children from migrant backgrounds Chui et al. (2011) highlight the different relationship between attitudes towards school and sense of belonging whereby children should be encouraged and helped to develop nurturing relationships with teachers in order to increase their belonging. There are suggestions of integrating children's experiences into teaching and learning and building on their strengths as bilingual and bicultural learners (Conteh 2003, Flynn 2007, Gregory 2001, Parke et al. 2002). Nonetheless, teachers are restricted by the political and structural context of education which leaves little space for reflection on practice to challenge it actively and come up with new solutions and improvements. In principle, schools and specifically teachers who have been successful in integrating children's experiences and knowledge in the curriculum, have been associated with highly diverse schools and critical approaches to pedagogy and school improvement (e.g. Corbett 2001).

Children learning EAL make a number of conscious and subconscious choices related to their schooling. The choices are depending on their previous and current experiences as well as understanding of schooling. Understanding of schooling is culturally constructed, as well as its perceived value (Rassool 2004a). Hence children learning EAL may hold different attitudes and manifestations of engagement. They will not necessarily act the same way as their monolingual peers. Some may seem less engaged while others become increasingly engaged in their adaptation to new contexts finding

ways to manifest how they fit in. This links with series of questions about identity, capital, understandings and practice.

Packer & Goicoechea (2000) explain the urgency of acknowledging children's active participation in school and classroom settings viewing the classroom as a space for 'active cultural production' (p.236) where children are actively engaged in reproduction of relevant values but also potential transformation through their own interpretations. Returning to the point about experience and the transformative potential of incorporating different experiences in the curriculum and school in general, this statement is significant for teaching and learning. It points to a careful analysis of the active processes of decision-making that children initiate, which may uncover more complexity than is visible on the surface. Again, a major issue is setting up the communication and articulation of students' experiences at the right time and space. This also goes back to the point about valuing diversity and different types of knowledge.

In terms of my research project, I view engagement and agency as processes of choice-making on a daily basis. Children learning EAL make both conscious and subconscious choices with regards to the level of engagement in lesson activities and schooling, including the exercise of agency in choosing not to engage. However, the scope of engagement which I discuss here could be seen in two aspects. The first aspect of engagement is the process of doing and taking part in classroom activities, for instance engagement with the learning material and activities set by the teacher. This type of engagement is immediate, visible and can be judged upon by the teacher, peers or other observer in the classroom. Indeed, teachers aim for visible engagement as this is a perceived marker of learning and of the fact that the curriculum is accessible and inclusive to all children in the class (Ainscow et al. 2006; Booth & Ainscow 2002). However, this approach to engagement may disregard some particularly important points of the students' experience. As emphasised by Osler and Starkey (2002) there is

a danger that schooling could be perceived as something ‘done to children’ rather than ‘with them’ (p.279). The second notion of engagement is similar to the concept of participation where this right is granted by the sensitivity of the curriculum and teachers’ practice to the needs of both individual students and the whole class (Osler & Starkey 2002).

3.7 Summary

In this chapter I outlined key literature in the field of EAL and diversity focusing on the different aspects that contribute to children’s schooling experiences. In the light of changing assumptions about diversity and EAL-ness, I defined EAL as an attribute of children who speak different languages at home in an explicit attempt to remain open-minded about its meaning in a range of contexts shifting away from labels and marginalising language. This was influenced by the review of teachers’ conceptualisations of children labelled as having EAL where particular characteristics and backgrounds seemed to prevent establishing fully inclusive teaching practices due to perceived lack of understanding and personal experience with the ideas of diversity. The review of the discourses shaping school curriculums set the tone for teacher practice in terms of academic subjects and content alongside interaction with and views of students. A very explicit focus on language and strategies to enable children to access the curriculum instead of co-creating knowledge and classroom cultures was uncovered, which contradicts evidence that EAL is more than language. I argued that sensitive school practices have to consider other aspects of children’s experiences such as relevance to the dominant context and culture, agency, expectations and engagement.

In this thesis, I use transition between primary and secondary school as a focus on a crucial time to understand children’s experiences in changing contexts. Through existing literature I highlighted how teachers’ understandings of transition focus on

more formal academic aspects while children are most concerned with the social context and disturbances caused by changes. Therefore, my intended research focus on transition as lens to understand children's experiences of schooling and shifts in contexts will provide a unique viewpoint, not explicitly mentioned in the literature. Transition will provide a context to explore children's experiences of changing contexts in a vivid way against a number of factors that act as enablers or barriers. Some of these include relationships with peers, teachers and schools, already mentioned in the literature review. Other aspects, namely agency social and pedagogical structures stem from theoretical understandings that will provide a framework for analysing the experiences. By exploring the meaning of agency in educational contexts, I began to highlight mismatches between the understandings of teachers and children's actual experiences, agency and engagement in schooling.

Chapter 4:

Methodology and methods

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explained the theoretical framework that shaped the research situating the main lens and concepts in relation to the education field, transition and learners of EAL from minority backgrounds. This chapter turns to the empirical methods used to generate data to answer the overall research question of how children labelled as having EAL experience the transition between primary and secondary schools in terms of positioning, agency and engagement in social and pedagogic terms.

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to complement Chapter 2 in outlining the design of the study from the preliminary theoretical considerations through epistemology to the particular methods for interacting with the research sites and participants. The consequent analysis in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 brings together the data and the theoretical framework. In this chapter I discuss the technical detail of conducting the study and the role and participation of the researcher. The methodology is structured around my understanding of knowledge and selection of research methods intended to generate evidence. I introduce the overall research paradigm that predefines the study where I deconstruct my role as a person and qualitative researcher who brings values, interactions and distortions in the field. I focus on different aspects of my role as a researcher situated within a constructivist paradigm. I then describe the research strategy and design, sampling and participants before moving to the research methods and analysis strategy. The chapter continues with a discussion of ethics in educational research and participant protection measures. Finally, issues of research quality are discussed, including credibility and rigour, triangulation, coherence and transferability.

4.2 Research paradigm and researcher role

Personal and professional interests in the field of education, languages and the schooling experiences of children who speak more than one language were one of the reasons behind this project, as outlined in the introduction. My interests, teaching practice and personal experiences of EAL in a range of contexts shaped my thinking and research approach as they are interlinked with the research paradigm. The paradigm relates to a definition of knowledge as seen by the researcher, influenced by their practice and experiences, and is crucial for understanding the design and choice of specific methodologies. In my view, flexible qualitative designs are a suitable approach to research social settings as they allow for more in-depth explorations of specific practices within an established context through planned methods and critical incidents that carry additional information about the impact practice has on members of the setting (Silverman 2011).

Research is situated within philosophical paradigms alongside explicit researcher roles and involvement modes. Paradigms are ‘a basic set of beliefs that guide action’ (Guba 1990, p. 17, in Creswell 2014) and as such they hold the orientation of the research and its nature in terms of method. The diagram below summarises the research paradigm:

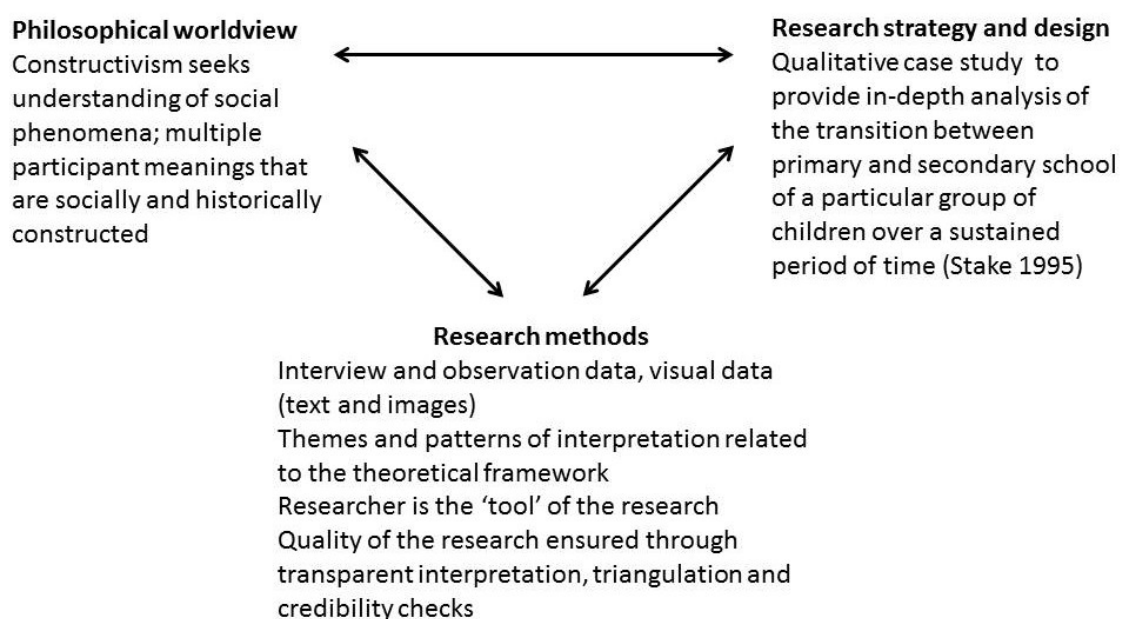


Figure 4.1: Research paradigm (adapted from Creswell 2014, p.5)

In this study, I adopt a constructivist paradigm stemming from my understanding of the world and the location of my research within the social domain. According to Creswell (2014) the key elements of constructivism are to build understanding of particular issue through working with multiple participants and their meanings, social and historical construction of events and behaviours. Schools are social settings with explicit cultures, systems, rules and behaviour codes that are internalised and practiced by members. As a former teacher, I enter the field having certain ideas and assumptions about how schools operate in general. My knowledge of settings has evolved through practice and research engagement with a number of schools, children and teachers. Yet, this could not provide a clear picture of the particular schools involved in the research which I had not visited before. Even though I am familiar with the school environment across national contexts, there is evidence that not every school operates in the same way or reveals the same cultures (Ainscow 1998, Alexander 2001). Indeed, there are overarching principles across the board, such as focus on teaching and learning strategies, driving attainment, classroom discipline, hierarchical organisation and so forth but the aim of the research is to keep an open mind and focus on the particulars of the selected schools. In this respect, my study of children learning EAL experiencing transition would require direct engagement with them, their schools cultures and teachers in the natural environment of the setting while resisting the tendency to see the classroom and inherent practices through teacher lenses as a result of my background.

Within the paradigm debate, Lincoln (1990) distinguishes the ontological, epistemological and methodological characteristics of constructivism or naturalistic inquiry as shaping elements. The ontological assumptions relate to viewing reality as social construction with no single tangible reality that is true to all individuals. There are multiple possible interpretations of the social reality which are both internally and externally constructed and dialogic in nature. Bringing this assertion in the context of schools, the multiplicity of actors at different levels leads to a multiplicity of social

constructions through different perspectives. The perspective of a child is not necessarily the same as that of a teacher, which can vary across subjects or based on experience, attitudes, professional standing. By focusing explicitly on the experiences of children I differentiate these experiences from the views of teachers of how children experience particular aspects of their schooling.

While the positivist worldview and applied quantitative methodologies seek the objective natural laws in the world and explanations applicable across contexts, the constructivist view is that social reality can only be explained locally through time-bound and place-bound knowledge. My knowledge of the children's experiences and school practices would develop from engagement with participants through observational and conversational methods (Lincoln & Guba 1985). By doing this I create knowledge that is context-dependent and useful in deepening the understanding of what EAL means and how children experience transition and schooling in a specific well-described context.

Alongside the advantages of constructing reality from multiple meanings and interpretations, there are perceived disadvantages. These relate to the complex interlinked nature of constructivism and the role of the researcher in shaping the interpretation of knowledge. However, stating my positioning and background provide transparency of the interpretations and potential hindrances (Silverman 2011). In addition, the complexity of social construction and individual analysis is addressed through my attempt to build in-depth and nuanced understandings of children's experiences and worldviews and through theoretical triangulation.

The epistemological position of constructivist inquiry is in its interactive nature involving both researcher and participants. The process of negotiating access to the research sites, agreeing methods, generating evidence and the presentation of the values and perceptions of participants happen in interaction. My study builds on continuous involvement with children and teachers schools through initial relationship

building and further data generation at two research stages. Methodologically, constructivist studies take place within the natural environments of participants (Creswell 2014) where the experiences occur uninhibited by special conditions. In order to build such understanding, I spent over six months in schools (see Appendix 1, 3, 4) where I interacted with participants in different situations and routines. This enabled me to construct a holistic view of the participants' realities (Lincoln 1990) and collate my own understandings of the settings and children involved. This was assisted by the use of qualitative research methods with different designs and flexibility as means to developing the multiple perspectives.

As constructivism entails building up knowledge and understanding through engagement with natural settings and participants' lives, I began planning my project committed to the flexibility of the design. Due to my initial knowledge of the schools through researching the local areas, conversations with supervisors and OFSTED reports, I already had some assumptions what the research and sample would look like. This was a useful strategy to shape the research as a manageable activity in advance and be able to present it to gatekeepers and school staff in order to gain access. A number of adaptations took place consequently, viewed as part of an emergent design in line with the unanticipated issues evolving from the engagement with participants. Lincoln (1990) emphasises that the design of constructivist research could not be fully articulated until the study is complete and the theory is fully applied and developed after data generation. Following these ideas, I organised my fieldwork and write-up plan, leaving space for alterations and emergent findings. Inevitably, this process created a level of uncertainty and insecurity whether the research was going in the right direction and whether I was asking the right questions, but in reality guidance from supervisors, open-mindedness and no particular urgency to produce findings and patterns actually led me to better understand the context. Later on I developed my understanding of the research participants, sites and data through writing up case reports and accounts at different stages of the analysis.

The next section moves into the detail of the research design, flexibility measures, adaptations and activities that shaped my study. It brings the research plans to life with information about the schools and participants.

4.3 Research strategy and design

This research was designed to explore the shifts of positioning, agency and engagement of children learning EAL in their schooling in times of change in transitions. In qualitative designs the researcher is seen as key in generating the data, developing instruments for the particular needs of the study and applying analytical strategies (Creswell 2014). Obtaining perspectives in their multiplicity requires the use of multiple sources of data through a range of methods that enable construction of meanings and experiences. In my research this meant use of various methods tailored to the needs of the sample in terms of both applicability and personal preference. The result was the development of holistic accounts that constituted a complex picture of the issues at hand. This involved reporting multiple perspectives, identifying a number of factors, sketching the larger picture as it emerged and discussions with supervisors. More specifically, the explorations entailed series of case studies across settings and participants. Within this approach there were elements of narratives and ethnographic research. The narratives were linked to the transition from one school to another and the accompanying processes of negotiation of positioning and establishment but these were purposefully not developed into exhaustive stories. The story approach is only used to convey the longitudinal nature of the study and the timeframe of transition. In this sense, the narratives serve as a mode of presentation. The ethnographic elements of my research relate to its longitudinal nature in addition to the approach of becoming an insider researcher. While ethnographers argue for the researchers' prolonged engagement with the field and first-hand experience of it (Conteh et al. 2005, Delamont 2002), I have followed these conventions only to an extent. The reasons are both structural and personal. The structural barriers relate to access, safeguarding and

roles within the schools I researched. While in the primary school my role was fluid and easily translated into classroom practice where I acted as an assistant of the teacher, in the secondary schools there were more restrictions in terms of physical movement in the school without being accompanied by a member of staff, timetabling issues and so on. The personal reasons relate to ethical issues and preventing children's dependency on my presence in the classroom due to increased attention and support opportunities. In addition to this, I had to maintain a particular identity in the research field, for instance, I was not a teacher, even though I had been one in the past; I was not school staff; I was not a friend to children, more of a critical adult open to listen to their experiences. Alongside this, I was a PhD researcher with responsibility to complete the research to a high standard and ethically as per University and funders' guidelines. With these considerations in mind and priority to generate data while benefiting children alongside their transition, I had to carefully manage my role in the different schools. This meant collaborating with teachers and being open about my intentions with the children. As I had to give the children a simple explanation to what research was and why I was doing this, I told them that I would like to help future teachers to be better at their practice and understand children's experiences from what my participants had to say. This included maintaining realistic expectations on the part of children that I am not to change anything in their classrooms and transitions and that I had to listen to their teachers as they did. I managed this by being open about my background, answering questions and telling them stories about my childhood, EAL and transition experiences, offering support when they complained about school experiences while trying to maintain a middle ground by contextualising what the teacher said or did from an adult perspective. This helped building a strong relationship, openness and sense of familiarity that continued through secondary school.

At the second stage of data generation the process was further complicated when I had to engage with a larger number of schools, each of which with its own culture and

attitudes towards my research (and researchers in general). This meant that although I already knew the children and they knew me, we had to adapt to new ways of doing the research. For instance, in one of the schools I only interviewed during form time in the morning, in another one there was always a teacher present during interviews with children, which could have influenced the data but this is how the schools were comfortable proceeding with the research. In addition, the structured timetable and different time of the academic year with more demands than the last few months of primary school, resulted in tightly scheduled research gatherings determined by the schools, not by my choice or children's. Again, one of the schools was very flexible about days I could come in while others offered fixed dates. Issues like these could not have been anticipated in advance as the schools differed in their attitudes to researchers. I had little experience of researching in secondary schools and in my experience primary schools had been more flexible with outsiders. I reflect further on the different cultures in the schools in the fieldwork section of this chapter and in the individual schools accounts in Chapter 5.

4.3.1 Case study research

A case study research approach was adopted as an appropriate methodology for exploring social issues in their depth as opposed to breadth through the generation of rich analytical material (Stake 1995). A perceived strength of this methodology is that it can be applied to a variety of research situations with priority aims of exploration and explanation of an issue, phenomenon or a programme in the wholeness with its setting (Yin 2003). Stake (1995) emphasises that a case is a bounded cohesive system which is characterised by complexity and ability to function on its own. Schools, students and teachers can be cases.

Stake (1995) distinguishes between three types of case studies:

- intrinsic case studies that result from the researcher's interest and curiosity about the particular case;

- instrumental case studies that aim to achieve more than understanding a phenomenon by seeking ways to improve practice or policy; and
- collective case studies that include several cases and require coordination between the multiple cases.

This typology is useful in thinking about the purpose of a case study and its framing in terms of participants and schools, but in the real world cases may not fit into a single category. I refer to the real world as the place where research and interactions with participants actually occur. The selection process and methods for data generation depend on the type of case study that is selected. Considering my own background and interest in the field of education and EAL, I would define my design as an intrinsic case study, but involvement with practice calls for an instrumental case study. The multiple schools involved in the research and the system of cases and subcases in Stake's words are a collective case study (1995). Therefore, my research design combines elements of all three case study types.

The case of investigation is a group of children categorised as having EAL as they transfer from primary to secondary school. The initial plan was to shadow a sample of 20 students in Year 6 in the same primary school into Year 7 in their new secondary schools. Focus on one primary school was sought to allow mapping the transition process and understanding children's perceptions and experiences from a common context perspective. Engagement with this one school was viewed as an opportunity for continuous period of time spent in a single setting with the same group of participants in order to fully understand the context instead of separating time and effort across different schools. The aim was to involve a school that feeds more than two secondary schools as I anticipated following the whole group into Year 7 in different schools.

A multiple case study approach (Yin 2003) was adopted where each case combined the primary and secondary school context through the process of transition and the

individual children who transferred to the particular secondary schools. The following diagram represents the structure of the cases:

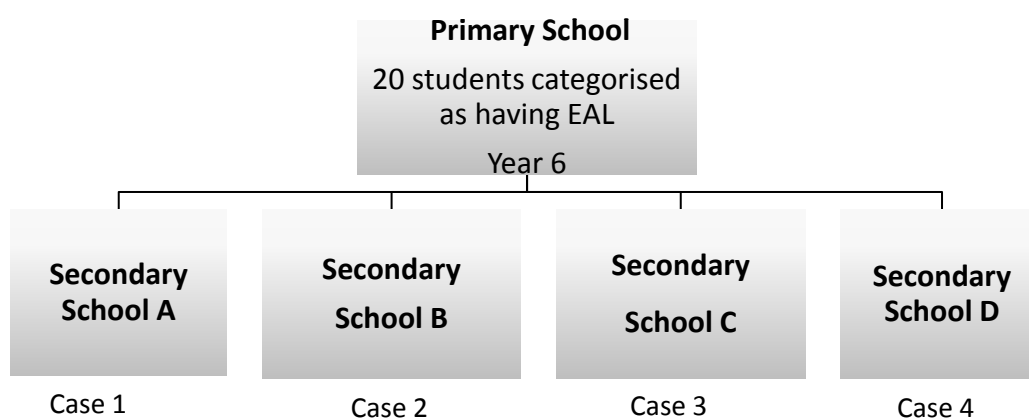


Figure 4.2: Case: Transition for children learning EAL where the case is a group of individuals within the particular primary and secondary school context

The cases are interlinked in terms of school and children samples. As illustrated in the diagram, each case is a combination of two schools – a primary and a secondary, and the transition from one to another of a group of children as the aim of the research is to explore both group and individual aspects. The plan was to have three to four case studies of transition between different schools. However, the actual relationship with schools and organisation of transitions proved to be much messier. The experiences of individual children were substantially different, much more individual and did not depend as much on the school contexts. Therefore, as the thesis advanced, I focused more on individual children rather than the settings. The next section discusses the logistics of the fieldwork, sampling and stages of data generation, the participants and the actual diagram of the research cases.

4.3.2 Research timeline and fieldwork

The structure of the transition case studies alongside the organisation of the academic school year required a two-staged approach to data generation with the school holidays between Year 6 and Year 7. In the primary school data was generated in spring 2012. Consequently, the secondary schools were involved in autumn 2012. Similar research methods were used at both stages. At the end of each stage an account of the contexts

and experiences reported by children in each school was to be produced and then upon fieldwork completion, these accounts were intended to form a data display for the process of transition.

In addition to the collective experience of transition, six individual stories were to be followed closely to develop understanding through thick descriptions (Lincoln & Guba 1985), and interrogated in relation to the theoretical framework. I intended to understand and explain children's active framing processes and positioning in social contexts as they cross boundaries between subjects and social spaces, e.g. classroom language, home and school, peer groups (Jenkins 2002).

The fieldwork spanned across a 12 month period that included negotiating access to schools, repeated visits and data generation. The table below outlines the main activities that took place, their location in terms of stage and a justification how the activities were important:

| What? | Where? | When? | Why? |
|--|----------------|---------------|---|
| Identify research sample: area, schools, classes, children and teachers | Primary school | Feb-Apr 2012 | Make informed decisions about the school populations and willingness to be part of research |
| Preliminary observations | Primary school | May 2012 | Make sense of the school context, get to know the participants, establish my role as a researcher |
| On-going observations, interviews, discussions, focus group, learning journals with children | Primary school | May-Jul 2012 | Data generation |
| Interview key stakeholders: teachers, senior leadership team | Primary school | Jun 2012 | Data generation, obtain a school level perspective |
| Transcribe and organise first stage data | n/a | Jul-Sept 2012 | Managing the quantity of data in a timely manner, processing and transcribing while the data is still fresh, using the school holidays as a space without active research involvement Preparations for the second stage of data generation |

| | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|---|
| Establish access to secondary schools | Secondary schools | Jul 2012 | Ensure participation and continuation of the research. Attrition rate of 30% embedded in the design |
| Preliminary observations | Secondary schools | Oct 2012 | Making sense of the school context, adaptations of the case children, teaching styles and differences from primary school |
| On-going observations, interviews, discussions, focus group, learning journals with children | Secondary schools | Nov 2012 – Feb 2013 | Data generation |
| Interview key stakeholders: teachers | Secondary schools | Nov 2012 – Feb 2013 | Data generation, obtaining a teacher perspective |
| Transcribe and organise data | n/a | Jan-Jun 2013 | Data management and organisation |
| Data display for each of the children | n/a | Jun-Jul 2013 | Preparation for analysis |
| Initial data analysis | n/a | Jun-Jul 2013 | Initial read to familiarise myself with the data before the theoretical in-depth analysis |

Figure 4.3: Fieldwork activities summary

Details about the fieldwork organisation are included in the Appendix: a timeline of the research (1), primary school data generation schedule (3) and secondary school timetables (4). While the primary school schedule broadly outlined the visits to the school and activities carried out, the secondary stage of the fieldwork was focused on visits to different schools and schedules around children's individual timetables. The negotiations with the secondary schools were taking place on a school by school basis with different proportions of time spent in each, despite my attempts and willingness to even this out.

4.3.3 Participants and research sites

Research sample

As it was mentioned the transition explorations began with a single primary school consequently working with the secondary schools the primary school feeds. Focusing on just one primary school has been my choice for three reasons:

- practicalities –additional time for travelling and access negotiation if more than one primary school were involved, greater number of secondary schools;
- research value - focusing on just one starting school to provide me with an opportunity to understand the selected students sample in a common context and one in which children are well-supported in relation to their academic and social development;
- perspectives - including more primary schools would lead to a variety of settings and practices of supporting transition, hindering the process of developing a full perspective in the limited time to generate data.

I set out a plan to recruit a sample of 20 Year 6 students identified by the school and myself. The following characteristics were to be considered:

| Sample characteristics | Why? |
|---|---|
| Children for whom English is an additional language | Case study focus Purposive sampling |
| Varying level of English language proficiency ranging from new arrivals to advanced users of the English language | Representation of the diversity of EAL |
| Varying levels of academic abilities | Representation of student diversity |
| Group cases - children who are part of ethnic groups sharing the same nationality/language background | In order to compare with individual cases |
| Individual cases - children who are not part of groups based on ethnicity/nationality/language principle – e.g. there will be children who are the only ones at the school from a particular background | In order to compare with group cases |

Figure 4.4: Children sample selection criteria

The focus of the case studies is on the experiences of transition of children who speak EAL. In identifying them I use the definition in Chapter 3 - children using one or more languages other than English in their everyday lives, for instance a different language is spoken at home. By doing this, I remain flexible about the level of proficiency and the time of children's arrival ensuring a mix of cases. With the selection criteria, I aim for representativeness of ability in relation to language proficiency. This is to ensure that I obtain a view of the experiences of a range of children with different characteristics and

not just the most able or outspoken individuals. The selection of individual and group cases is linked to suggestions in the literature that children may experience schooling differently as a result of friendship networks or the lack of these (Weller 2011). Comparing the last two variations of children's circumstances would be interesting in terms of behaviour and positioning within a group and in the lack of such supportive environment sharing a common identity. It would be also useful in terms of analysing the support value of peer groupings from the same or mixed backgrounds and how this is reflected in children's engagement, agency and positioning.

The sampling strategy is purposive to satisfy specific criteria of the case study and it is a prevalent strategy in case study research (Cohen et al. 2011). The specific characteristics I consider are intended to shed light on the experiences of a specific group of children in particular circumstances and to gain understanding from the so called 'knowledgeable people' who have in-depth knowledge about the issue of concern (Ball 1990). In addition to this, I relied on the inside knowledge of the headteacher and Year 6 teachers in the primary school to identify children to take part in the research. Stake mentions this as a common strategy in instrumental case studies (1995). I made this decision based on willingness to use insider knowledge and perspectives as enabling in my research. Once I familiarised myself with the research site and individual children, I could make informed decision about the final sample of children whose stories were to be told in the thesis.

The final sample of schools and children who took part in the research changed the transition diagram:

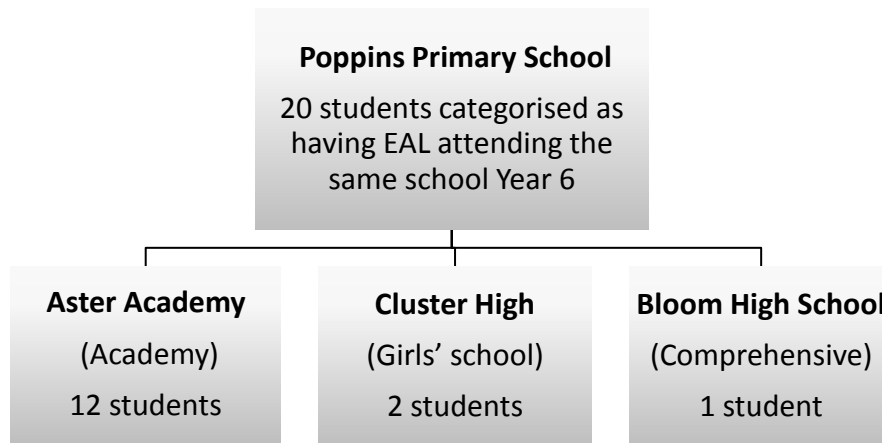


Figure 4.5: Transition diagram informed by the agreed research sample

It is important to mention that although I use the term sampling, there was no intention for representativeness of the general school population within this study. The group of children and teachers who took part are a unique group of individuals and contributed to the better understanding of their school environments. In this respect, sampling was more concerned with selecting the right school and types of students initially and then reducing the cases at the stage of data analysis but still to reflect their diversity.

In the next sections I talk about negotiating access and gaining entry to the research schools and the roles of gatekeepers. The school sites, children and teachers' names that follow have been replaced with pseudonyms.

Schools

I approached two primary schools in the Greater Manchester area which both served diverse communities in terms of national background, migration and socio-economic status. There was a third school that I had considered if I was not successful with the first two.

Access to Poppins Primary School, where the research took place, was negotiated using networks from the University and facilitated by meeting the headteacher to introduce the research project. I was aware of the four schools that Poppins Primary feeds but the

access to secondary schools was to be negotiated once I knew how many children were transferring where. I approached four secondary schools before the end of the academic year to build a rapport and contacted them again in September when the children were in Year 7. Access to the secondary schools was negotiated through my professional network and already existing links between some of the schools and the University. Only one of the schools gave access straightaway, the rest required more work with the gatekeepers to ensure that the leadership teams were happy with the research. One of the schools did not respond to my efforts to continue the study which reduced the sample.

The table below presents the main characteristics of the four schools taking part in the project in relation to the research aims and sample selection criteria.

| School site | Key characteristics |
|--|--|
| Poppins Primary School 3-11 Community Inner city | Local area popular with immigrants and refugees from disadvantaged backgrounds; high levels of economic and social deprivation. Student population resembling the diversity of the local area. Large number of students from ethnic minority groups, the majority being of African heritage. 23 different languages spoken in the school and over three quarters of the students speak EAL. Many students join or leave the school mid-term. |
| Aster Academy 11-19 Academy | Student population drawn from the immediate area which is geographically almost the same as Poppins Primary School. Twice as many boys than girls. Proportions skewed as a result of two girls' schools attracting pupils away from Aster Academy. Over 85% of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. Over 65% speak EAL. Many students leave or join the school mid-term. Transition programme for Year 7 students who may not be able to access the curriculum. |
| Bloom High School 11-16 Comprehensive Specialist Arts College | Situated in an urban more affluent area. Draws on students from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. More boys than girls. Just over half of the students are from minority ethnic background. A large proportion of these speak EAL. Stable student population - a small number of students leave or arrive mid-term. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Cluster High 11-19 Girls' school Specialism in business and enterprise | Located in a leafy suburban area. Number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and speaking EAL above national average . A very large proportion of students join the school at a later stage than Year 7 entry and leave before Year 11. |
|---|--|

Figure 4.6: School sample characteristics

Children

The children who took part in the research volunteered to do so after a discussion with the headteacher in Poppins Primary School. The school had two Year 6 classes so the headteacher selected one to work with me. My request was to work with a Year 6 class until the end of the year exploring how children are formally and informally approaching their transition to secondary school. I explained that I was aiming for a smaller sample than the entire class but this was dependent on parental permissions, children's willingness to take part, personal characteristics, EAL, etc. I provided the headteacher with 'Participant Information Sheets' and consent forms (following UREC guidance, see Appendix 7) to consider before agreeing to have me in the school, and consequently parents, teachers and children to decide whether or not they would want to be involved.

Once I started studying my sample the criteria about length of experience in the UK changed (Figure 4.5). Although some of the children had been born in the UK or been resident for more than five years, I decided to include them as they still had EAL which fit the rest of the criteria. I also saw this as an opportunity to compare the transition process for children with limited experience of schooling in the UK with those with more understanding.

Initially, I generated data with all children in Year 6 who fulfilled the sampling criteria and returned signed letters from their parents. Access was requested from their secondary schools, but later on some of the children dropped out of the research as one of the secondary schools did not take part. In addition to this, one of the children's family migrated out of the country before I negotiated access to another school. The

table below summarises the children's sample. A much more detailed table is available in Appendix 2 outlining children's years of arrival and time in Poppins Primary School.

| Name | Gender | Background | Secondary school |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Seyhan | F | Pakistani | Cluster High |
| Naadiyo | F | Somali | Aster Academy (Transition) |
| Decca | F | Somali | Aster Academy (Transition) |
| Aisha | F | Arabic | Aster Academy |
| Nafisa | F | Somali/Kenyan | Aster Academy |
| Subira | F | Somali/Kenyan | Aster Academy |
| Taban | M | Somali | Aster Academy (Transition) |
| Adhra | F | Somali | Oakfield High |
| Jamilla | F | Somali | Aster Academy |
| Hani | F | Somali | Aster Academy (Transition) |
| Ayanna | F | Somali | Cluster High |
| Omid | M | Iranian | Aster Academy (Transition) |
| Taj | M | Bengali | Aster Academy |
| Ghedi | M | Somali | Oakfield High |
| Eyaz | M | Kurdish | Aster Academy |
| Hakim | M | Iraqi | Bloom High School |
| Ubah | F | Somali | Oakfield High |
| Keyon | M | African | Oakfield High |

Figure 4.7: Children sample characteristics

Some of the most obvious characteristics relate to boys being outnumbered by girls in the primary school and the well-established group of children from a Somali background. The majority of the class also transferred to Aster Academy, the closest school to Poppins Primary. These characteristics reflect closely the intended sample described in Figure 4.5. The children engaged with the research to a different extent due to school logistics, timings, absences and personal preference. Appendix 5 provides information about the activities each of the children took part in as part of the research in both primary and secondary school stages.

Teachers

The teachers who took part in the research were identified through the children's agreement to participate. I worked with the primary school teacher and main teaching assistant (TA) supporting Year 6 and also interviewed the deputy head to obtain a leadership perspective. At the secondary school stage I observed the children in science and English lessons which pointed me to work with their teachers in these subjects. However, due to the logistics and timings of my visits, I did not interview the teachers in two of the secondary schools. The table below provides summarised background on the teachers involved in the research.

| Teachers | Subjects | School | Children taught |
|--|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Miss Taylor | All | Poppins Primary School | all |
| Mrs Thomas | TA (all)/ICT | Poppins Primary School | all |
| Miss Higgins (gatekeeper) | Transition (all) | Aster Academy | Hani |
| Miss Al-Adhiri | Transition (all) | Aster Academy | Decca Omid Taban Naadiyo |
| Miss Grant | Science | Aster Academy | Eyaz Nafisa |
| Miss Williams | English/Drama | Aster Academy | Eyaz Nafisa Jamilla |
| Miss Crawford | English | Aster Academy | Jamilla |
| Miss Raj | Science | Aster Academy | Jamilla |
| Mr Smith | Science | Aster Academy | Jamilla |
| Mr Green | Science | Aster Academy | Taj |
| Miss Long Mrs Raymond Miss Someh | English | Aster Academy | Taj |
| Miss Martin | English | Aster Academy | Subira Aisha |
| Mr Potter | Science | Aster Academy | Subira Aisha |
| Mrs Jones (gatekeeper) | Transition/MFL | Cluster High | n/a |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|-------------------|--------|
| | Science | Cluster High | Ayanna |
| | English | Cluster High | Ayanna |
| Miss Phillips (gatekeeper) | Maths | Bloom High School | n/a |
| | Science | Bloom High School | Hakim |
| | English | Bloom High School | Hakim |

Figure 4.8: Teachers sample characteristics

The majority of children transferring to Aster Academy split into six different classes. About half of them were in Transition, perceived to need more targeted language and academic support, while the rest were alone or in pairs across the different ability sets. Generally speaking, some of the friendship groups were divided between classes and sets, others remained with their best friend and some were in the same class with a peer they had no friendship with. The numbers of teachers teaching each child are interesting too – there does not seem to be a pattern in each child being taught by one English and one science teacher. While the transition classes were taught by one teacher for all subjects, other children had up to four teachers in the two subject areas. Alternatively, due to staff changes some were taught by several teachers for limited amounts of time, raising questions about the impact of these additional ongoing changes on transition experiences.

4.4 Data generation and analysis

4.4.1 Data generation methods

Three types of methods were used for data generation: observations, talk and visual resources. Used with individuals or in small groups, the methods provided different form of data as well as different versions of the stories told (Barr 2010). Being interested in the individual and group accounts, my strategy was to reproduce the complexity of the children's experiences through different methods. Collecting a variety of perspectives and snippets of experience allowed me to further develop my understanding of the relations in the school (e.g. field, habitus) and the positioning of individuals in relation to others. Most importantly, I could explore how the individual

stories fit into the bigger picture. The individual tasks aimed to provide children with space to 'tell their own stories' in the way they like and expand on their views of transition from one school to another. Group talk, on the other hand, would provide a collective perspective in a supportive environment and possibly be a source of themes and ideas that can then be explored individually in more detail.

During the process of data generation I was closely engaged with the day-to-day experiences of children and their schools and aimed to obtain an almost ethnographic perspective immersing myself in the school life (Delamont 2002). In this respect, I aimed to be a participant observer and an open-minded interviewer with flexible questioning techniques. Following is an outline of the methods, justification and the type of evidence that emerged.

Observations

Two different types of observations were used as part of the study. Firstly, I used observations to make initial sense of the schools and lessons. Secondly, on-going participant observations of lessons and play-time/breaks took place to generate systematic data about children's experiences.

The preliminary observations' purpose was to understand the context before becoming involved with the participants directly. I conducted series of observations each time I was in a new school noting the interactions, behaviours, rules and dynamics in the classrooms. This has been described as an unobtrusive observation where I restricted my participation in order to observe the natural setting in an unstructured and informal way (Robson 2011). In the primary school this helped me to get to know the names of children, friendship groups, learning and behaviour in the classroom and outside. This also helped with my membership status and acceptance in the Year 6 class.

In the secondary schools I focused my preliminary observations on the dynamics in the classroom, interaction and responses to different situations. This was possible as I

already knew the children quite well so I could compare their interactions directly with the primary school. I also had a basis for comparison across settings and classes and wanted to highlight any similarities and differences. This kind of evidence was in line with the theoretical framework leading to data relevant to the main concepts – field, habitus, agency and pedagogic discourse. During this stage I followed a list of prompts adapted from Wragg (1999):

| Question/Prompt | Why? |
|--|---|
| What teachers and pupils do in the classroom? How do they spend their time? | Valuable when observing different ability groups |
| | Build understanding of the school field |
| What kind of interaction takes place? Who talks to whom? About what? | Focus on language and instruction |
| | Field analysis |
| How does the teacher manage their class? What are the classroom rules? How is time, space, pupil behaviour or teaching strategies managed? | Pedagogic discourse in the classroom |
| | Understanding of roles and interaction |
| | Habitus and field analysis |
| | Pedagogic discourse Learning discourses Triangulation with student interviews |
| What do pupils learn? What tasks do they engage in? And with what degree of involvement and success? | Understanding interaction in the classroom |
| | Understanding engagement |
| | Triangulation with teacher interviews |
| How do pupils respond to particular teaching strategies? Are there any individuals or groups getting less out of schooling? | Classroom rules |
| What happens when a child does not understand something? | Vertical and horizontal knowledge |
| How are different subjects / topics taught to different ability groups? | Behaviour management and understandings of student agency |
| What happens when students disrupt lessons or behave inappropriately? | Understand group dynamics |
| | Understanding pedagogic discourse and roles in the classroom |
| What happens when children work in small groups? What sorts of assignments are undertaken? Who decides what? Are the groups collaborative? | Dynamics and peer relations |
| | Children's interaction |
| | Understanding the environment from the children's point of view |

Figure 4.9: Preliminary observation prompts

The ongoing participant observations in lessons were focused on children's experiences of the lesson and the ways in which they choose to take part or not in activities, develop ownership of their learning and interact with others in the process. In the primary school I observed a number of lessons across the curriculum but paid particular attention to literacy and science. In the secondary schools I alternated English and science lesson observations as the distinction between the subjects was more explicit (see Appendix 5.1 for observation focus sheet for each of the subjects). In both school contexts, at break times I looked at the activities that children undertake outside the classroom – choices made for break and play time, groupings for lunch, participation in after-school clubs and sports.

The ongoing engagement with the schools called for a participant observation approach. Its key feature is the aim of the observer to become part of the observed group. Robson clarifies this membership as:

‘entry into their social and ‘symbolic’ world through learning their social conventions and habits, their use of language and non-verbal communication and so on.’

(Robson 2011, p. 318)

My role as an observer was made clear to the children at the start of my research but being used to outsiders in their setting, they assumed I was learning how to be a teacher. As my aim was to gain children's trust before proceeding with the transition aspects of the research, I clarified my non-teaching role and declared my interest in their learning and transition. I was a participant as I took part in lessons by supporting children with their work, giving prompts, praise, support and explanations, but also support to the teachers in handing out materials, photocopying, managing small group work. My positioning in this way meant that in addition to taking part in activities while observing, I could also ask participants to explain to me aspects of what was going on, for instance the sequence of lessons or a seating plan. I gained the children's trust as I was interested in their schooling and supportive of their learning without being a teacher so the relationship relied on different dynamics to the usual adult-child

relationships in a school. At the same time, my professional experience was welcomed by the class teacher and she relied on me to support the children as necessary. As part of this, I went on trips with the class where I was allocated a group of children like the rest of the school staff.

My observations were recorded as fieldnotes written during observations or immediately afterwards. They were a chronological account of what I saw, the questions it raised in relation to my research, my hunches and assumptions (Ely et al. 1991). The main aim was not to attach judgements to the observations but keep a record of what I saw with clear differentiation from my reflections which I wrote in a different format, e.g. sticky notes, different colour pen. Later these were fully typed up and organised as a comprehensive research journal (Conteh et al. 2005). After observations I sought opportunities for debriefings with both children and adults in order to cross-check observation data to address any additional questions or to find out about specific aspects of the experiences observed. In addition to this, I used observations as a basis to brainstorm interview questions or to form questions about practices I had observed.

Talking with the children

- Learning walks

I used learning walks as an informal school tour guided by the students where I could ask questions about school, displays, daily activities, rules and so on. This approach was inspired by the walking interviews idea (Clark & Emmel 2010, Evans & Jones 2011). Its strength was the conversation stimulated by the environment and the ways in which students behaved in different areas of the building. A further strength was the reliance on the physical environment to bring back memories (Ross et al. 2009) about schooling, interactions and relationships to enable me to better understand the children. The physical environment and objects around the school building were used as prompts for those whose English language needed additional support.

Learning walks were planned to take place in both primary and secondary schools to capture the essence of personal changes taking place while changing school environments and the shifts from being a senior student in Year 6 to starting as the youngest a new school environment in Year 7. However, the logistics and safeguarding measures in the secondary schools meant that no learning walks were carried out. I conducted several walks in the primary school and these were recorded as very brief notes later expanded into full written accounts.

- Interviews/informal discussions

Interviewing as a research method involves the researcher asking the participants questions about issues related to the research topic in order to understand their own perspectives (Kvale 1996). I used semi-structured interviews (Robson 2011) with varying flexibility depending on the topic discussed and children's engagement on the particular day. I adopted a less structured approach to my interviews to enable children to reflect freely and give responses that correspond with their own thinking, language knowledge and ability. I was aiming for authenticity of the answers and evolving pattern of the interview and so kept my engagement as informal as possible. I explored children's views of schooling – the types of support they get in the process of transition, the decisions they make and the ways in which they feel they will be enabled to progress smoothly into their new schools more generally, what children enjoy and do not enjoy about school and how school could be made a better place for all. A summary of the main questions/themes is provided in Appendix 5.2. The questions were not asked in a single interview, rather over the duration of my fieldwork.

As I wanted to empower children to see the research as theirs and to recognise their active part in sharing experiences, shaping the direction of the study and constructing the main report, I asked them to make choices around their engagement. They could decide how to take part in the interviews – individually or in a group with their friends. As a result I conducted both group and individual interviews.

The use of semi-structured to unstructured questions was interesting in this individual/group set up. The individual interviews called for a more structured questioning approach where I used probing questions and prompts, while the answers developed as part of the conversation between children in the group discussions. In these I only prompted the main conversation topic and asked less questions overall. Listening to the children, I had the opportunity to follow up on any interesting comments or probe to build understanding of their experiences (Robson 2011). The informality of the interview set up was intentional to secure the children's interest and engagement with the thematic line of the research. I also used my participant observer role to accumulate the right language and refer to schooling in the way children did, for instance using words like 'big school', the correct names of teachers, locations of rooms, etc.

The interviews and group discussions lasted between 30 and 40 minutes each and were audio recorded. Children were interviewed several times over the course of the research with the aim to have everyone's views before and after the transition.

- Focus groups

A focus group was used in the primary school to find out about children's expectations and feelings about transition. As a group method, this was intended to capture a multitude of expectations and perspectives and highlight the topics that are most important to the children (Robson 2011) in their upcoming transition from one school to another. Due to the time limitations and facilitation of the group process I asked the following three questions that resonated with the main themes within transition:

- What seems exciting about going to 'big school'?
- What worries you about going to 'big school'?
- What could make you feel more relaxed about going to high school? What have your teachers done to prepare you for 'big school'?

Each of the themes was discussed in turn. The children were asked to write their suggestions on sticky notes and put them on a card in the middle for group discussion. I then facilitated a discussion of the points on their notes. We produced a display under thematic headings:

- What I'm excited about...
- What I'm worried about...
- What could make me feel better...

The interactions were audio recorded and partially transcribed to get the main points of the discussion and children's ideas for further explanation. It was anticipated to follow up some of the individual ideas from the focus group, however, this proved to be difficult (Robson 2011). I took note of some of the points and asked questions individually in an informal way or during group discussions.

On reflection, this method did not yield particularly rich data. The composition and size of the group meant that some children remained quiet despite my attempts to involve them, while others overpowered the discussion. In this respect, the focus group felt more like a question and answer session with the children rather than a group discussion on a selected topic. I had to intervene on a number of occasions which meant that I was controlling the discussion instead of facilitating it. The multitude of voices also made the transcription particularly difficult and time consuming. Considering the age of the children and the experience of putting this method in practice, combined with the lengthy process of transcription, I decided not to use focus groups for the rest of the research. This was a strategic decision which aimed to focus my time and effort on gathering rich data from individual children and in groups but in a more flexible and productive way.

- Learning journals

The learning journals were co-created with and kept by the children. They were used for personal reflection as well as a medium for signposting their process of learning and transition. Rather than imposing this research tool on all the children, I developed it in collaboration with those who opted to keep a journal. At the beginning I shared my idea and asked who wanted to have a journal. The ones who agreed were further consulted how they wanted to proceed. I did not have a clear idea of how to use the journals and I explained this to the children so together we took ownership of developing the tool. I prepared a series of activities to do in the journals if and when they wanted, keeping an open mind that this was a secondary tool for data generation that may not work. The structured activities are listed below and further described in Appendix 5.4:

- Memories from primary school
- Language map
- Schooling timeline
- Blob pictures
- Out-of-school and out-of-lesson activities
- Subject word cards

In addition to this, the children could use the space to write or draw their own accounts of transitions, school experiences and country experiences. The agreement was that they could use different modes of expression – English, home languages, pictures, drawings.

I anticipated the journals may prove to be a useful tool for schools to enable students to develop ownership of their learning and provide teachers with additional information about the children in a way that does not require extra time or resources. I gave the children an option whether to share their journals with teachers or not, and the

majority did not mind. Data from the journals was to be analysed at the final stage of the research with the use of extensive member checks and verbal explanations.

Talking with the teachers

As part of constructing the transition and schooling experiences, I interviewed some of the teachers I observed. The interviews were semi-structured and looked at the schooling experiences of the children learning EAL through the eyes of adults.

In the primary school I interviewed the Year 6 teacher and TA as the two adults who knew the children best from directly working with them. In the secondary schools I interviewed science and English teachers, as well as those teaching the transition classes (see Appendix 5.3 for questions).

All the interviews were audio recorded and fully transcribed before analysis.

Research diary and reflection

I kept a research diary to record my involvement with various activities as part of the project. As recommended by Robson (2011) I used the diary as a one-stop record for dates of school visits, data with details, notes from informal conversations, follow-up questions and activities, people to speak to, timetables and so on. The most valuable use of the diary was keeping a record of my thoughts and reflections in relation to the project, particularly changes I decided to make in reflection on the progress and direction of the research. The notebook I used for this attracted a lot of attention from the children and on several occasions I allowed them to flick through and be reassured about the detail I kept there. The journal was useful while I reconstructed the sequence of activities that took place as part of my research.

4.4.2 Data analysis procedures

In line with the two-staged approach to data generation, the analysis was organised in distinct stages, each informing the next:

1. Primary school data: Ongoing data analysis, transcription and organisation with series of case study accounts prepared in the summer before Year 7

Transcribed interview and observation data was organised and coded while I developed a set of themes in tentative emerging categories – gender, transitions, behaviour, learning journals/students’ work. I planned to review these in accordance with the secondary data and prepared them as lists of themes and codes.

At the end of this stage I wrote page-long accounts of the way I saw the children and research direction, including notes about case studies to be followed up and gaps in the data or my understanding. The accounts included brief description of children’s behaviour in lessons and break times, a sample of writing, observation notes and a description of how they engaged with the research. An example is available in Appendix 8.

2. Secondary school data: Ongoing data analysis, transcription and organisation

Similarly to the previous stage I organised, transcribed and coded the secondary schools data. I did not prepare a summary at this stage. Rather, I started planning the theoretical analysis, case and data reduction strategy.

The transcription process was time consuming (Robson 2011) and required discipline. I aimed to transcribe as I go to reduce the amount of transcribing I would otherwise have to do in bulk. A technical issue was deciding the level of detail to include in the transcripts. Silverman (2011) emphasises that features of natural conversation, like pauses, hesitation, ‘er’, ‘um’ and interrupted utterances, matter in building understanding of the interview data. In my study of EAL such utterances or difficulties pronouncing particular words were important in constructing children’s identities by

looking at the way they make sense of schooling through speaking. The conventions I used indicated the length of pauses, interruptions in brackets, self-corrections, mispronunciations and hesitations. Instead of using existing orthographic conventions, I used my own symbols that made sense to me. Although the time required to transcribe over 40 recordings could be considered as a disadvantage to preparing interview data (Robson 2011), I used this process as preliminary to my data analysis as an opportunity to familiarise myself with the data and begin the organisation reduction process.

3. Bringing together the evidence from both stages to look at the transition experience, coding, thematic organisation, theoretical analysis, develop individual stories development

The complete dataset from the schools was organised and labelled using colour codes, dates, line numbers, initials and subjects to ensure easy coordination and to secure that nothing gets misplaced. At this stage I carried out the sample selection and case reduction where 14 potential cases from three different high schools were reduced to six to shape the main thesis analysis and theoretical illustration.

Sample selection for analysis

The original sample consisted of 20 children in the same Year 6 class at the primary school stage. Observations were taking place at the same setting throughout a number of days. I was also withdrawing children for research conversations individually or in small groups according to their preferences. I had a degree of flexibility who I speak to so I could manage to be consistent in terms of speaking to all children. However, in some cases, children were absent a number of times so I did not manage to sustain a systematic record in terms of observation and interview data. Nevertheless, I took note of these absences and used opportunities to speak to these children when they were at school.

The research project began with a clear aim to select only a number of cases to analyse and present as part of the thesis out of a larger pool. The exploratory nature of the research meant I would be open in terms of data generation and use all opportunities to get insights into the experiences and schooling of all research participants. I intentionally started with a larger sample to enable me to compensate for any loss of participants due to relocation, refused access to schools or consent. Each of the 20 children was treated as an individual case and although some of the research activities took place in pairs or groups, I recorded the data in separate folders for each participant. Aiming to create series of case studies focusing on individual transition journeys and experiences, I defined the case unit as the child experiencing the transition between primary and secondary school.

Due to the longitudinal nature of the research over the summer holidays and securing access to secondary schools, as outlined earlier in the chapter, the second stage of the research in the secondary schools began with a sample of 14 children in three different schools. In terms of selecting particular cases for analysis, I focused on obtaining detailed enough insight from each of the schools so I could analyse the experiences of children of changing contexts coming from the same primary school context into different secondary one. I selected two case studies based on the contextual variances in transition to different schools (Hakim and Ayanna who transferred to Bloom High and Cluster High respectively). The rest of the cases for analysis were selected from the sample group that transitioned to the third school, Aster Academy. This large group of group of students were allocated into different classes based on ability (see Figure 4.10 below). The ability setting was initially done on the basis of the Key Stage 2 SAT results in literacy and numeracy. Consequently, the high school completed their own tests to determine ability and the sets were adjusted. However, none of the children in my sample moved sets; they all stayed in the initial groups.

| Set name | Top U | Top T | Middle C | Middle CM | Low A (EAL) | Low L (Behaviour) |
|-----------------|--|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Brief | Top set – highest achieving children, a class of 30 students | Second top set, medium sized class | Higher middle set, relatively small class | Middle set, relatively small class, lots of turbulence with English teacher changes | Transition group following a primary-style approach with targeted EAL support | Transition group following a primary-style approach with additional support for behaviour |
| Student | Subira Aisha | Eyaz Nafisa | Jamilla | Taj | Hani | Naadiyo Omid Taban Decca |
| Teacher English | Miss Martin | Miss Williams | Miss Williams/Miss Crawford | Miss Long/Mrs Raymond/Miss Someh | Miss Higgins | Miss Al-Adhiri |
| Science | Mr Potter | Miss Grant | Miss Raj/Mr Smith | Mr Green | Miss Higgins | Miss Al-Adhiri |

Figure 4.10: Sample distribution into ability sets, Aster Academy

From the sample that transferred to Aster Academy, I aimed to include one child whose case study was to represent a particular set. The initial idea was to include one child from the top, medium and low sets, but once I became familiar with the school setting I realised that the sets were not homogeneous enough. I then explored the variation of cases in terms of individual stories and how children managed the transition between primary and secondary school. This, coupled with the rigour of data in each case, was the determining factor when selecting the cases to take forward for analysis.

Case reduction process

The potential cases from three different high schools were reduced to six to be included in the theoretical analysis in the thesis. All cases were initially examined closely in terms of the richness and structure of the generated data, systematic approach and presence of enough evidence to be able to build understanding and draw conclusions in the light of the theoretical framework. The process was not easy as I kept trying to imagine that I knew everything about everyone and I thought that it was a fault of mine

not to have enough data about some of the children. With supervisory support I came to the reflexive realisation that I am carrying out research in the real world where things happen and I could not have obtained rich and systematic data on every case due to unforeseen circumstances, for instance, teachers or children being absent, not being allowed to observe lessons, prioritising time for interviews, limited amount of time spent in schools, formal tests, and so on.

With this in mind I divided the cases into three groups - main analysis, test analysis, discard. I ended up with eight in the first group (aiming to reduce further to six); three in the second and three in the last group. A justification for each case was written up – a very brief description of the case and the reasoning why it was in certain group and the value it could add to the thesis/additional analysis/reasons to be discarded. The table below summarises the case reduction process in relation to each of the 14 children. Each individual case is briefly described. I then developed a justification for inclusion or exclusion on the basis of the quality and rigour of the data.

| <u>Cases for analysis in the thesis</u> | <u>Case selection/discard criteria</u> |
|--|---|
| <p>Case 1: Hakim (Bloom High School) Hakim joined Poppins Primary School in Nursery. His parents are originally from Iraq, but lived in Yemen for a while before moving to the UK in 2000. Hakim appears fluent in English having experienced the English educational system from the very start of his schooling. He speaks some Arabic at home and attends a Saturday Arabic school. Hakim's parents do not speak English so he uses Arabic when talking to them and English with siblings. In conversations and in his encounters with the high school while in Year 6 he raised important concerns about the difference between becoming and being in different contexts which in turn brings to use the theoretical concepts of Bourdieu – the role of the habitus in terms of positioning in the field and dispositions in adjusting to different contexts.</p> | <p>Case selected on the basis of transition to a different school (Bloom High) where none of Hakim's classmates moved. It represents transition to a different subfield and navigation according to Bourdieu's framework and is likely to provide points for comparison with other cases.</p> |
| <p>Case 2: Ayanna (Cluster High) Ayanna is of Somali background, born in Sweden and moved to England in 2005 with no English. In Year 4 the family moved to the North West and Ayanna joined Poppins Primary. She made friends with a group of girls from the same background who joined the school at the same time. On the whole she was one of those children who remained invisible to the teacher. However, with her friends she would be the opposite. These shifts indicated that Ayanna's positioning in different contexts was more complex than observed in lessons. In terms of transition, Ayanna was worried about not having friends in the new school as all of her friends were transferring to Aster Academy. However, she thrived in secondary school, being given opportunities to engage with learning and make new friends.</p> | <p>Case selected on the basis of transition to a different school (Cluster High). Case also a representation of the tensions between being visible and invisible in school and respective links to behaviour. It provides points for comparison of similar cases in different school contexts (e.g. Omid). In secondary school Ayanna could manifest her habitus more explicitly and work on establishing the boundaries of her identity herself.</p> |
| <p>Case 3: Subira (Aster Academy, top set U) Subira was born in Kenya and moved to England to join Poppins Primary's Nursery. She speaks Swahilli and English. In class she was quiet and focused on the set work. Her spoken and written English demonstrates her balanced bilingualism. In terms of high school, she was curious to find out more and what it is to be a student there from experience. She was most interested in the academic side of school.</p> | <p>This case is an example of a very high achieving student who smoothly navigates through different educational contexts. Case for analysis because of the stark contrast in the lack of effort in adapting to social contexts, schools and teaching styles in comparison to other children. Subira's habitus demonstrates resilience and determination to succeed despite structural or cultural barriers.</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Case 4: Eyaz (Aster Academy, top set T) Eyaz is of Kurdish origin. He came to England at the age of five with no English becoming completely fluent within six years. Eyaz is one of the loud boys in Year 6 who likes to attract attention. Eyaz finds academic work easy and uses the additional time to chat to friends. In secondary school Eyaz viewed the transition as a new field for establishing new positioning. Eyaz's behaviour and attitude to learning quickly deteriorated in Aster Academy.</p> | <p>Case selected as demonstration of the differing options that transition provide to children. Eyaz experienced the new field as an opportunity for expression of different dispositions and identity. His changing attitudes would provide a different slant to the theoretical analysis and potential for comparison across cases.</p> |
| <p>Case 5: Taj (Aster Academy, middle set CM) Taj is from Bengali/Bangladeshi origin. Born in England, he spoke two languages at home. He struggled initially at school both with the language and academically. Although focused on academic work in most instances, he would attempt to socialise with others during lessons. In primary school he was rarely mentioned by the teacher even when he tried hard, but in secondary school, he had a strategy to introduce himself on the school map from the very beginning. He volunteered as a form captain.</p> | <p>Case as an example of the transformative potential of the habitus where experience in one situation prompts diverting from the usual ways of doing to achieve different outcomes. Also a representation of the medium ability set.</p> |
| <p>Case 6: Hani (Aster Academy, low set Transition) Hani was born in Somalia. Her family moved to England in Year 4. She made friends with a group of girls from the same background who arrived at the same time. Hani joined Poppins Primary with no English. In Year 6 her writing was behind the average for her age and she had some difficulty with understanding spoken and written language. At secondary school she was assessed to be six years behind in terms of reading age. However, the supportive attitude of her secondary school teacher provided different opportunities to engage and catch-up with learning.</p> | <p>Hani's multiple transitions had an impact on her schooling and achievement. Hani's case is an example of transition in the lowest ability set, but in high school she actually found herself in a more supportive and nurturing environment in the Transition classes.</p> |
| <p>Case 7: Nafisa (Aster Academy, top set T) Nafisa is from Somali background, born in Kenya, family migrated to England when she was two. Nafisa's English was fluent and she was one of the high achievers in primary school. As she transitioned to secondary school, she became quiet and withdrawn. She would be on task but rarely volunteer unless chosen by the teacher. This was problematic, as being quiet and independent she was rarely selected or rewarded by the teachers. They were too often occupied with the children who 'shouted the loudest' leaving the quiet ones to get on with work. This type of teacher engagement provided opportunities for some children to express themselves and others to remain 'invisible'.</p> | <p>The case is an example of a student who took on a different path once she made the transition from primary to secondary school. Linked to the theoretical framework, Nafisa's case study reveals issues of visibility and invisibility, dispositions and adaptations in the changing educational contexts. This case was later reconsidered as an additional case as it was too similar to Taj's case.</p> |

| <p>Case 8: Omid (Aster Academy, low set Transition)</p> <p>Omid joined Poppins Primary School in Year 3 with no English. His family migrated from Iran. Omid was still struggling with reading and writing. He was well aware of his weaknesses. In primary school his teacher described him as one of the children she did not know well. Omid was in the lowest set and because of special educational needs he was working well below average. In secondary school Omid was enrolled in a Transition class. The structured approach of the teacher to his lessons was enabling him to complete the exercises in a timely manner and be on task as there were no opportunities to disengage. Omid seemed to have matured being more independent and focused on work.</p> | <p>The Transition setting could be compared to other children in the same school who were placed in higher sets. In the case of Omid, he became a visible and engaged child in secondary school. This case was later reconsidered as an additional case as it was too similar to Hani's case.</p> |
|---|---|
| <p><u>Additional cases that could be used to test the analysis</u></p> | <p><u>Case selection/discard criteria</u></p> |
| <p>Case 9: Jamilla (Aster Academy, middle set M)</p> <p>Jamilla is from Somali background, born in Holland, her family migrated to England in 2004. Jamilla made friends with the Somali girls who joined the school in Year 4 and built very strong relationships establishing themselves as a group. Being surrounded by her friends, Jamilla finds it difficult to concentrate and resist the temptation to chat away. She, like her friends, was more interested in social life and doings outside the school than learning. However, on her own, Jamilla was quiet and creative (e.g. she introduced herself in the third person as if telling a story). In secondary school Jamilla was in a class where none of her friends were enrolled. She remained quiet but her curiosity and desire to learn seemed to grow. She was more interested in levels and how to improve.</p> | <p>Jamilla's case is an example of active adoption and reflection on school routines as a way of engagement to better learning. She exhibited a great transformation. This case was defined an additional case as aspects of it were similar to Hani's case (e.g. friendships) and to Taj's case (transformation).</p> |
| <p>Case 10: Taban (Aster Academy, low set Transition)</p> <p>Born in the UK, Taban is of Somali background. He joined Poppins Primary in Nursery. Even though he had learnt English from an early age, Taban had noticeable gaps in academic performance and substantial behaviour issues. At primary school he often tried to be the centre of attention in ways which were not necessarily considerate of others. Taban had learning difficulties and disruptive behaviour and the teacher adjusted her responses accordingly. Even though Taban came across as a bully in primary school, what he was most scared of were the prospects of the older children bullying him. As Taban started secondary school he did not enjoy the same treatment as in primary school. Towards the end of my project Taban was demonstrating good behaviour.</p> | <p>This case reflects concerns about visibility and invisibility in the different school contexts, what types of children and behaviours get the attention of teachers and classmates. As a result, it was defined an additional case as aspects of it were similar to Eyaz's case (e.g. behaviour and relationships with teachers) and to Taj's case (language and UK born).</p> |

| <p>Case 11: Seyhan (Cluster High, set n/a)</p> <p>Originally from Pakistan, Seyhan and her family moved to England in Year 5. While in Pakistan she has been attending a primary school where English was taught which, she said, laid the foundations of her learning in England. However, at the stage I met her she was still struggling with all aspects of the spoken and written language, including understanding. Initially the family settled in the South, where she attended school for a year and a half before moving to the North West. She joined Poppins Primary at the end of Year 6, just after the SATs. Seyhan had been in four schools by Year 6 – two in Pakistan and two in England but of them all she liked Poppins best.</p> <p>Seyhan always came across as quiet, focused and diligent. In terms of transition, Seyhan was aware that the late arrival in Year 6 prevented her from making long lasting friendships. She had been part of a couple of groups and paired with individual children but she looked forward to high school as an opportunity to start fresh and have the time to make friends.</p> | <p>Seyhan's case is incomplete due to her subsequent relocation before I gained access to the secondary school. The primary school data is rigorous and systematic and I obtained insights from the secondary school when I visited. The case could be considered for a test of the analysis at the primary level and as an example of the effect of multiple transitions of children's educational trajectories. With regards to the theoretical framework, Seyhan was making active choices about her adaptation to different contexts and perceived benefits of transition as an opportunity to start a 'new' undisrupted school life.</p> |
|---|---|
| <u>Rejected cases</u> | <u>Case selection/discard criteria</u> |
| <p>Case 12: Aisha (Aster Academy, top set U)</p> <p>Aisha is of Arabic background and she speaks Urdu in addition to English. She joined Poppins Primary in Year 4 with good English as she attended another school in England previously. Aisha was a talented student; she was in top sets both in primary and secondary school. She was always focused and on task. She seemed talkative with her friends engaging in a range of games and conversations, but controlled and inquisitive in class.</p> <p>I did not spend much time getting to know Aisha, she only took part in a couple of discussion groups in the primary school then she was absent for a while and I could not talk to her. In the high school Aisha was again absent a number of mornings.</p> | <p>I found it difficult to connect with her and build a relationship to carry out the research. The case was excluded from the analysis due to lack of systematic data through primary school, and the low level of understanding I had of this student.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Case 13: Naadiyo (Aster Academy, low set Transition)</p> <p>Naadiyo is of Somali origin, born in Holland. She arrived at Poppins Primary in Year 4 with no English. She quickly formed a friendship with the rest of the Somali girls. Naadiyo was preoccupied with growing up and being cool more than anything. She was easily distracted during lessons. She found most of the work hard and she was dependent on direct adult support to stay motivated. Naadiyo seemed to know her position and abilities well and did not aspire higher than that. Naadiyo took an active part in the research at first but then disengaged. At secondary school she took part in some discussions but often did not engage in a constructive way.</p> | <p>The case was excluded based on saturation with some of the data from the relevant category already included for analysis and the fact that the experiences of the Somali girl were very similar. This case could not bring new insights to the analysis as this particular group of students experienced similar transition paths and attitudes on the teachers' part.</p> |
| <p>Case 14: Decca (Aster Academy, low set Transition)</p> <p>Decca is of Somali background and became part of the Somali friendship group on her arrival in Year 4 with no English. Decca was loud while with her friends and just like the rest of the girls seemed not engaged in lessons. However, this could be due to her limited English language knowledge. Decca was in the bottom ability set where teaching was very differentiated and supported but the class teacher characterised it as one that has limited children's independence and willingness to work on their own.</p> <p>While on her own Decca was quite different. It might be the case that within her friendship group she follows the main behaviour pattern and leaves little space for thinking and reflecting. On her own she was thoughtful but not very articulate as she was sometimes struggling with the language.</p> | <p>This case represented similar observations to both Hani and Jamilla's cases. In the secondary school Decca was placed in the bottom Transition set with Hani and Naadiyo. The case was excluded based on similarity and saturation of the data in the particular category. Primary school data was not as rigorous as secondary school evidence.</p> |

Figure 4.11: Case reduction process

Coding

The data from the six final cases was coded in relation to emerging themes about agency, positioning and engagement as central issues. The consequent theoretical analysis involved Bernstein's theory which was used to explain interactions in the formal classroom context (Harker & May 1993). These were focussed on children's agency and positioning in the classroom. A broader field analysis (Jenkins 2002) was applied to look into children's social positioning in relation to their habitus. Experiences and engagement, as indication of individual agency, positioning and identity, were analysed in the processes of developing new disposition or coping strategies in the context of changing learning environments. Positioning, capital construction and ways of behaving as elements of the habitus were sought in the data to explain agency, more specifically the ways in which children learning EAL manoeuvre at school on a daily basis, and to challenge knowledge which is 'taken-for-granted' by schools.

Alongside the coding I produced clean, simplified, surface level accounts for the eight cases using data from both primary and secondary school to illustrate children's transition, behaviour and agency. In these accounts I unintentionally mixed my own assumptions about the children and their positioning with the original data and failed to raise questions about potential gaps in my understanding as if I knew them inside-out. In addition, I was looking at the accounts from a teacher perspective which was not the aim of the study. In order to rectify this, I interrogated each of these accounts as data in relation to the rest of the data about the schools and children and rewrote them to be more objective. When looking at the simplified accounts, I questioned them to bring back their original messiness and non-linear order in relation to the children's experiences (Ely et al. 1997); I tested out generalisations, identified what I did not know and clarified my assumptions by explaining the context. I achieved this by splitting the text into columns– description; questions/commentary; theoretical lens. I

then pulled out my own commentary from the descriptive text and focused on developing the description while questioning the gaps and assumptions I had previously made. New questions and comments started emerging in the second column which felt closer to a systematic process of theoretical coding and analysis and preparation to bring in the theoretical lens. According to Ely et al. (1997) this was a process of lifting the meaning from the text and separating my own assumptions.

As I was rewriting the case studies, I started paying attention to the theoretically informed themes emerging from the data and noted these in the third column. I repeatedly referred to theoretical concepts in the literature to ensure I was focusing on the right pieces of data. Once the three columns were completed, the cases ranged between 6-7000 words each. I then produced a visual map of the main concepts in the analysis in relation to the theoretical framework. At this stage I had another round of data reduction. I decided to use two main case studies for in-depth analysis, and accounts of four case studies for illustrative purposes, which are outlined in the analysis Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

4.5 Ethics

The ethical issues related to constructivist paradigms include the need for face-to-face communication, representation of multiple and potentially conflicting realities, maintaining privacy and anonymity while using extensive word-for-word quotations and in-depth detailed descriptions of participants and settings in case study settings (Lincoln 1990). Williams (2010) discusses an interesting binary in ethical considerations – the right of the public to know versus the right to privacy and no harm to research participants. Stemming out of this is an important consideration about the way we learn things from research and whether these actions could potentially cause harm to participants. The overarching and moral idea being that the ‘no harm’ principle always precedes the right to know means that participants should be

protected and put first in a research project even at the cost of terminating the research if needed. Therefore, appropriate steps were taken to ensure that there was no harm caused to any of my participants during the research study and write-up process. However, another suggestion that Williams make is the notion of ‘guilty knowledge’ as having any knowledge that could be potentially harmful (2010, p. 260). In this respect, given that I was in close interaction with children, who are at a vulnerable age and position in terms of EAL, and teachers sharing confidential information about their personal challenges in practice within real schools meant that I had to take responsibility to anonymise the data and research sites while ensuring confidentiality and stop the research if any unforeseen distress was caused. This was dictated by a responsibility to protect my participants and the research sites.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from UREC. Participants were selected on a voluntary principle and were given the opportunity to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was gained and re-checked several times during the fieldwork. For all children a signed permission letter was obtained from their parents. Copies of the information sheets, consent forms and letters to parents are included in Appendix 7. Issues related to confidentiality were discussed with participants and they were reassured about the use of pseudonyms for both people and schools.

4.6 Credibility and rigour

A crucial question about any research is its credibility and rigour, and in particular whether the researcher’s claims make sense and are integral to the people studied and wider audiences (Miles et al. 2014). Tracy (2010) identifies credibility and rigour as key indicators used to evaluate the quality of qualitative research. Credibility refers to the trustworthiness of the research design and reporting of the findings. According to Tracy (2010) and in line with the argument of Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility is achieved by providing thick descriptions, triangulation of methods and data and the

inclusion of multiple voices and points of view in the analysis. In interpretive research meaning is made through retelling of someone else's story and making sense of multiple perspectives. It has been pointed out that the trustworthiness of qualitative research has to be substantiated with a discussion of the impact of the researcher on the setting and on the interpretation of the data based on the researcher's values (Silverman 2011). In this respect, I have provided a clear account of my background in Chapter 1 and research worldview earlier in this chapter. I have also been transparent about the ways in which my values interfered with the research throughout my engagement with the field and data analysis along with the steps I took to minimise this in the data analysis section. This led to increased sense of reflexivity in relation to the research process in order to ensure the transparency of my judgements and interpretations, which is recognised as a notion of sincerity (Tracy 2010).

I followed particular strategies to ensure the credibility and rigour of the research which included:

- Triangulation of the data, further discussed in section 4.7;
- Long-term and repeated observations at the research sites in order to become a legitimate participant observer (Ely et al. 1991);
- Peer examination with supervisory team in terms of debriefing my observations, analysis and direction of thinking and conceptualising the research; and
- Participatory modes of research – participant involvement in aspects of the research and tools design; repeated debriefings after observations to check interpretations and understanding were in line with participants' stories.

In addition to these strategies, I followed a theoretical analytic induction (AI) process which not only shaped my analysis in relation to Bourdieu and Bernstein's frameworks, but also addressed issues of trustworthiness and validity. The purpose of AI is:

“to uncover causal relations through identification of the essential characteristics of the phenomenon studied. To this end, the method starts not with a hypothesis but with a limited set of cases from which an initial explanatory hypothesis is then derived.”

(Gobo 2009, p. 198 in Silverman 2011, p. 374)

AI was applied by selecting a small number of cases to analyse theoretically. Having generated a set of categories and interpretations from these, I tested the emerging theorisation by expanding the data corpus with several other cases and applying the constant comparative method (Silverman 2011). This enabled me to draw out the similarities and differences between the case studies and ensure the validity of my findings and their fit with the theoretical framework.

Lastly, the credibility and rigour of the research were further confirmed through the write-up of rich, thick, in-depths descriptions (Lincoln & Guba 1985) to enable the reader to make sense of the context and how the study was situated by providing them with sufficient understanding to make their own judgements.

4.7 Triangulation

Triangulation is another strategy to ensure quality in a qualitative research project. It involves the skilful use of multiple sources to improve the rigour of the research. In accordance with Robson (2011), I have addressed the following types of triangulation:

- Data triangulation in the use of multiple methods to generate data;
- Theoretical triangulation in the use of two different theoretical perspectives in analysing the data.

Ely et al. (1991) recognise another aspect of data triangulation in addition to the use of evidence from different sources, which can occur when gathering data over a prolonged period of time. In my study, this relates to the different stages of data generation at the primary and secondary schools and the opportunity to cross check findings at these

explicit stages. Another aspect of triangulation addressed particularly in relation to the write-up of thick descriptions and the case studies was the use of cross-checks with supervisors in order to remain transparent in my analysis. Steps and measures undertaken were initially presented earlier in this chapter and are further explored in the discussion section of Chapter 8.

4.8 Coherence and transferability

The final considerations in this chapter are concerned with the coherence of the study, which relates to the potential for broader inferences and implications (Silverman 2011). Coherent research is purposeful and reflecting the aims set out at the initial stages, it makes use of methods that complement the theoretical stance. However, Tracy (2010) emphasises that coherent research could be messy and informed by different paradigm terminologies in reflecting the complexity of the study. This stance again indicates that real world research and constructivist perspectives are multi-layered and informed by different standpoints. In my study, coherence is achieved through a consideration of the views and experiences of different research participants, both adults and children in a number of different contexts, which somewhat recreate the messiness of the school field at large.

Lincoln and Guba's notion of transferability (1985) is particularly important here. The coherence of the study and other quality criteria ensure the transparency of the process and analysis, which in turn contribute to its transferability. Certainly, the case study approach and focus on individual children would be hard to transfer and apply fully to a different context, but my assumption is that a similar study in a similar context would produce similar findings. This assumption is based on the case selection where I aimed for coherent representation across abilities and EAL levels as such variations are likely in any context.

Silverman (2011) argues that a case study is not limited to the initial fieldwork but could be used to test a hypothesis. This is similar to what I have attempted to illustrate in my analysis by bringing different cases from different schools to illustrate the concepts. Because of the individual heightened attention and detail generated in my study, I hope the cases have provided enough information so that teachers and practitioners in other contexts will recognise similar transitions and trajectories. There is potential for the findings of this project to be ‘projected’ from one school to another, either by analogy or by re-examining the differences between contexts.

4.9 Summary

Methodological manuals outline the essence, advantages and disadvantages of different ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches (Robson 2011, Silverman 2011, Cohen et al. 2011). There is a variety of methods that could be used to generate qualitative data and scope for potential interpretations. In this chapter, I outlined the design of my research and provided justifications for my decisions. Although there has been a consideration of the ontological position of the research, I am aware of the individualistic and subjective nature of research design and analysis. Where possible I explained my reasoning alongside factors beyond my control that shaped the research, for instance access to schools, timetables and children’s absences. I highlighted that while considerations seem clear-cut on paper, in the real world where research comes to life there are real consequences of decisions made. Transparency and procedures undertaken to ensure the quality of the research concluded this work. In the following Chapters 5, 6 and 7 I present data from the fieldwork. Chapter 5 sets the context by introducing the children in the case studies and these are then theoretically explained. Chapter 6 develops the theoretical analytic model and Chapter 7 is an analytic induction of this model illustrating its use with additional cases.

Chapter 5:

Setting the scene

5.1 Introduction

This chapter sets the context of the research. It unfolds the multiple case study approach and emphasises the importance of understanding the context in order to investigate the stories of the children. It begins by introducing the schools. The primary and three secondary schools which form the context for transition are described through personal accounts of my encounters. The chapter then moves to the stories of the children whose transition journeys were explored. I present my understanding of the children developed through continuous engagement in a variety of ways, described in Chapter 4, and shadowing them over prolonged periods of time in order to get to know them. This chapter demonstrates the diversity of stories and linkages to EAL where language is only one aspect of their experiences leading to opportunities for initial comparative summaries drawn from the individual case studies.

The chapter concludes with a description of teachers' framing of children's experiences in terms of transition and options for engagement with the process. These are useful in beginning to highlight some of the thinking tools to be used to make sense of the data. Teachers' accounts represent a simplified institutional view of transition between primary and secondary education. The term simplified is used to indicate that although teachers spend large amounts of time with students in the classroom, they understand their experiences through pedagogic lenses and official discourses. I focus on these here and build on them to develop a more complex understanding of the contexts and thus children's experiences in Chapters 6 and 7 by deconstructing the transition stories and giving voice to their experiences.

5.2 The primary school

Poppins Primary School

The school is located in an inner-city area characterised by low socio-economic status and increasing diversity resulting from migration in the last decades. The main backgrounds are Asian and Afro-Caribbean with predominance of children from East Africa. The population of the local area is relatively young in comparison to other parts of the city. Although the area is infamous for past gang activity and considerably disadvantaged because of social housing, the local authority had invested in extended regeneration to bring about a different feel and type of residents. The intake of the school is from the immediate local area alongside two other primaries – a Roman Catholic school and another community school. In comparison to the RC school which is two streets away and boasting a brand new building as part of the regeneration project, Poppins Primary School's architecture resembles the rest of the buildings on the road – terraced houses with front facades turned into chip shops, take-away and African shops.

What follows is my account of the school as I experienced it at the beginning of my research project. Poppins Primary is located at the heart of the community and passing by one can see and hear the children playing outside. The school– a red brick Victorian building with two main blocks - is at the back of the playground. The entrance is through a new building facing the playground and connecting the buildings in the back. This new building is housing the reception area, administration and senior leadership team offices, staff and photocopying rooms along with a small meeting room - calm and peaceful space separated from the fuss in the rest of the corridors. The initial feel of the school is welcoming with colourful displays of children's work celebrating achievements. A display that immediately grabbed my attention is 'Languages we speak at school' supposedly showcasing the diversity of the school and celebrating the benefits of being in a truly multilingual and multicultural context. It lists the 23

languages currently spoken in Poppins Primary with photographs of children, some of whom are identified as interpreters with a label next to their language.

Alongside the KS2 classrooms on the ground floor, there is a small dining hall and a gym. On the first floor are located the learning support room and ICT suite with the library. On the side of the stairs leading to the first floor are frames with children's faces drawn by them and grouped by class. The way in which children have portrayed themselves is interesting because of the feel of the multicultural ethos of this school and the ways in which children see themselves – some have big faces, others small, some of the girls have drawn their head-scarves, others have portrayed their hair with sparkly accessories.

Year 6T's classroom is on the ground floor and 6N on the first floor directly above. The desks in 6T are arranged so that children sit in groups of three and four. Numeracy and literacy displays highlighting aspects of learning are on the walls. There are also art displays with children's work and learning objectives wall which are updated regularly. The classroom is cosy and welcoming with big windows and light on a sunny day. There is just one multilingual display at the back of the room with school-related words in English, Urdu and pictures. The children explain to me this is to help new students who may be struggling with the language but I never saw anyone referring to this display. By the door there are few other pointers to the diversity in this classroom – a sheet 'This is Class 6T' in Arabic, Somali and English with a photo of the class. At the back of the room are the students' trays where they keep unfinished work, a stack of notebooks and a small library with a reading corner.

The 27 children in this class are from a range of backgrounds, all living in the immediate area, walking to school every day. Over 20 children have EAL and quite a few of them have joined the school between Year 1 and Year 6. There is one very recent arrival, a Pakistani girl has just moved from a primary school in another part of the

country while a girl from China who spoke little English has just left. There is a large group of Somali children reflecting the ethnic profile of the local area.

On my first day at school the class teacher was standing by the door greeting students as they came in and responding to queries from parents. Miss Taylor had been teaching this class since the start of Year 6, but she also taught them in Year 4. However, some children left in the meantime and others joined so the class was slightly different this year. Miss Taylor's background is white British, late 20s. She had a distinctive northern accent and a friendly attitude complemented with a big smile. The children were greeting her as they entered the room. Miss Taylor quickly briefed me about the class profile encouraging me to sit with them and have a chat at any appropriate time. She emphasised that the class was very friendly and open to visitors. We agreed that I could help with explanations and work during lessons. The classroom was full of morning buzz and children were picking books to read as they came in, either from their tray or from the library shelves at the back. There were quiet chats among friends discussing what they had been doing at school or at home the previous day. No one seemed surprised by my presence, the children were curious about me and my role in their class. I joined one of the tables and had a chat with the girls there about who they are and where they were going to secondary school.

As time passed, I got to know the school and children through observations and discussions immersing myself into the context to obtain an almost ethnographic perspective (Delamont 2002, Ely et al. 1991). The last few months of Year 6 flew by before everyone faced transition to the new 'big' schools.

5.3 The secondary schools

While I experienced a welcoming relationship with the primary school, in the secondary schools the approach to my introduction and visits was much more structured. There were fewer opportunities to engage with observing the school

grounds and soaking up interactions as I was taken into lessons or talking to children and teachers. There was also less flexibility with my gatekeepers' time as they were all teaching during my visits. As a result, what follows is a more formal account of the secondary schools involved in the research.

Bloom High School

Over the last few years the school had been consistently improving academic achievement and enhancing the contribution of students to the wider community as a commitment to equip them with relevant knowledge and skills to succeed in a changing world. The school is located in a much more affluent area than Poppins Primary which is reflected in the less diverse student population. The grounds consist of a new building with narrow corridors but big classrooms. During my initial visits the school seemed a calm and peaceful place, the students were following a strict walking system – lining up by the walls and being careful not to sweep other people along the way, which was one of the worries of the new Year 7s. The atmosphere in lessons was similar to the organised transition between rooms - children were eager to learn and engaged in interactions with the teachers. The teachers who had me in their classes were open to the research and willing to share their experience of the Year 7 classes and Hakim in particular. My positioning was also helped by the fact that I knew my gatekeeper from working together on a different project, so a prompt initial entry in the school was not an issue.

In terms of transition, the school was very active in organising series of events in advance of the academic year start. In addition to the traditional open days for children to visit the school and experience learning, they were also visiting feeder primaries with current Year 7 students. The aim was to get the school introduced by peers holding Question & Answer sessions with future students. When a teacher and a couple of students visited Poppins Primary School in July 2012, Hakim took part and I was invited to stay as part of my project. He had the chance to ask questions and find out

about his new school in an informal and supportive context. Contrary to his usual cocky behaviour at school, the presence of the secondary school teacher and students made him appear shy and quiet, perhaps as evidence that the roles in secondary school switch and children in Year 7 form the bottom, rather than the top as in Year 6. Also, the number of Poppins Primary School students joining Bloom High this year was relatively small which potentially could disrupt friendships and cause anxiety over the unknown as documented by other researchers (Muschamp 2009, Reay et al. 2011).

Aster Academy

Aster Academy is situated down the road from Poppins Primary. The academy was converted 15 years as a result of underachievement. Over the years the achievement of students had improved significantly. The large number of students who start in Aster Academy in Year 7 with low attainment in reading and writing make good progress as a result of the well-planned transition classes and overall focus on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

Aster Academy had in place three transition classes to support students who may be experiencing difficulties with the formal secondary school curriculum. One of the classes was for new arrivals new to the English language offering a platform to catch-up and develop confidence before joining respective mainstream classes. The other two transition groups were for Year 7 students – one focused solely on EAL and the other – SEN and behaviour support. The Year 7 groups were running throughout the academic year with students leaving into mainstream Year 7 half-way through or after major assessments. The classes were taught by one teacher for the main curriculum areas, following a primary school thematic approach. In the additional subjects, such as music, PE and art, students were taught by specialist teachers.

The transition classrooms were located at the back of the school building and physically separated from the rest of the Year 7 classes by the 6th Form unit. This provided little opportunities for children to mix with their peers in other classes during break times.

Miss Higgins, teacher of transition, described the classes as the school's strategy to address the achievement of children who were not making the expected progress in Year 7. There were two classes:

‘one group EAL and the second group, they used to call it more behaviour but I think they’ve changed the language to focus on more vulnerable children now and sometimes that does affect behaviour.’

(Miss Higgins 29.11.2012; 20-37)

Essentially, although not explicitly stated, the transition classes were the bottom set in Aster Academy. However, the institutional position of staff and the leadership team was that these were transition groups for children who were not ready to access Year 7 for various reasons, of which EAL was just one, and as such operated as a year-long preparation for mainstream and Year 8. In addition to teaching the curriculum and focus on achievement, teachers in the transition classes had pastoral responsibilities for children as a strategy to ease them into secondary school and provide support for their social needs. Miss Higgins had developed thorough knowledge of individual needs and personalities. The effect of this arrangement is illustrated with Hani's case study in Chapter 6.

Cluster High

The entrance of Cluster High was grand and old-fashioned asserting the long history and achievements of the school. As I walked inside with the gatekeeper, the students were lined up by the classroom doors patiently waiting for the teachers to let them in. The gatekeeper, who was a modern foreign language teacher and running the EAL language support groups, told me that the school was not currently full with a number of new students arriving weekly. From her perspective, this was posing challenges in providing timely language and curriculum support in lessons.

The majority of students were coming from the immediate area of the school but some were travelling longer distances because of their parents' preference for the particular school. There was another girls school in a nearby area, but Mrs Jones deemed that

Cluster High was better in terms of achievement and pastoral care. The profile of the girls, as stated in OFSTED reports and based on observations, was mainly Black and ethnic minority and Mrs Jones clarified that this was resulting from faith considerations and strong parental preference for single sex schooling.

Cluster High was one of the schools where I did not spend much time because it took a while to gain access and just one child transferred there. I had a limited view of lessons as I only observed English and science teachers with the same class. In addition to this, my access was restricted in being accompanied by Mrs Jones at all times, including interviews with Ayanna, even though my research instruments were consulted with and approved by the headteacher. Mrs Jones was not teaching Ayanna as she spoke good English and was confident in engaging with lessons, so this meant a new adult in the discussions. Having known Ayanna for a few months in primary schools was somewhat helpful in the new context with an outsider to the research present at all times. Ayanna was still willing to share her experiences and discuss initial expectations versus the reality of secondary school. Although I felt not trusted being accompanied everywhere and everything I asked being monitored, being transparent about my research was the only way I could gain access to the school and Ayanna and I am convinced this was because of the school's intentions to safeguard and protect their students.

These descriptive accounts aimed to introduce the primary and secondary schools as the context where children's learning happened. Figure 4.6 in Chapter 4 illustrated where each of the children transferred and in the next section I focus on the individual children as I gained knowledge about them through observations and discussions in school.

5.4 Introducing the children

The following section provides six descriptive accounts introducing the children who took part in the study in their uniqueness. Although they were all from the same class,

their schooling and social experiences were different as were their expectations of transition and schools, trajectories and identities. The accounts are brief, giving a flavour of the children in different situations and collating my understandings of them as an outsider who consequently obtained in-depth knowledge and an insider status. The accounts are an important part of the study as the consequent analysis builds on de-constructing the transition experiences of children as lenses to understand how changes in contexts affect them and their positioning through their own eyes. In addition to the narratives, supplementary photographs of children's work and learning journals are provided in Appendix 9 to substantiate the feel of the stories. The photographs illustrate academic achievement and language proficiency in different contexts, such as formal classroom learning and informal research situations. This evidence of achievement and engagement alongside examples of behaviour set the context of the study and begin to shape stories of transitions and navigation. The aim is to present an in-depth, rich but descriptive account of each child before theorising their experiences from social and pedagogic point of view.

Eyaz

Eyaz is of Kurdish origin. He came to England at the age of five with no knowledge of English but quickly caught up at school and six years later he was completely fluent having picked up the distinctive local accent. Eyaz did not like talking much about his family and home environment and he only briefly mentioned that his father had a local shop where he spent time after school.

In Poppins Primary, Eyaz was one of the loud boys who evidently liked to attract the attention of teachers and classmates with the risk of misbehaving or making others upset. He was quite mature for his age and well aware of the consequences of his behaviour and actions. He was already interested in the differentiation between girls' and boys' talk and activities. However, when speaking with girls he would become unusually shy and actually avoid interactions in an informal environment if possible. Occasionally, I would observe him tease the girls in break time by either taking their

ball or running in the middle of their game but he would then leave, perhaps as a manifestation of his constant desire to be noticed and part of events.

In class Eyaz seemed to find the work easy which meant doing it quickly and moving on to more enjoyable activities such as chatting with friends or making silly remarks. He was well aware of his higher than average abilities and the advantage he had from being able to do his work up to standard quickly enough to have extra time for other things. However, if he felt he could get away with not doing something, he would pretend not to understand. This was an example of his technique to grab the attention, which he consistently practised as I joined the class in Year 6.

When under pressure to perform or showcase his abilities to gain an advantage, Eyaz was absolutely brilliant and this was why he was successful in the main role in the school play. The role suited him and provided a challenge at the same time. I observed him a number of times during practice and there were no doubts that he was going to impress in the final performance. In contrast to lessons, he was attentive, following the instructions of the external teacher and making sure he left the best impression possible. It was the case that if children were not suited for the particular role they could be replaced, so Eyaz seemed to make sure this did not happen to him.

Eyaz's 'cocky behaviour' mentioned by Miss Taylor and predictions about getting in trouble did materialise as he progressed into Aster Academy. Eyaz was outspokenly disagreeing with teachers in lessons pointing out how they failed to engage him to understand the work. He maintained clear differentiation between his position as a student and the teacher's role to provide him with learning which caused him to be sent out of lessons, shout out and talk back. When I first came to Aster Academy he hardly engaged with the research either, he came to the initial discussion group but said very little and only when specifically asked a question. In the meantime, he had his head down on the desk and consequently fell asleep. Despite my attempts to later engage him to have a chat on the corridor, he did not seem interested. However, I kept

observing him in lessons and speaking to his teachers to make the most of the data available out there.

Eyaz seemed to have taken on a new attitude and recognised the secondary school field as an opportunity to establish a new identity. Eyaz's behaviour and attitude to learning quickly deteriorated to a point that he was focused on the disruption he could cause in lessons instead of learning. While observing him I noticed he was finding it difficult not to respond to everything the teachers said to make the class quiet. He was one of the children who wished to speak last and could not keep themselves quiet. He would adopt a multi-tasking strategy to taking part in banter with friends, talking back to teachers' requests of quiet and somehow managing the set work.

Teachers often talked eagerly about Eyaz pointing out that he was one of the children who did get noticed for his disruption rather than learning. Eyaz was in the same class as another peer from primary school. I asked about teachers' observations of both students but I listened through more precise accounts of Eyaz's behaviour and analysis of it rather than the quietness of the other child. It became clear to me that Eyaz was easily noticed but teachers were keen to justify his behaviour in their own ways.

EAL was not an issue because of his confidence with English. His behaviour was much more noticed and blamed for deteriorating achievement than the consideration of linguistic and cultural background. However, through a case study account developed later I demonstrate how his behaviours and attitudes were resulting from EAL in other than the traditional language-related concerns.

Hani

Hani is of Somali background. She arrived in England in Year 4 with no English language knowledge and supposedly limited schooling experience. Hani said she spoke Somali, English and Ethiopian. To her siblings she spoke '*sometimes in English, sometimes in Somali*' which she did not clarify any further. With her friends at school she only spoke Somali, and very occasionally used English words. She joined Poppins Primary School mid-term in Year 4 and her best friends became a group of Somali girls

who arrived the same year, most of them with explicit EAL needs. Being in a group where the same language was spoken seemed comforting for the girls but even more so being in the same ability set and sitting together. Although tall for her age, Hani was quite immature, asking silly questions and often pushing the limits of teachers' patience by her perceived lack of engagement. She liked to talk with her friends on topics not related to school instead of learning.

In my observations, I noted Hani's curiosity about what I do at almost every stage of the research initially. She would ask me and check what I was writing, recoding, why I did that. Following my protocol, I let her know in order to build a trustworthy relationship and get her involved with the research. Despite her curiosity towards everything new, in lessons Hani was less pronounced and articulate. She would focus on completing the tasks but then switch to seeking support from the teacher instead of attempting on her own. She seemed reluctant to try. Miss Taylor often sat with the girls to help them with the work by simplifying it and giving prompts but even then Hani was reluctant to try unless she was sure of a positive outcome. In addition to EAL as a language barrier to understanding, Miss Taylor identified Hani as having SEN in the light of learning difficulties.

Hani's explicit EAL needs in lessons were evident in finding it hard to concentrate and understand learning material, she was easily distracted and preferred to chat with her friends. However, on her own she was working harder when there were no distractions. Language was a barrier – she would struggle to find the words to express herself in academic writing even though she appeared quite confident and knowledgeable in every-day English. Culture was a barrier too and Hani preferred the comfort of her friendship group as if it was reaffirming her identity and background.

At break times Hani (and the whole groups) were as if unleashed –loud and articulate:

‘A bunch of Somali girls play gymnastics in an open space in the classroom while shouting, screaming and showing off what they can do until they get stopped by the lunch supervisor and asked to sit down [....] Naadiyo, Decca, Jamilla, Hani, Ayanna are now sat down at the table but they still seem to be quite loud, arguing, shushing one another.’

(Research log 1 28.05.2012)

In Hani's case the contradictions in terms of behaviour and agency in different contexts (e.g. formal and informal school experiences) were very pronounced. While Miss Taylor described her as a dependent learner experiencing difficulties, which failed to recognise some of the main elements of the way Hani behaved, within three months her secondary teacher was able to provide a more explicit and accurate account. Hani was advised to take part in a confidence-boost group to help her with public speaking and presentation in a class environment, which meant that perhaps Miss Higgins was actively trying to help her become active in lessons while recognising that she was too afraid to make mistakes raising barriers to engagement.

In Aster Academy Hani was in one of the transition classes – Miss Higgins' EAL class. Some of the children had better spoken language but had difficulties with writing in comparison to the higher ability sets. During literacy work, Hani's EAL needs meant that she had difficulty with spelling and writing. In terms of social relationships and friendships, in Aster Academy Hani found herself distanced from her original friendship group. She had limited opportunities to be with her friends who were in different classes. In breaks however, they all tend to stick together and chat in the school yard.

For Hani, the secondary school provided different opportunities to engage from the primary school. Miss Higgins took an active role in making her feel welcome and valued in the class, not only able to contribute but expected to do so despite difficulties with English. Hani became a more confident learner and more aware of her abilities and especially taking part in lessons which improved her engagement.

Ayanna

Ayanna is of Somali background, born in Sweden where she attended nursery before the family moved to England in 2005. At the time the family moved to the UK, she did not know English so joining school posed new challenges. Initially they settled in the Midlands where Ayanna attended primary school from Year 1 to Year 4. They then relocated to the North West where Ayanna joined Poppins Primary School in Year 4.

Ayanna was the oldest child among her siblings and she talked willingly about their relationship and distance – *‘they are too boring and I don’t get their games’* (07.09.2012 500). She was differentiating herself in terms of expertise and the experience of remembering the transitions the family had made in the past.

At Poppins Primary School Ayanna made friends with a group of girls from a similar background, who all shared a language and a number of relocations before they ended up in the same school. The most significant link seemed to be based on language, backgrounds and relationships that were sustained outside school. The group of girls joined the school in the same year, some of them mid-term and it seemed natural to stick together as they all found themselves in a very similar position - with no friends but sharing language and culture. Ayanna seemed comfortable within her friendship group and had an established role. Most times she was quieter in comparison to the rest and seemed mature in her expressions. Part of this may be the fact that she was an older sibling so she could have projected this type of disposition into her school experience.

Initially, I began working with Ayanna as part of her friendship group involving all the girls in the research. At first she was quiet and reluctant to engage, she preferred to observe the discussions. However, once I started talking with her in a smaller group, she was open about her experiences. She reflected on having to learn a new language while catching up with school. She occasionally talked about the adaptation processes that took place when changing schools and some of the choices she had to make. Consequently, she became a very active participant in my research which slightly contrasted with the engagement of the rest of her friendship group. Most importantly, she seemed to understand the importance of the research and how it would help teachers and children to make a smooth transition.

In primary school lessons Ayanna was quiet and trying to get on with work. From my observations she was in a middle ability group and she would do well unless her learning was disrupted by noise and banter by the other children.

On the contrary, she was a different child while with her Somali friends and at break times, loud and silly following their suggestions for games and gossiping. When such events occurred during lessons, I would note down that Ayanna is distracted and chatting instead of working. She was one of those children who remained invisible to the teacher. Miss Taylor did not have much to say specifically about Ayanna, apart from her impressions from the Somali group of girls.

She was the only one transferring to Cluster High and was therefore anxious that she may not make new friends. Her hesitation combined with encouragement from her friends reached a point when she would attempt to convince her parents to move her to Aster Academy where she could be with everybody else. This did not lead to any results, I was not aware whether she had a conversation with her parents. She started the new academic year in Cluster High. At the time I did not pay much attention to her friendship dilemma assuring her that she would be just fine but actually there was perhaps some relation to the way she made friends in primary school and an anxiety that she may not meet a group to identify with, rather everyone would be in the same position which could make it difficult to take a passive role requiring a more active approach to making friends.

When I visited Cluster High, Ayanna seemed to be thriving in her new environment. She had made many new friends and adapted to the new learning styles and expectations. In lessons she was quiet not creating fuss or causing trouble and she was much more eager to demonstrate her learning. She was actively taking opportunities to engage with learning assuming that the secondary school provided for her an arena where she was free to express herself. Perhaps expectations had an impact – she was as new as everybody else and as known as everybody else which enabled her to make different choices in comparison to the primary school where her identity choices seemed to be somewhat restricted by the mid-term arrival and lack of cohesion with the class as a whole. I observed her being active in science and English lessons, volunteering eagerly to answer questions and pushing through what she could not

understand. While in primary school Miss Taylor guided her group's learning by her own perceptions of what they needed, in high school Ayanna was taking active steps herself to ensure that her learning was good and meeting achievement targets.

From what I gathered, the teachers in Cluster High were content with Ayanna. They seemed to be genuinely interested and engaged with the learning of all their students and Ayanna was not unnoticed in any way. In interviews Ayanna demonstrated more of her understanding of secondary school and how it was initially daunting but then all right to get on with things. This is an example of transition where she could make the most of the array of new opportunities she was presented with. She embarked on a process of transformation and growing up in her new surroundings.

Taj

Taj is from Bengali/Bangladeshi origin. He was born in the UK speaking two languages at home, mostly mixing English and Bengali with his siblings and mother while speaking only Bengali with his father. He explains that initially he struggled at primary school both with the language and academically, and he was not particularly happy. However, he later caught up and performed better when he moved to Poppins Primary in Year 4.

During my observations I noted down that his achievement and performance were good but not particularly high. Taj was somewhat in the middle – good behaviour and engagement. The teacher praised him for work or effort every now and again but he was not the centre of attention in terms of achievement or behaviour. Taj was disciplined and organised during lessons. At times he volunteered to answer questions or demonstrate his learning. Although focused on the lesson and set work in most instances, during noisy periods Taj would get distracted from the work in order to respond to banter in class. He was often absent. His understanding of spoken English and lesson content was good, however, his writing demonstrated difficulties considering the level of English he spoke and the early age he was introduced to the language. His work was well-organised but not high quality especially in the cases

when independent work was required and it was not corrected by the teacher. Taj's experience was more illustrative of the traditional view of EAL where the verbal and written/academic language skills develop at a different pace (Cummins 2000).

Taj seemed to have strong opinions about his friendship circle, who could be part of this and how to handle the boys who were not that friendly. In these cases he would not engage with them, rather stay focused on the work. He mentioned a quarrel he had had with some of the boys making him realise they could not be friends and should just avoid each other. From observations and talks it became clear to me that Taj was the kind of student who would avoid trouble and uncomfortable situations to prevent being affected negatively.

In contrast to being quiet in lessons, Taj was animated in research discussions. He seemed to enjoy the attention and the fact that I was seeking his views readily available to listen which made him eager to share. He was thoughtful in talking about school and appeared concerned with improving his achievement being the best he could be. He was articulate about his experiences at school. He was also particular about the kind of things and attitudes he liked emphasising that his favourite teacher used to spend a lot of time with him explaining and focusing on perfecting his skills. He did not seem to have the same kind of relationship with his current teacher Miss Taylor.

During break times Taj was either playing with friends outside or taking turns on the classroom PC playing games. He was considerate and observant and a couple of times I noticed him clearing toys and balls as he was coming back from break:

‘During the break Sonny, Omid and Taj return to class early – Taj moves his stuff to the front desk with his work and starts reading and copying the text from the board – he also check occasionally if I’m looking at him.’

(Research journal 1 727-729)

In secondary school, it took a while to get hold of Taj. His name was misspelled on the register so my gatekeeper could not locate him, until one day I ran into him in the morning as children were lining up. He eagerly explained that he had been waiting and

that his name was inputted incorrectly. Later on he added that his teachers were calling him by surname but he had lost the will to correct them and carried on.

In Aster Academy Taj's discussions and efforts became more focused on academic achievement and although academically he found nothing difficult, he received additional tuition in the core subjects to improve his levels. Working at Level 4 and placed in the bottom middle set, Taj shared that levels are important in order to be successful not only in school, but in life. He was conscious of what would be required to have a successful career and worked in this direction, e.g. the importance of maths in his plans to become an accountant. He emphasised the importance of levels as a marker of success rather than knowing and doing things well.

While in primary school Taj was quiet, rarely engaging with large groups of pupils, in Aster Academy he gained confidence to adopt an important role in representing students. He claimed this allowed him to make new friends in addition to the people transferring from the same primary school. Friendship groups in high school seemed to have shifted. Although the majority of children transferred to Aster Academy, their friendship relationships changed and few remained within the same group as in primary school. Taj talked about reinventing his friendships with Eyaz and Liam as part of the high school context where he described the boys as more mature.

Subira

Subira is from Somali descent, born in Mombasa, Kenya where there is a large Somali population. Subira's family moved to the North West when she was two years old. She joined the nursery adjacent to Poppins Primary School. Subira spoke Swahili and English fluently which she indicated on her language map demonstrating how she made use of different languages for different purposes and to communicate with different people. The only person at primary school who shared the same language background with her was her best friend - Nafisa, and although they would speak mostly English, I would occasionally hear them whispering in Swahili and laughing. Subira was able to write in both languages and she confidently showcased this in her

learning journal (see Appendix 9). She was learning Swahili in supplementary school. In addition, she was teaching herself German and Chinese by watching television and copying texts from the internet. Although the primary school did not provide foreign language classes, Subira was hoping to pursue these interests in secondary school.

Sharing the same background, home language and similar aspirations to learning, Subira and Nafisa were spending a lot of time together all through primary school. They sat together and often supported each other's learning in lessons. Subira was friendly to everyone else and particularly a group of girls sat in the same corner of the classroom. As with Nafisa, they would help each other with learning and follow teacher's instructions closely. I observed Subira as a calm and collected student with a curious outlook. She was physically the smallest girl in Year 6, tiny in comparisons to some of the other girls. Her frame, however, was not reflective of her maturity. Subira was one of the most thoughtful and reflective students I met. In her learning journal Subira wrote:

‘I’m worried going to high school because I won’t be able to join in at certain things like a club with a person who hates/bullies or hurts you and because I won’t think I will be able to make many friends because of my appearance and I might not have enough confidence to ask my way back (ask higher pupils than me).’

(25.06.2012)

In lessons Subira was taking work seriously. She would put a lot of effort in crafting her work not only academically but visually. Her books were immaculate. Subira would readily respond to questions and engage with tasks posed by the teacher. She was in the high achieving group and her SATs results were among the highest.

In terms of EAL, Subira was a confident speaker of Swahili at home and English at school. Her English was advanced and on par with native speakers. She was an example of a fully bilingual child with a keen interest and engagement in learning. Subira was good at art and enjoyed drawing so much that she took an arts approach to her learning journal to demonstrate her journey.

Subira was keen to find out what high schools are like and to be a student there from experience. She was not taken aback by the rumours about bullying and behaviour and had high expectations about the level of learning. She was interested in the academic side of school looking forward to science and learning new languages. As part of my research Subira participated in a number of discussions and kept an informative learning journal. She was always willing to share her views, even when they were different from the majority in her predominantly academic focus.

In Aster Academy, she was in the top set for all core subjects. During lessons observations Subira was quiet, on task and ready to respond. She was eager to demonstrate her knowledge and abilities. However, on several occasions when asked to describe the learning, Subira mentioned that it was lacking a challenge and she was finding it easy. Subira preferred strict teachers because then they would teach and expect more of the children but she then said her teachers were not strict, hinting that she was not stretched to the maximum of her abilities. Her secondary class was lively and loud. Consisting of 28 children and growing to 31 before Christmas due to set adjustments, the composition was predominantly boys. At the beginning of the year as most teachers allowed sitting in friendship groups, Subira sat with a friend from Poppins Primary School. They were later moved around to sit with other people in English but stayed together in science. Subira did not seem to notice the noise. She would focus on her own work and achievement. I observed her following instructions, taking part and volunteering to answer questions, seeking help and completing assessments. She produced high quality pieces of work with no direct support from the teacher but utilising strategies to improve her work – consulting peers, using a thesaurus, etc., showing awareness of ways to improve. During observations, she always seemed settled and ready to learn and teachers consistently described her as an able student.

In terms of after school activities, Subira was involved with an arts after school club twice a week and Mosque school on weekends as a reflection of her culture. She

recognised it as another type of learning that was as important as school and quoted her teacher: *'Yes, because the more you learn, the more you know. The more you know, the more you forget. The more you forget, the less you know so we learn.'* (16.11.2012 78-79).

Hakim

Hakim's parents were originally from Iraq, but lived in Yemen for a while before moving to the UK in 2000. Hakim is one of five boys –three older brothers, all born in Yemen, two of them high school students, and the oldest has completed his compulsory schooling. The youngest one, born in the UK, is in Poppins Primary with Hakim who joined the school in nursery. In Year 7 Hakim was transferring to the same high school as his brothers so his general attitude was that there was nothing to worry about because he had his two brothers there.

Hakim appeared fluent in English having experienced the English educational system from the very start of his schooling. However, he spoke Arabic at home and attended a Saturday Arabic school learning how to write. Hakim's parents did not speak English so he spoke Arabic to them and English to his brothers. He also preferred to speak English with friends who shared the same home language: *'I speak with them English but like for jokes we sometimes speak Arabic [...] Because normally we use a funny word in Arabic'*. (22.10.2012). The language he used most both at home and school was English because he found it easier, but culturally his family followed their traditions and aspirations for the children to retain them through supplementary and religious schooling.

In primary school Hakim used to be in the top set in both literacy and numeracy which gave him the confidence that he was a talented and high achieving student. In addition, he was involved in a number of after-school activities – taking part in the school steel pans which performed regularly during assemblies, an after-school ICT club and football training with a few of his classmates. When I met him in Year 6 he was finding

the work easy and predictable to a certain extent so he was looking forward to high school which he saw as an opportunity to challenge his learning.

In lessons Hakim was quiet and focused on the work. At times he would make remarks that were uncalled for or chat to his friends, but he did not engage in any particularly disruptive behaviours. Being in the highest ability group meant that he could ably get on with the work and achieve high results with minimal supervision from the class teacher while relying on his understanding of both the language and schooling more generally.

In the school play at the end of the academic year Hakim got a primary role where he would frequently engage in dialogue with his best friend Eyaz. They were both good at their roles, learning the lines quickly and being able to impress by engaging with the play. However, they would also successfully find time and space to have boyish banter during rehearsals.

Speaking Miss Taylor, it appeared that she was worried about the social aspects of the behaviour of the boys that could get them into trouble:

‘...I think a lot of them in this class are very cocky and very sure of themselves and actually not overly pleasant to other children and I think it’s gonna be a shock [in secondary school] when people suddenly are cocky and not pleasant to them and then they are not gonna know what to do because they are gonna get a shock [...] That group of boys – Eyaz, Hakim, Blain, Jayden, Taban, and it’s a shame because some of them are so easily led, they just follow and that worries me’

(Miss Taylor 20.06.2012 380-383)

Anticipating transition to high school, Hakim was looking forward to meeting new students, making new friends and meeting all the ‘other’ teachers, which he saw as a big difference from primary school but an exciting variation of the routine. Being in the same school for a long time, he seemed to have become used to the usual business, meeting the same teachers and routine. In terms of academic subjects, Hakim was looking forward to ‘science with objects’.

Once in Bloom High, Hakim described Drama and PE as his new favourite subjects, but prompted about science, he said it was ‘fun’ because of the chemistry experiments and

more visual presentation of learning. English was another subject he enjoyed because of the scope for acting it provided but he was finding it a bit more challenging in terms of finding out about the meaning of words and how they could be used, which was perhaps a consequence of his learning of EAL and increasing complexity in the secondary school curriculum to involve more abstract concepts.

In the process of transition Hakim highlighted several differences between primary and secondary school, some observational, others more in-depth. He recognised the differences in the building and student profile making him younger and more vulnerable, although he did not explicitly state that. He talked about the differences in learning. School was not all of a sudden more difficult but abstract and he could recognise the efforts of teachers to make it easier using different strategies to explain the content. He also talked about the importance of active doing in the process of learning explaining that the most engaging subjects were those involving active participation and engagement, e.g. PE, science, drama.

Preliminary comparisons

In what follows I begin to draw preliminary differences and similarities between the six children in the introductory accounts to set the scene for children's experiences of schooling and link to some of the concepts in the research questions. There is considerable difference between the children in their migration and arrival stories, English language proficiency, relationships held with the class teacher in Poppins Primary School, visibility and classroom positioning in relation to their own perceptions and the perceptions of teachers.

The arrival stories incorporated a British-born child (Taj), three who joined the school nursery (Eyaz, Subira and Hakim) and two arrivals in Year 4 (Hani and Ayanna). They all had different stories and migration routes, even the ones sharing the same background. Some even had limited experiences of schooling altogether. These differences presuppose different experiences of schooling based on children's histories,

understanding of the school context and expectations. These would perhaps also lead to different transition expectations and experiences as well. Children had various levels of English language proficiency. However, this was not dependent on length of time spent in the country as Taj, the British-born child, identified learning EAL as a barrier. There was a perceived difference in the relationships children had with the primary school teacher where the new arrivals were less known to her. The more established members of the class were well known and recognised by the teacher creating binaries of visibility and invisibility. This was interesting because the late arrivals were in this class for two years already but they still stood out in their engagement with the teacher and separateness from the rest of the class. As a result children were positioned differently. There was explicit agency exercised by more established learners such as Subira, Eyaz and Hakim, which was in contrast to the passiveness of Taj, Hani and Ayanna.

There were also similarities in language attitudes, forming friendships and transition expectations. Language was not an issue as such or a marker of difference. Being able to speak two or more languages was the norm in this class and none of the six children saw any advantage of speaking more than one language in terms of schooling. Because of the high level of diversity in the school, cultural differences and languages seemed to be the norm. Those who recognised English as difficult were keen to learn the language to be able to achieve in school and improve their grades.

In terms of forming friendships, all of the children were part of a group with particular characteristics that were similar to their own interests and attitudes towards schooling. Eyaz was best friends with Hakim, Ayanna was in the same friendship group with Hani and other Somali girls, Taj liked spending time with a group of boys from the same ability group, and Subira was friends with Nafisa who shared background, language and a migration story. Friendships were formed around factors and experiences that brought particular children closer together and particularly within the field and in relation to capital. Another similarity here was the time of arrival of the children and

their tendency to form friendships with people with similar experiences. With their upcoming transition to secondary school, all children expected to find out more. Some had a firm understanding of the secondary school as a new field with new opportunities, while others were concerned about breaking friendships. Altogether, there was a perceived positive outlook towards transition and an understanding of the process as a stage of growing. They all recognised a sense of responsibility in being the top of the school in Poppins Primary coupled with a sense of the unknown in joining their secondary schools at the very bottom in Year 7. Perhaps this had to do with the children's own experiences of managing the progression through primary school to get to Year 6 and recognition that they were staring at the bottom again in the new schools. These points are further discussed in relation to the theoretical concepts in the next chapters.

5.5 Teacher's views of transition experiences

Following the descriptive accounts of the four schools and six children, this chapter continues to set the scene through the views and practice of teachers. While the previous section was focused on my understanding of the case study children, here I attempt to discuss their experiences from the point of view of primary and secondary teachers. I use data from interviews to present teachers' understanding of transition pathways elaborating on how they see and position the children in the school field. This is important in order to highlight mismatches or similarities between the views of key outsiders (myself and teachers) and the insider views of children. The aim of this section is to demonstrate how teachers' views are similar or different to the literature outlined in Chapter 3. Again, although the focus is on transition, I am much more interested in the concept of change in terms of social and academic positioning, framing, classification and agency, rather than the specifics of primary to secondary school.

During interviews, I asked what teachers thought were the transition experiences of children. The primary school teachers responded with their expectations of what transition entailed and how this was likely to shape children's experiences. Miss Taylor did not know where specific children were transferring and with a choice of more than five schools locally, her views seemed overly generalised:

'I think some of them will flourish and will love it because they are ready to move on, they've hit the top of the school, they are well above average now, they are ready for that high school grouping, setting, but they are ready to be put in the top set and moved on and pushed. Some of them are gonna get a sharp shock and the first few months are gonna be miserable because they are not organised, here three times you don't have your PE kit then you get a detention. I don't believe it's gonna be like that in high school. You know, they don't even wear the right PE kit now.'

(Miss Taylor 20.06.2012 327-333)

Framing experiences, Miss Taylor immediately applied a binary approach and positioned her students as the 'good' ones that will be just fine because they are ready, and the 'bad' ones who will struggle because they cannot follow the rules. These expectations serve almost as a predictive framework for particular children shaping their engagement based on current observations while dismissing the context as a potential source of influence and change. In the case of Hakim and Eyaz, Miss Taylor only stated that they will get into trouble in high school, while others were not even mentioned, raising questions about the visibility of non-disruptive children.

She also hinted the distinctiveness of Year 6 experiences as a process of coming to an end by continuing to talk about the PE kits:

'They wear it like they've went to a disco.. if you look low down the school, it's better. I don't think parents have wanted to buy new PE kit for children in Year 6 who are going to be leaving. We only ask for black bottoms and white top. But they'll get a shock at high school when they've turned up and they've not got this and they've not got that...'

(Miss Taylor 20.06.2012 358-365)

The last sentence is an explicit statement about children's independence and engagement, and the results of its absence. Miss Taylor almost makes an excuse for

accepting certain behaviours because she knows the children and this is further explained by Mrs Thomas:

‘High schools tend to be quite black and white in terms of behaviour that this is not acceptable and there’s no excuses whereas you think in Poppins Primary School because we’ve got to know individual backgrounds and we can say ‘well, hold on, he’s done that because...’ and we can provide an excuse. But we understand what’s going on, whereas as they are going in secondary school and it’s bigger so certain behaviour just wouldn’t be accepted.’

(Mrs Thomas 09.07.2012 84-89)

Her further views were in line with Miss Taylor’s focusing on children who will excel on the one hand, and those who may struggle, on the other hand. I noticed that both teachers who worked often with Year 6 did not mention children ‘in the middle’. With such one-dimensional view, it was particularly interesting to see whether this positioning was to change at the secondary school level.

The secondary school teachers were asked to reflect what they thought the transition experience of Poppins Primary School children was and how that was manifested in their lessons in terms of particular children and positioning. Discourses around visibility were evident here too, not necessarily explicitly, but some children seemed to receive disproportionately less attention. An expressed concern was around achievement and readiness for high school in terms of academic capabilities. Miss Al-Adhiri, a transition teacher elaborated further:

‘With regards to my group I kind of think to myself what have these children been doing in primary, their levels are so low and it’s not a criticism in the sense of none of them has been doing anything. I’m sure that they’ve been doing really well but some of them are so low [...] I think some of these children haven’t been allowed to use their full potential [...] I think you’ve got to think about their history sometimes like Decca’s I forget that, I think that probably the reason her literacy is so low is because she came in Year 4.’

(Miss Al-Adhiri 20.11.2012 511-537)

Although Miss Al-Adhiri attempts to speak as if she is not criticising the primary school, she explicitly points out what has not been done – differentiation, which for her explains the unequal achievement of children who were deemed to have lower ability and the issue with new arrivals with no English language knowledge. In this respect,

there seems to be a missing link in communication and understanding between primary and secondary schools. The focus in the secondary school seems to be on achievement and being able to do things, questioning the approach in primary school as not preparing children enough. What is important in this quote is how Miss Al-Adhiri carefully unpicks that not all children are this way, and for some there are valid reasons for lower levels, but the main issue is what creates the perceived gap in achievement between primary and secondary school. Surely it is not the six weeks of holiday in between and this issue has been long discussed in the literature (Riglin et al. 2013).

Miss Grant, a science teacher, shared a similar view about the contrast between Year 7 students and the older ones:

‘they [Year 7] are so needy and they are so.. it almost feels like they are so untrained but then you think that at primary school they should have been trained so well [with] that one teacher.’

(Miss Grant 12.12.2012 72-74)

She also reaffirms the binary view shared by the primary school teachers in terms of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ in coping with transitions and schooling and maintains achievement is a marker of academic success. Not surprisingly, she echoes Miss Taylor in her views about Eyaz’s ‘problematic’ attitude and behaviour. She also defines the struggle in relation to the number of teachers and contexts:

‘And that’s why our kids do struggle between primary and secondary as they get loads of different teachers then their teachers don’t know them and they don’t understand as well as their primary school teacher how they work and how they’ve worked in the past.’

(Miss Grant 12.12.2012 214-217)

This reflection on the difference between primary and secondary school returns to the position of Mrs Thomas in being able to make excuses for children’s behaviour and understand it through insider knowledge. However, the question is whether all of the children were understood and supported well in primary school as suggested by Mrs Thomas or some became invisible (e.g. the contrast between Eyaz and Taj).

Several teachers talked about the flexible approach they took initially to get to know their students in Year 7 through 'All about me' activities and co-construction of rules. While children were more interested in the activities and sharing their stories, teachers found value in negotiating the rules:

'In the first lesson I said 'What do you expect from me?' So I said you know, 'What do you think the rules are? What do you think I expect from you?' then they wrote it down like hands up and all of that, all the stuff that they can't do but they know that they should do rather than me going right, these are the rules, we're creating them together. I said 'what do you expect from me?' and Eyaz was at the front at this point and he went 'For you not to always pick the girls' so he was sort of saying how he was feeling because he's a boy, his [primary] teacher didn't like them and all sorts of stuff. I mean I don't know but this is it.'

(Miss Williams 23.11.2012 193-206)

Miss Williams was clear about how she wanted to manage her new class but it was interesting how the co-construction of rules materialised in lessons and is sustained over the course of the academic year as it would involve children's agency and engagement in a way that took their genuine experiences at the forefront. Alternatively, it could prove to be a lip service of an aspiration that did not make significant difference for children or the teacher.

Two of the secondary teachers I met were from a primary school background so they were both familiar with the organisation of Year 6 and the small transition gap between primary and secondary school. Miss Someh's reasoning about the use of previous knowledge and bridging the gap between the two school contexts through personal experience was somewhat reassuring: 'I know that with Year 7 I'll just think more how I would treat a primary English lesson and go with it that way' (Miss Someh 21.01.2013 178-183).

Up to this point this section provided a wealth of views about the transition experiences by both primary and secondary teachers. The views were based on personal assumptions and negotiations of positioning and identity. However, the shaping pedagogic role of teachers was evident and although some viewed it in a negative light as if they had to deal with the consequences of inconsistent primary school provision or

lack of test results and information about the children, one teacher took a more positive stance pointing out the hard work of primary teachers:

‘How did the primary schools deal with children that are very [different], they got low ability because obviously with primary schools I know they are appointed to different groups as in a red group, orange group and they are all assigned different tasks accordingly, it’s all differentiated. Obviously must be hard for one teacher to have such a broad spectrum of children in one class. At least here we get one type in one class.’

(Miss Raj 26.11.2013 111-115)

The next step is the exploration of how these views affect children’s transitions and learning more generally. This is a task for the next chapter and it is addressed through the theoretical framework.

5.6 Summary

This chapter described the broad research scene by introducing the schools, children and dynamics with teachers in terms of transition. It provided a description of the contexts and a feel of the schools as I experienced them. The children were also introduced in the way I saw them and their experiences by engaging in prolonged observations and discussion activities. In the final section these rich accounts began to be contrasted with the views of teachers in relation to the change of schools and learning in the first instance. This is where the chapter concludes as the next step is to relate the context and particular stories in their depth to the theoretical framework.

Chapter 6:

Understanding the complexity of transition experiences

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I continue to develop the case studies from Chapter 5 using the theoretical framework concepts more dynamically in order to explain the complexity of transition and give voice to children's experiences. I draw on the work of Bourdieu and Bernstein to analyse different aspects of schooling in:

- informal or social contexts; and
- formal, pedagogically oriented contexts.

These are important in understanding patterns of children's behaviour and positioning in a range of situations and contexts. The social aspects of schooling are concerned with children's positioning in the wider school field and in relation to peers and teachers, while the pedagogic aspects are part of the formal function of schools to educate through the curriculum and particular pedagogic statements. While the social aspects of schooling are more fluid and involve various actors and times of the school day, the formal aspects are grounded in the context of the classroom with explicit positioning of children and teachers.

Bourdieu's field, habitus and capital enable me to think through the social aspects of schooling. To describe the classroom aspects of transition, I use Bernstein's concepts pedagogic discourse, framing and classification. Although I have initially separated the concepts in the two frameworks, they are interconnected and function simultaneously in interaction across the school and beyond. The two frameworks are theoretical models of a complex reality and they work together by potentially complementing each

other in creating a model that facilitates better critical inquiry into children's experiences, agency and positioning in shifting contexts.

The chapter is structured around the cases of two children – Eyaz and Hani who transferred to the same secondary school. The data is introduced alongside the theoretical framework concepts. The process of analysis that led to the case studies being developed involved writing-up of each of the cases as a description of interactions and engagement before and after the transition to secondary school. As described in the methodology, this process involved the use of tables with three columns – one for the description, one of the theoretical coding and interrogation and one for the write-up of the cases through theoretical lenses. In this respect, the development of the cases and use of theory were happening simultaneously. Due to my background as a teacher, in the process of writing up the case studies, I deliberately tried to detach myself from thinking in this way. However, this required a level of reflexivity and awareness of the way my background was influencing my thinking and analysis. The use of the theoretical concepts as codes and further interrogation of the descriptive accounts enabled me to reshape my focus and adopt the language of the theories more dynamically. In this respect, this chapter illustrates the use of the framework supported with a recap on the main concepts from Chapter 2 and in-text explanations of how I use the concepts to present the data. As such, the use of raw data may seem limited in the sense that the cases do not speak for themselves, rather they are interpreted through the theoretical concepts. The cases are presented chronologically in order to capture the process of transition over time and the different stages in building understanding of children's experiences.

Firstly, I explain the informal aspects using Bourdieu's field operationalised through habitus and capital at the individual level. I pay particular attention to the ways in which the two children navigate in and between the primary and secondary school fields exploring the interplay between the external structuring of the school field and

the internalised structures and responses of the children. This is demonstrated by analysing the habitus and capital of each of the children. As the transition story develops, I interlace the social stories with the formal academic aspects of schooling, lessons in science and English in particular. Secondly, I use Bernstein's pedagogic discourse to make sense of lessons, the curriculum and children's positioning in classrooms in relation to different requirements. The theoretical application is illustrated by focusing on the multiple aspects of schooling and bringing the two transition stories to life by extensive quotes and observation vignettes.

6.2 The social complexity of schooling experiences

Bourdieu's thinking tools are important as they have the potential to provide an in-depth explanation of schooling experiences from different viewpoints. Firstly, the self-constructed perspective of what schooling and transition look like guides the children through the process, and secondly, there is external structuring positioning of peers and teachers that interacts with the children's perceptions. In Chapters 2 and 3 I explained the structuring factors in schooling, particularly the influence of teachers and socially based expectations. I pointed to the idea that children do not just follow structures without consideration, rather they use agency in the process. Here I use Bourdieu's theoretical work to tease out children's agency and active transformations as reflected in schooling but also adhere or reject options framed by teachers and peers.

Both from ethnic minority backgrounds, Hani and Eyaz have developed their habitus in the intersection of cultures and their shaping 'ways of being'. Home is an important marker of identity formation and habitus, and so are the different languages they speak on a daily basis. English as an additional language, meaning speaking more than one language on a daily basis depending on situations, people and contexts, is embedded into the daily routines of Eyaz and Hani. Although their personal life histories are very different, there is commonality and consistency in their experience of dealing with multiple cultures to make sense of schooling and EAL. The language levels of the two

children were dissimilar as they had spent different proportions of their schooling in an English context, but EAL carries more implications than just speaking the language. There were internal issues with the definitions of EAL at school level where I recorded contrasting views and shifting ideas at different stages of the research. Some of these were concerned with the lack of consistency in assessing EAL and understanding the broader implications of living with more than one language and culture, while others focussed narrowly on accessing the school curriculum. Focusing on the broader understanding of EAL, I noticed that in the cases of Eyaz and Hani, their upbringing across different contexts led to particular tensions and misconceptions in the field in relation to the dominant discourses. Children are not passive subjects of power relations as these are in constant interaction with their individual habitus and dispositions. Thus, the theoretical framework provides useful lens for analysing complexity of schooling experiences and outcomes where children actively use their agency to engage with and options in the field in the course of transition.

6.2.1 The rules of the game

I adopted the idea of the school as a playing field where practice can be thought of as a game with particular rules (e.g. Nolan 2012, Thomson 2012). This game involves both children and teachers in negotiation of positioning, agency and identity options in a school setting. The personal and professional backgrounds of teachers influence how they take part in the game, follow and reproduce the rules which may be explicit or implicit in being invisible for newcomers. Training helps teachers build relevant cultural capital through their critical participation in the dominant discourse of education and application of conversion strategies as teachers that enable their positioning in the school field and game (Apple 2001). For instance, in order to organise practice, teachers use ability sets to distribute resources towards children on a 'deserving' principle related to capitals and positioning. As a result, they focus on the 'right' children from an institutional point of view, or those who seem to make progress,

know and follow the rules of the game. Therefore, a primary school teacher like Miss Taylor focuses on getting the children through their SATs in Year 6, which in turn calls for ability-based teaching to differentiate for the diverse learners in her classroom. Some children are allocated to the top group, others – to the bottom. Eyaz is in the top set, he exhibits higher abilities and supposedly well-established knowledge of the discourse, including ways of behaving and learning. Hani, on the contrary, is in the bottom set. Having migrated to the UK only recently, she is less likely to know and follow the rules of the game. Her position is not helped by limited English and suspected learning difficulties which are constituted in the interaction of field and habitus as a barrier. On the basis of ability, teachers make assumptions about children and their likelihood to succeed without apparent regard of personal histories and capital. Such assumptions are based on visible characteristics and behaviours - a prevalent strategy in new contexts when the particular circumstances are unknown (Oliver & O'Reilly 2010) and in the teaching profession. Although this is one way to frame teacher practice, it is not the whole story of how the school field operates. I have used it as a way to explain teachers' behaviours in the light of the case studies but the main focus of this work is to understand the experiences of children.

Despite the objective notion that ability setting at crucial times of schooling, such as SATs, enables all children to benefit from tailored support and learning experiences, at the individual level the picture is multi-layered. Right at the heart of the process, settings foster the reproduction of inequalities in education by separating children into differentiated groups according to presupposed abilities and expected levels of academic competence, pitching teaching at a particular level which does not mean equal access to the curriculum. Bourdieu's stance is that education is a powerful mechanism to reproducing social and cultural inequalities by legitimising certain practices, cultures and forms of capital (Mills & Gale 2010). In my study of schooling with EAL and cultures in mind, it becomes evident that some children from non-dominant backgrounds are not only at initial disadvantage when joining the school, but

they also may fail in accumulating the necessary capitals to close the gap at later stages. Others, on the contrary, build on the transformative potential of their habitus and backgrounds to change their position. Additional background factors make it difficult to be objective and fully appreciate the history of each child. In the cases of both Hani and Eyaz there were mismatches between the expectations of the primary school teacher and their own understandings of the education game based on capital, habitus, assumptions from changing contexts. With this in mind, I clarify the habitus and capital in each of the cases.

6.2.2 Habitus and capital

Thomson's idea of describing the habitus and social capital of children as a virtual schoolbag (2002) is useful in understanding how children from different backgrounds are equipped for the schooling game. I adopted this approach to develop understanding of the practical application of the concepts habitus and capital. Eyaz and Hani's schoolbags contain collective and individual experiences of their past so they have an important role in explaining the children's positioning in the schooling game in contexts.

Eyaz's virtual schoolbag

'Eight years I've been in this school, miss, eight years...' (04.07.2012)

In his virtual schoolbag Eyaz has elements of two sources of cultural capitals – his original background and national heritage and the dominant capital acquired through schooling in England. Eyaz operates within different cultural contexts and languages on a daily basis; he helps in his father's shop and wants to be a salesman. In his free time he enjoys playing football and he talks about sports very vividly. School, on the other hand, is not something Eyaz is too happy with. Eyaz's remark on being eight years in Poppins Primary School is a testimony that he has had enough and knows the workings of the school inside out. The reasons for Eyaz's dissatisfaction with school are neither simple, nor fully visible. To be precise, Eyaz's habitus demonstrated a sceptical

attitude towards the schooling game and later in his transition became much more embodied and not fitting into the secondary school context which led to a number of difficulties for his academic acceptance on the part of teachers. Perhaps in interactions in the primary and secondary school fields, Eyaz uses different dispositions and elements of his habitus – in Poppins Primary School he puts scepticism aside and accepts the teacher's role while in Aster Academy scepticism is used as a positioning and capital accumulation strategy.

The different cultural capitals in his schoolbag are inevitably intertwined and dependent on one another as they have developed in a simultaneous system. Eyaz's identity is marked by a mixture of discourses, meaning that he is never just English or just Kurdish and this is further complicated by the different value of what he brings into the field. Thomson (2002) maintains that there is a benefit in the combination of discourses in accumulating knowledge, but not all capitals/knowledge are recognised by schools. A combination of capitals would put Eyaz in an advantageous position being able to draw from more 'funds of knowledge'. But the field did not necessarily recognise this capital.

During his primary schooling, Eyaz had developed a good sense and use of the dominant discourse to benefit his position in the school field, specifically familiarity with the classroom discourses and rules, teacher expectations and dynamics in communication and exchange patterns. He confidently talks about academic levels notifying me that he is '*very good at it*' showing that he is aware of the game and doing it consciously. Eyaz's familiarity and experience of the school field put him in a position to accumulate benefits through the possession and exchange of relevant capitals. However, this is only true in terms of the capitals and behaviours recognised as legitimate within the dominant discourse. The school does nothing in using his cultural, national or linguistic background as an asset to education. However, Eyaz finds a way to be creative in the use of capital as a conversion strategy using his agency strategically

to accumulate gains. Later on he relies on a combination of dispositions and capitals to negotiate his identity in the secondary school adopting a view that this subfield is an opportunity for a fresh start to transform his habitus and positioning so he makes use of his capital and unclear power relationships to challenge the rules of the game for what he perceived to be his own advantage.

Hani's virtual schoolbag

Hani's virtual schoolbag contains both social and cultural elements linked to her background and strong belonging to the Somali community. Having arrived from Somalia in Year 4, her virtual schoolbag does not have the necessary content to equip her to be successful in primary school – initially she did not speak English and was not familiar with the dominant cultural and normative school context. Her strong and explicit Somali identity enables her to forge lasting relationship with a group of girls from the same background creating a support circle. It seems that this circle is necessary in order to navigate the school context and field in the UK as the girls share habitus and dispositions towards their experiences. Although this strategy satisfies social aspects of Hani's schooling, there is a concern about the implications in terms of academic progress.

Leaning towards the familiar environment and reproducing her original cultural context within school could also be interpreted as creating a barrier to integrating into the dominant context and understanding the rules of the field – leading to marginalisation as part of a minority group that puts itself in isolation in relation to the rest of the field. It is important to mention here that the group aspects of positioning and support are what maintained the bond between the girls resistant to the dominant context. However, despite the large number of children from Somali background in Poppins Primary, it was difficult to identify a common experience or pathway arriving in the North West and the UK. The different migration routes of families featured arrivals directly from Somalia, on the one hand, and migration through and experience

of other European countries and schooling systems, on the other hand. The composition of Hani's friendship circle was as diverse as the latter observation.

Her arrival in Year 4 led to a cultural and social mismatch in her schooling experiences due to lack of educational background in similar contexts. Hani's story stands out from the rest of the stories of the Somali girls, highlighting that assuming a particular identity and positioning for these girls was not a useful strategy. The majority had come through Europe and respective schooling systems. Not only did Hani not have any Western schooling experience before joining Poppins Primary School, but she seemed to lack overall school dispositions. This could put her at a disadvantaged position in relation to the discourse and rules of the field as she lacked the relevant social and cultural capital recognised by schools. In Eyaz's case his familiarity with the context enabled him to build relevant capitals and 'ways of being' but this was a much more challenging task. According to Bourdieu's conceptualisation of field, the earlier a player enters the game, the better s/he can cope with the rules and implicit workings because of the accumulation of relevant discourses and capital in the habitus. This is why Eyaz was much more likely to know how to play the game because the rules are part of his virtual schoolbag. Hani, on the other hand, was more likely to struggle due to her limited exposure and experience of the dominant discourse. My interpretations that the primary teachers did not take any obvious measures to address this making assumptions based solely on Hani's ethnic background and friendship circle instead, further complicated the picture.

Having described the habitus of the two children and some of the wider social context through the exploration of the field as an attempt to understand them from a social perspective, I bring in the pedagogic aspects of schooling.

6.3 Pedagogic complexity and discourses

In this section I recap on the role of pedagogic discourse in shaping students' experiences. I then use the concepts of power, control, classification and framing to explain the discourses and interactions that organise children's learning, engagement and communication in the curriculum.

There are different options and reasons for children to engage with RD and this creates different responses/behaviours in relation to ID. For instance, Eyaz engages with RD in the primary school by responding to Miss Taylor's pedagogic utterances and responding to tasks in the dominantly recognised ways, although at times trying to cut corners. However, he refuses to do so in the secondary school by questioning his teachers' motives for pedagogic tasks and understandings of meaningful learning and classroom interaction. By doing so, he prioritises social and cultural capital gained through interactions with peers. He moves further away from ID and becomes isolated in terms of the pedagogic discourse. I later illustrate this idea in Eyaz's case study and explanation of his active transformation in different schools. In contrast, Hani does not engage with RD in the primary school because she is not aware of the way it works. Therefore, she cannot make use of ID. By building better understanding of RD in secondary school through stronger framing, she becomes more sensitised to ID.

RD and ID are regulated by framing which, in turn, refers to the controls on communication in local pedagogic interactions. I focus on the classroom level to understand the dynamics of these interactions in relation to power and control and how they shape the experiences of children. I then look at the individual level of Eyaz and Hani to highlight how they understand and make use of pedagogic discourse in their transition experiences. I draw on the transmission context that highlights the process of acquisition within classroom interaction (Figure 6.1). Essentially, transmission operates through rules, understandings, ideals and norms.

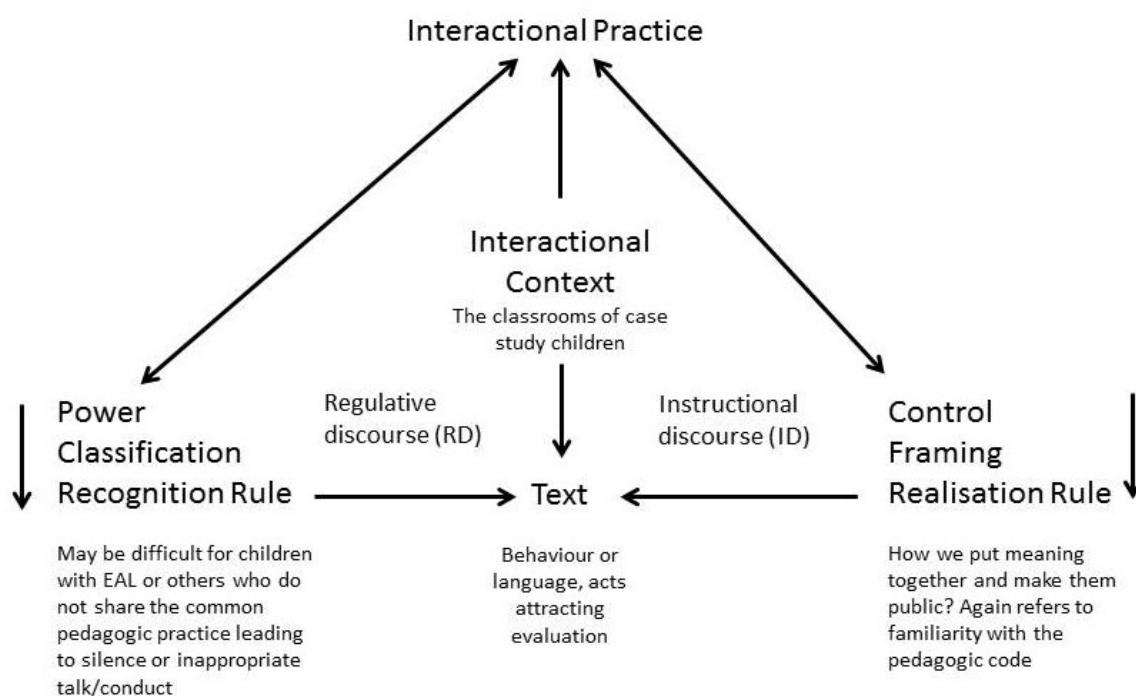


Figure 6.1: Acquisition model and its transmission context (adapted from Bernstein 2000, p. 16)

The model above demonstrates the interaction of the theoretical terminology which will be used to construct and understand children's experiences. RD and ID are introduced in relation to the rest of the theoretical concepts in order to better understand children's positioning and behaviours. RD has a structuring function over pedagogic order, relations and positioning, therefore it is more closely linked to the power and classificatory principles in education. ID, although embedded in RD, is concerned with the specialised skills and ways of orchestrating pedagogic instruction and thus linked to control and framing processes in the classroom.

In my study this means recognising the different rules of the classroom context as opposed to break times; the different subject lessons with their boundaries and specific knowledge, values and applicability across contexts. In this respect, it is interesting to find out how children operate in different contexts making use of recognition rules and overarching power and classification. As argued by Bernstein (2000), children are able to recognise the context and their positioning within in terms of power relations, but the realisation rule has a critical role in being able to communicate in the expected

ways. In Eyaz’s case the realisation rule is essential in making sense of his behaviour. Although in Bourdieu’s terms his virtual schoolbag contains the necessary prerequisites to successfully navigate schooling, he may be using the recognition and realisation rules in different ways. I argue that to an extent, the recognition and realisation rules can only take place in relation to the children’s individual histories and accumulations of habitus, dispositions and capital. This is achieved by reflecting on both theoretical frameworks. The rest of this chapter tells the two children’s stories through theoretical lens bringing together their social and academic aspects of schooling. Each story is organised as a timeline to reflect the longitudinal nature of the research and stages of transition as a narrative of developments and experiences. The timeline tells a story of positioning, agency and engagement in transition with key moments emphasising expectations of transition while still in primary school; first encounters with the new school, class and teachers; and the later stages of being a more established Year 7 student. The figure below summarises the timeline approach:

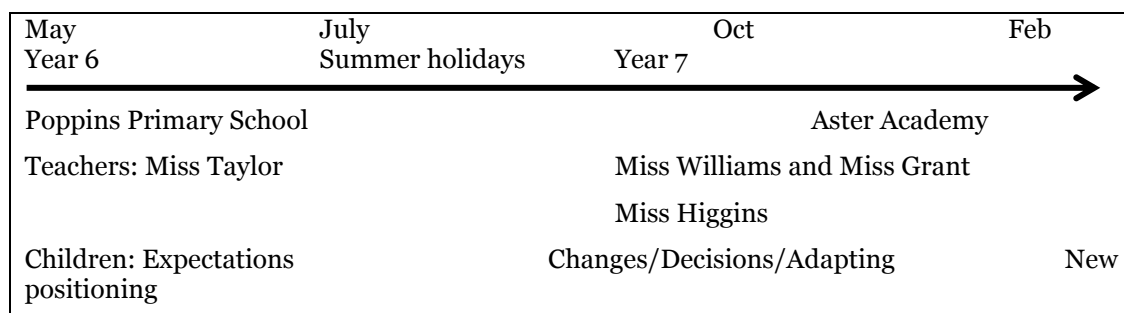


Figure 6.2: Transition timeline

The sequence approach is important as it captures children’s unfolding experiences, consequent decisions and agency/positioning adjustments as a result. Eyaz’s case was developed first in order to develop and demonstrate the theoretical framework and concepts with the data. Because of the introductory role of this case, it is longer than Hani’s. Hani’s story is building on the framework used in Eyaz’s in making the concepts livelier and applied in a different set of circumstances. However, while Eyaz’s story was used to set the way I use the concepts, Hani’s is much more intertwined with the theoretical explanations. Later on in Chapter 7 the stories of the rest of the children are

further condensed as the use of the framework is already set and explained through Eyaz's longer account and Hani's different context.

6.4 Eyaz's transition and challenging the rules of the game

July Year 6: Assembling secondary school expectations

Returning to the virtual schoolbag metaphor, familiarity with the dominant discourse and consequent internalisation put Eyaz in an advantaged position from the onset with his exposure to the 'right values', accumulation of relevant capital and skills. He was aware of the ways in which school operated, the expected behaviours and utterances through his schooling in Poppins Primary School. Due to the long-standing constraints (strong framing) maintained by Miss Taylor, Eyaz was choosing to cooperate with the pedagogic discourses – engaging with RD and following ID, e.g. teacher control of the classroom. However, with other actors, he was actively exploring options to engage in different ways or re-establish the rules and pedagogic discourses as an example of agency. By doing this he was renegotiating the classification principles of roles in the classroom, including myself, TAs, cover teachers:

The task was to work in ability groups in order to find out about the number of medals per country in the last 7 Summer Olympic Games. [Children] were given a template to use. The top set had to draw their own template [using an example from the middle group], because they had to record information about the number of [...] medals each country had.

Eyaz asked me a couple of times if I could do the task for him as he was upset that he didn't get it right the first time and he had to start all over again. Instead I gave him an idea of what he could do to adapt the original template so he can fit in the information and he went on to do this.

(Research log 1 129-140)

At the beginning, he tried to communicate to me the classification of adult roles in the classroom as people who help children with the work. My knowledge of the context meant that I was aware of his responsibilities as a student and moved away from 'doing for him' to giving him advice and encouragement. However, the notion that he was upset is important. It mainly results from his initial disappointment of following the

classificatory principles of the task provided that the top set work was weakly framed. He had an example to work from but being used to stronger classification pre-SATs and more explicit guidance, Eyaz was perhaps frustrated with the weak framing and resistant to apply the realisation rule. The final months of primary school created such opportunities because of the flexible nature of learning which were in contrast with the earlier stages of Year 6 SATs preparation that was framed and classified strongly.

Towards the end of Year 6, children and teachers were preparing the school play. This was an important event for two reasons. Firstly, the children were enjoying a more relaxed school routine and approach. Secondly, the play was the formal send-off for Year 6 while demonstrating their learning and development over the years. Making active use of his familiarity with the pedagogic discourse, Eyaz navigated the opportunity to take part in the play and establish his identity with the external drama teacher:

Eyaz volunteers to be the king's wife and he seems quite confident being in the spotlight, he's good at listening attentively and following instructions. When going into his role he does excellent imitation of what he's asked to do and gets a lot of praise for it. After a few children try different roles, they are all asked [by the new teacher] to work in groups of five and practice their parts after which they will have to perform in front of the rest.

(Research log 1 216-229)

As a result of his excellent performance, Eyaz was selected for the main role. Eyaz's awareness of expectations and how to make a good impression demonstrated his way of 'doing school' in the appropriate ways and his relevant choices to engage with RD and ID despite the weak framing of selecting children for different roles. He worked the realisation rule and responded by applying familiar principles of classification – to get the role he needed to recognise the context as formal and strongly classified and so demonstrated relevant behaviours effortlessly given his habitus and capital developed through primary schooling and familiarity with RD. By doing this, he affected the interactional context and interactional practice getting himself the main role (Figure 6.1). Looking at the example from a field perspective as a place of contestations within,

Eyaz seemed to know how to navigate to create maximum benefit for him by using relevant capital gained in the classroom. Furthermore, he accumulated educational capital that was likely to benefit his position in school. In the drama lesson, Eyaz was building his capital by associating with the drama teacher as a person he recognised could confer advantage to him. The teacher was male, authoritative and strict with the children giving them one chance to impress. Therefore, Eyaz's way to impress the potential role model was to gather his relevant capital and follow the RD and ID as internalised discourses.

While the above is an example of positive engagement, it was not unusual for Eyaz to behave in a way that was seen as negative in pedagogic terms. His habitual need to be acknowledged was a stronger driver than the regulation of how he would be seen by others:

Previously Eyaz was sent out to do his work in another class but [on his return] he tells me: *'I've been sent out for good behaviour, miss! In this schools children can go out for good behaviour!'*. He's sitting on a table with Blain and Hakim and there's a lot of banter going on [...] At 11.50 Eyaz is sent out again for using inappropriate language.

(Research log 1 756-761)

Eyaz used humour as capital to position himself within the classroom subfield. He was aware of the implications of unacceptable behaviour and why he had been sent out, but instead of admitting, he used my outsider position to affirm his belonging. He used different dispositions and classification of pedagogic situations to navigate the field based on the outcomes he aimed for and the gains in terms of relevant capital. His dispositions required different contexts to operate and different levels of framing which Eyaz recognised effortlessly, for instance lesson time with Miss Taylor, the main teacher, versus lesson time with Kate, the cover teacher who had less control over the class as a whole and individual children due to her subordinate position within the field and weaker framing. Another example of similar binary choices and behaviours is structured lesson time versus play time with friends, or being asked to sit with a boy or

next to a girl. Such situations created different engagement opportunities for Eyaz and he made active decisions how to navigate these by either agreeing with the status quo (RD) or challenging the pedagogic messages (ID), by using inappropriate language, teasing the girls or switching to another activity. Where opportunities related to power and control in the classroom, there was less optionality for Eyaz and he accumulated educational capital by following the dominant rules. On the contrary, while with friends there was more flexibility and options for him to accumulate primarily social capital and acceptance.

The example of dispositions towards communicating with girls is important because it raises a host of considerations with regards to power and control. A definition is necessary here. Power and control set the rules of the game where power denotes the structuring of the school context and keeping particular parts of it different, while control is about communication within the different discourses. When in a position to communicate with girls, Eyaz wanted to project certain identity and values but how was this handled when the projections were not in line with the dominant discourses? Eyaz made vivid vocal expressions related to gender, values and control implications in the school. As a male pupil of adolescent age, Eyaz was already aware of the difference between male and female figures. This was even further reinforced by his cultural background and was part of the capital that constructed his virtual schoolbag. His cultural perspective was likely having different implications from the understandings he demonstrated at school. Possibly the different gendered role in his immediate environment had prompted him to transfer these behaviour patterns to school in a somewhat acceptable form as response to RD. Having taught the same class in Year 4, Miss Taylor seemed to have Eyaz under control within firmly established boundaries. Eyaz seemed consistent with this and acknowledged where he stood. Even though Eyaz was keen to be seen as a tough young boy by his teachers and peers, he did not always present himself in the same way:

In the morning a boy from 6N has kicked off and hit Miss Taylor by mistake. He's been sent home immediately and there's a bit of a problem with the play on Thursday as it's too late for someone else to take his part and learn the lines. His mum and the teachers have thought that because of his attitude he doesn't deserve to take part in the play.

Miss Taylor asks the class, emphasising that she's giving them ownership, if the child should take part in the play despite the accident. 7 children say yes at first but then she asks again and only Eyaz and Liam raise their hands. Liam is unsure why, but Eyaz says that everyone should be given a second chance. But then it's clarified by Miss Taylor that the student in question has had a second, third and fourth chances as he's been disruptive all along.

(Research log 1 1420-1428)

Eyaz demonstrated his sense of fairness in this weakly-framed context and established his positioning as someone who cared about redemption. He also reiterated Miss Taylor's position around children's behaviour and second chances (which she was giving to her students). Here Miss Taylor negotiated the consequences with the class who were ever so aware of rules and control practices in her classroom. Eyaz's excuse was really important given the earlier example where he humoured his detention from the lesson and his ability to navigate the field and make use of relevant discourses. However, in response Miss Taylor deployed her capital by characterising the nature of the behaviour and emphasising her final say in what happens re-establishing the RD. By doing this she framed the acceptable behaviours and engagement from her point of view and in relation to pedagogic practice, but not the one Eyaz used as justification for his suggestion.

Thinking about transition, Eyaz was articulate in his open dislike of the school he was going to. Some of his reasons were legitimate, showing his anxieties of the expected shifts of power and positioning, strong classification and framing. For instance, Eyaz seemed to believe in the myths of being bullied by older students:

'Miss, do you know Tom, he told us he's worried that he's gonna get trashed into the cabinet. Because, Miss, that cabinet, the teacher called Tom he told us that when he was a kid he got locked into the cabinet for 20 minutes...'

(07.07.2012 lines 117-122)

I asked whether this was plausible to happen at school and while the others responded negatively, Eyaz insisted it did which again established his position through a performance that could lead to advantage. Through my interest he elaborated his views, or his expected positioning in the secondary school as the hero who will resist immense challenges. The next minute he was talking about getting into fights. These views framed the experience of secondary school before Eyaz had stepped through the doors. His preoccupation with fights, ‘trashing’, and the role of older students is a marker of his understanding and worries around the power shifts and control in the new context.

The other extreme, however, included unrealistic considerations of what made a good school. Talking about the upcoming open day in Aster Academy Eyaz remarked: ‘But miss, you don’t *have* to go there’ positioning himself yet again through playfulness with the rules. It was then clarified that he was going but the hesitation and criticism continued: ‘Miss, but the Academy just have a boring football pitch [...] Because they don’t have many good stuff there, they don’t even have a proper-proper football there...’ (04.07.2012). Football in Eyaz’s world seems to be of utmost importance and he was openly disappointed that the high schools would not meet his expectations. This is interesting because it somewhat hints at Eyaz’s perception that the secondary school will be better than the primary. Perhaps the fact that his expectations were not met called for disappointments before encountering the facilities as his information was inconsistent with reality.

Little was said about learning as a factor, but Eyaz emphasised again the potentially higher status of Aster Academy: ‘The Academy, they *never have any treats*, they only have detentions [...] They *don’t use kiddish words*.. like numeracy’ (04.07.2012) alluding that secondary school will be about being a grown-up and differentiating himself from the language and discourse of the primary school as a mechanism to project his maturity. Towards the very end of primary school Eyaz recorded his thoughts about starting in the new school:

‘I am going to be feeling not bothered really because I don’t really like the school that much’

(16.07.2012)

This quote clearly states the attitude that Eyaz adopted in his transition. The separation of the two schools and power relations was important and interesting for me to explore post-transition. At the last moments of primary school, Eyaz acknowledged his sentimental stance although his actions showed differently:

At the end of the day Miss Taylor talks about how great children’s behaviour has been today – she seems pleased and very proud of them, they all get cupcakes, some eat them, some take them home. Then they line up for the last time and say final goodbyes. Eyaz [says] ‘Miss, just don’t cry now!’ – seeing that Miss Taylor is getting emotional.

(Research log 1 2158-2161)

With his advice to Miss Taylor he positions himself as described in the earlier comment – mature, ready to go and not bothered. By doing this he also separated himself from the subfield of the group using the mature student stance and capital. However, I wonder whether he said this partly to prevent himself from getting involved in the realisation that primary school was over?

October Year 7: Transition, changes, decisions, actions

Transitions between different contexts can provide a wealth of opportunities for a fresh start and re-invention (Oliver & O’Reilly 2010). Eyaz made active use of such opportunities by using different capital and behaviours to position himself in the school field. Before I turn to the secondary school, I bring back a critical incident from the open day in Year 6 which shaped the framing of Eyaz’s secondary school experience.

In the morning of the open day Eyaz turned up to Poppins Primary School as usual. The class teacher saw him sat at his desk and exclaimed: ‘*What are you doing here?! You’re supposed to be in Aster Academy for the day!!!*’. She was genuinely surprised to see him and started arranging for him to go to the school accompanied by Mrs Thomas after a phone call to his parents. In Aster Academy Mrs Thomas was in for a surprise, she later described:

‘As soon as Eyaz arrived in the school he was extremely rude to the staff who told him he was late and he had to change this attitude in high school. He refused to accept that he’d be starting school earlier and was expected to be on time and with all the right equipment. I was embarrassed to be at the school with him and at the same time astonished as I had never seen Eyaz behave in this manner’.

(Research log 2 09.07.2012)

Eyaz’s fresh start with the secondary school field began with this first visit when he established his position as not willing to conform to the expectations. While other children saw themselves as becoming the youngest in secondary school and so starting at the bottom of the ladder, Eyaz did not seem to agree with this position. Instead, he decided that the secondary school could provide new ways of being by engaging in certain behaviours to give him advantage. Exercising agency Eyaz challenged the rules of the schooling game quite contrary to his performance in the play and collaboration with the drama teacher. A reason for Eyaz to navigate the field in this way was the female authority figures and his outright rejection due to insecurity in the context of lack of familiarity. In addition, this could be interpreted as a strategy to establish positioning in the new field. Given that familiarity and strict boundaries in primary school restricted his behaviour, he was taking a different approach in Aster Academy. In the visit Eyaz exercised his agency and engaged with his transition in a different way from everybody else – making sense and use of opportunities in the field in relation to particular situations and contexts. I wonder whether he would have entered the school in the same way if he was with his peers.

I first visited Aster Academy in October and Eyaz made an active choice not to engage with the research in the way I asked him. This is a valid way of dealing with transitions and an example of agency over time in acting in accordance with his beliefs about the new subfield and how it fits with the research. While some of the others saw a benefit in talking to me, having a familiar face in the new school, and someone who knew them and provided a particular type of framing, Eyaz had a different stance. Knowing him from primary school, I was seen as part of the old field and theoretically unable to

understand his new trajectory. Nevertheless, I continued observing him in lessons and speaking to his teachers to create understanding of his transition, engagement and agency. Through the lesson observations that followed in Aster Academy, I developed the following accounts of his experiences.

English

Miss Williams's classroom was situated along the languages corridor where English and modern foreign languages shared the rooms. The desks were in rows facing the board and children had a seating plan. Miss Williams was energetic and enthusiastic about her lessons; she was helpful and supportive providing opportunities for individual and small group work in addition to whole-class teaching. Eyaz's English lessons were characterised by strong classification between subject areas and content. English was where they read, wrote and learned new words which immediately alerted me to follow Eyaz's engagement.

Initially my observations were focused on the interactions between the children and the teacher (framing), pedagogic activity (interactional practice) and children's attitudes (recognition and realisation rules):

The general attitude of children is as if they are not bothered. The teacher walks around them to monitor their work and help them. She checks on Eyaz's work. They are all expected to work independently but there is a substantial amount of chats going on. At one end of the room the teacher is monitoring children's work in the notebooks so children are quiet but at the other end they are quite loud and rowdy [...] whenever the seating plan is not working, the teacher moves them around so that they can stop chatting and focus on work.

The starter activity was going on for more than 10 minutes, Eyaz is trying to get out of the lesson to go to Student Services – the teacher says no and that he can go afterwards but he keeps trying... she then says that he will be able to go out of lesson earlier if he's behaving well. He keeps being distracted trying to look through the window.

(Research log 2 23.10.12)

This observation demonstrates strong framing through control of time, task and engagement. Not all children were responding to the instructional discourse because they were either unable to as they could not recognise it due to not having a developed recognition rule, or because they did not possess the realisation rule to show their engagement. In Eyaz's case the realisation rule meant setting his own versions and

realities of the classroom. He was attempting to leave the lesson early giving a 'valid' reason in relation to the school RD. However, in the context of the teacher's attempts to affect interactional practice, Eyaz's behaviour could be interpreted as a disruption. This disruption changed the interaction in the classroom prompting Miss Williams to move to the front of the room to bring back the strong framing. The issue here is how children interpret the flexibility in individual work and the operation of their recognition and realisation rules that change the interactions.

After the lesson I was interested to find out if the children were usually like this – loud and unsettled. To my surprise, Miss Williams responded what I had just seen was 'good'. She explained that the students in this class had a history of difficult behaviour, especially some of the boys. The fact that they had not yet been allocated properly in ability sets led to mixed ability teaching and she admitted finding it difficult to manage behaviour and differentiate work – some children took all the attention while others got on with the work. She was confused who to address and teach, experiencing a dilemma about her role as a teacher and priorities in the classroom. I was confused how she managed the learning of this class, and more importantly how the children, and Eyaz in particular, managed their own learning as they seemed nothing but disinterested.

The point about the boys' behaviour resonated with predictions of the primary school teachers. Miss Williams said that Eyaz was always noisy. In her opinion he 'did not have a clue what was going on in the lesson' and his learning was not good. Later in the term the classes were to be resetted and teaching was expected to become easier especially for the quieter children, as well as for the teacher in terms of differentiating the work and managing behaviour. At this time lessons were about getting children quiet and doing as they are told.

Once resetted the class seemed more settled, however Eyaz continued to engage in his own ways:

The sentence work is independent in silence but creative as they provide their own explanations and understanding of the poem. Eyaz keeps chatting away across tables at every opportunity. The teacher stops him and he comments that work is easy, that's why he gets distracted.

(Research log 2 7.12.12)

Behaviour was still the main focus as a potential barrier to learning. Bernstein's notion of text in Figure 6.1, which could be behaviour or language, is important to understand the dynamics here. What a teacher would consider as 'disruptive' behaviour changes the dynamics of the classroom in a way that requires an intervention by the teacher to re-establish control. Miss Williams would adopt the following strategies:

- demerits as a 'punishment' strategy to improve behaviour;
- physical movement between the children to closely monitor them; and
- establishing control by standing up in front and asking for attention.

As names appeared in the demerits column, some children would quieten and focus on the lesson working the realisation rule. Others, including Eyaz, were not concerned with demerits as they already had a collection:

The teacher starts giving demerits for bad behaviour. [...] Eyaz responds to her request to turn around and focus by saying: 'Why is it always my fault?', but then he turns around and keep talking to a peer – regulation and understanding of his own behaviour.

(Research log 2 23.10.12)

Eyaz actively questioned this approach on a personal level. His question implied that the situation kept repeating and perhaps he felt blamed for something he was not doing (or not realising to be doing). As a result he chose to do his own thing. Putting this in the context of Miss Williams's understanding of Eyaz is imperative:

"He doesn't listen, he doesn't listen to *what you tell him* and then ... and then he goes right on task, and then he's like 'Oh I don't know what I'm doing!' and he gets *angry with me*. And I'm like 'You need to take *responsibility for not listening*.' Because he gets really genuinely quite cross with me for not explaining what they're doing but *he doesn't understand* that he's *not listening when I'm telling him* to do what I'm telling everyone to do that everyone then gets on with and *he then erupts* into this 'I don't get it, don't get it, don't get, miss' and I'm like well.. I'm just gonna *have to sit him* at the front I think, moving back to the front and *keep him apart* from his mates that distract him now. *He's not gonna like it but that's what's gonna happen*."

(Miss Williams 23.11.2012 219-226, my emphasis)

The way in which Miss Williams speaks about Eyaz sets the rules she makes as she goes along. As such, these cannot be explicit for Eyaz. Furthermore, he is able to notice that the rules change. It is evident that Miss Williams is concerned with Eyaz's conformity but also the potential implications in the subfield of her classroom. The wording 'erupts' and 'not gonna like it' emphasise the conflicting nature of the tensions between Eyaz's habitus and the field but also the changes in text which are likely to result in Miss Williams changing her pedagogic practice. This not only highlights the trajectory in Eyaz's transition and positioning, but also shifts in the teacher's own understanding of him in different contexts and at different times.

Miss Williams highlighted that he was an able student, but choosing not to engage in the 'correct' dominant ways by not listening, shouting out or talking back. There is an interesting shift that Eyaz made in situations like this – almost exploiting the sense of control in his favour – he does not know what to do, therefore it is Miss Williams's fault as she has not given him an explanation. The explanation here is the strong framing that Eyaz needs to navigate the field, but in reality he had missed the opportunity to engage with the task as he had chosen to engage in something else. This is choice and agency, but why are teachers failing to engage him and what kind of environment and stimulus does he need?

Eyaz was not interested or willing to take part in extra-curricular activities. One day Miss Williams was looking for volunteers for World Book Day but Eyaz did not engage as a result of his recognition rule – these activities were optional and weakly classified, therefore taking part would not gain advantage and capital. During lessons he was either engaged in his own activity or rejecting RD:

Eyaz answers a question and says afterwards: 'Can I have a merit now?'. His question is not acknowledged by the teacher. He seems to be pushing the limits and seeing where he can get with this behaviour.

(Research log 2 23.10.2012)

Although aware of the pedagogic discourse and expectations in the classroom, in this lesson he had continuously disturbed both the teacher and the rest of the students with

unnecessary comments. At the point when he made use of the recognition rule and answered a question in a way that fit, he demonstrated a different realisation rule and sought special acknowledgement of his success. In his aim to point out that he has done as required; Eyaz failed to do the exact same thing. He exploited gaps between RD and ID where his behaviour would fit the latter and not the former. The result was ironic positioning of the teacher, orchestrated by Eyaz. In his transition and introduction to the secondary school RD Eyaz was playing with the rules, hierarchy and notion of control. He had a clear stance in Poppins Primary School not to mess about as the boundaries of the field were clear and the hierarchy would mean consequences. He was conforming to both RD and ID. Consequently, he chose different positioning in Aster Academy because the control relationships were not set from the beginning. By doing this his behaviour shifted away from RD bringing him in an isolated position in relation to ID.

Science

Miss Grant's science lab was organised in two rows of tables facing the whiteboard. This was internal classification into science and scientific knowledge as subject of transmission which was reinforced by the environment of Bunsen burners and vials. The first row was in direct proximity to where Miss Grant would stand during lessons. She would hold onto one of the sinks while explaining the content or attempting to grab the attention of children. In terms of contents privileged in Miss Grant's classroom, there was explicit focus on science and respective vocabulary. The class was working their way through biology so there was little scope for experiments and I did not observe any for the duration of my visits. Miss Grant's lessons included:

- extensive verbal explanations and relating material to children's everyday experiences. However, on a topic such as pregnancy, this was a difficult task. As a result children like Eyaz were not engaged with the content;
- pictures and videos; and

- completing sentences, writing definitions, using key words in explanations.

The lessons were also marked by weak framing in terms of tolerance towards behaviour and interruptions. The teacher was somewhat trying to address these in a less structured way being friendly to children which was putting in question her hierarchical position in terms of power and control. Even the positioning of the seating was a factor:

I notice that children sitting in the back of the room are more organised and getting on with the work independently. The ones in front, all boys are chatting on irrelevant topics and being naughty constantly in direct contact with the teacher and in close proximity. Perhaps they are seated there to be easily controlled but there's unintended conversation going on with the teacher all the time. The children in the back seem to be less often noticed by the teacher.

(Research log 2 08.11.2012)

The students sitting on the first row were the boys in direct interaction with the teacher at all times through frequent verbal and non-verbal behaviour-related exchanges. The back row was quiet with children working independently and aware of RD, ID and expected behaviour. The following quotes illustrate some of the situations occurring in this classroom. Not surprisingly, Eyaz was sat at the front and actively engaged in exchanges with the teacher:

As the lesson goes on the children keep talking among themselves. The teacher stops her teaching when she feels it's too much or occasionally she raises her voice to attract their attention but that rarely lasts for long.

At the end of the lesson the teacher decides to let out in break children who 'have been good, not irritating me' – there is something here about teacher power discourse and how she views children's behaviour.

(Research log 2 8.11.12)

Eyaz volunteers to define a word and shushes other children so that they can hear him. He is more awake now, asked a question about key words he checks his book before answering. The teacher says that this is cheating, but Eyaz replies 'It's looking at information'. The teacher does not further acknowledge his actions on this.

(Research log 2 23.10.12)

In this last example, Eyaz made use of RD and ID to make the children quiet. He then built on the framing around Miss Grant's questioning strategy to classify his strategy as legitimate in the pedagogic discourse. By not acknowledging him further, Miss Grant

demonstrated control focusing on the practice of teaching instead of justifying her actions to Eyaz.

Miss Grant's understanding of Eyaz was crucial for framing his attitude and agency in the classroom: *'Eyaz is usually at different stages and moods – sometimes he is brilliant, other times naughty'*, she then stated that she did not like him in between as then he was difficult, perhaps moving away from RD and ID.

Miss Grant pointed out that Eyaz was one of the children who were noticed for his disruption rather than learning:

“Eyaz [...] is finding it a little tough and I think quite a bit of it is external influences like you can see that Mina and Nafisa have got nice friends, they found their place in the school and they are nice, hard-working group whereas Eyaz seems to think you know.. having a shirt untucked and turning up late to lessons and doing that is the cool thing to do and that's not really.. obviously you can help him much in life but that's how he's found his transition so I think you kind of know your friends and you know who you end up with is massive. And I also think for his is consequences like you spend you spend 4 hours of the day with one teacher and you know you can't get away with anything, you spend an hour and then you move an hour and when you move you can get away with your...”

Later on she continued:

“My only comfort is that I know it's not me as in like you can look up on his behaviour record and you can see he's behaving exactly the same way across the board and it's almost like the paths that he's chosen to take at the moment and.. we see it every single year and generally they calm down or they end up messing up completely and therefore getting moved down into lower sets and they behaving worse or they actually realise they're gonna get moved down and pick their feet up. I think it will depend which way he wants to go so [...] Eyaz I need... I need to crack but it takes a while.

(Miss Grant 12.12.2012 84-96; 106-112; 203-205)

In her explanation, Miss Grant seems to focus on a strategy how to work with him and his particular needs or motivations for certain behaviour. In contrast, other children are described through sweeping generalisations – the quiet ones with no issues, assuming that Eyaz needs extra attention and getting used to, hence Miss Grant's need to get to know and 'crack' him in order to achieve her teaching purposes. I wondered how much of this Eyaz was aware of. His mastery in managing the classroom in his own way was remarkable and his expressions were hinting the need for a 'justice discourse':

The teacher starts by talking about their test scores – ‘Most of the low ones are because of behaviour’, she puts the scores on the board and children get noisy and excited to look up their scores.

Eyaz – Target 4A, Test 1 4B, Test 2 4C

When seeing his results Eyaz remarks ‘How come I have that level?!’ Next thing, Eyaz gets sent out for behaviour and talking back with another boy. As they are outside the room [...] the class is quiet and settled. The teacher puts on a video and goes out to deal with Eyaz and the other boy. In a minute the boy walks in and she stays outside with Eyaz. She nips into the room to tell students to be quiet and listen to the video while she’s talking to Eyaz.

(Research log 2 10.12.2012)

The following two extracts highlight Eyaz’ s usual mode to respond to activities in lessons. They also highlight the engagement of the teacher with his remarks as valid points, despite not being relevant in pedagogic terms:

Eyaz gets asked for a definition and replies with ‘I don’t know’, choosing not to engage. The teacher immediately comments that he’s been talking all term and now doesn’t know the answer. Someone else is asked to define the word and Eyaz says ‘I know that’. Then the teacher says: ‘Then you do this one – ovary’.

Miss Grant interrupts the children to ask for quiet. Eyaz responds that he’s quiet, which of course is misleading but he seems to be paying attention to what the teacher is saying at least remotely, but not engaging with the lesson.

(Research log 2 08.11.2012)

Crucially, as in English the interactional context was changing significantly as a result of the behaviours and language Eyaz used to express his dissatisfaction. This was the recognition rule that because of the teacher’s close engagement, messing about with what was expected would not change the situation. At the same time the back row was almost unnoticed and unacknowledged because of the unequal distribution of the recognition rule and what texts changed interactions. The immediate responses to behaviour on the front row were even more discouraging for the rest at the back as it seemed they had no legitimate ways to be noticed or become engaged unless they act in certain ways. There is a contradiction here with the general classroom discourse and highlighting different forms of capital noticed in the classroom which shift away the attention from learning.

February Year 7: Summary or getting to be who you want to be

Half-way through Year 7, Eyaz seemed to have established his position in Aster Academy. He was more settled in lessons in terms of engaging with work, but retained

a clear stance on RD and ID – getting distracted with others around him, chatting, commenting that work was too easy. His attitude to work and distraction was interesting as he continued to reattribute the teachers' power and control of the classroom by implying that his engagement did not matter when the rules were not explained.

Eyaz's desire to be engaged by his own rules is an example of agency where he actively adjusted his positioning according to the situation and his own interpretation of it. In this respect, his agency had evaluative purpose with regards to the present moment, but also a projection function in determining future behaviour and positioning, as discussed by Emirbayer and Mische (1998). It was difficult to establish what he was doing at every given moment. However, this was an active position and choice to engage with a multiplicity of situations, each one important in their own right. His engagement seemed to serve different purposes - to respond to teachers, even by providing excuses; to engage with peers in an acceptable format for the circle; and to learn as the primary aim of the school. It seemed that these purposes had different rankings of importance for him. This is interesting as it sums up Eyaz's approaches to:

- engaging and impressing new actors in the field, e.g. the drama teacher, particular peers during lessons in Aster Academy;
- shifting interests in his surroundings – priority given to peers over lesson content;
- ability and willingness to follow the rules for his own reasons (habitus and capital); and
- acknowledging the boundaries set by authority figures and making excuses by shifting attention to the power discourse.

The transition he had made could be treated as a complex trajectory with inner struggles which subsided over time. This is relevant to his shifting behaviour patterns with different roles, genders and authority figures, the drama teacher was older male, particular and strict in his approach - Eyaz adapted accordingly and I never observed

him play at the boundaries of the field. Furthermore, the prospect to lose the role as result of misbehaviour or lack of ability was not desirable so again there was evidence for strategic navigation in the field to achieve personal goals.

I also witnessed Eyaz's encounters with the headteacher in Aster Academy on a few occasions, which go back to the gender-related behaviours. I did not observe him in serious trouble in primary school, apart from Miss Taylor's warning and consequences system. In secondary school, this shifted to a purposeful trouble-making experience where Eyaz was not worried about the consequences of this attitude when moving away from RD. I saw him walking the corridors behind the headteacher, a practice the management team employed with students who were in serious trouble and not allowed to go into lessons. I also saw the headteacher looking for Eyaz's class one morning, as Eyaz seemed to claim he did not know where his lesson was. These were interesting observations and particularly relevant to Miss Taylor's 'self-fulfilling prophecy' that Eyaz will end up impressing the wrong people and get in trouble as a result. In his case it seemed that school was more than education but an arena for social exposure and exchange, a field to test out different engagement strategies and their outcomes.

Eyaz was confident and reliant on his friendship circle in demonstration of his agency. By contrast, in the incident with the headteacher, Eyaz was embarrassed, quiet and out of control. This different image resulted from the power and authority figure shift carried into the picture by the male headteacher who made no excuses for misbehaviour in school. Prompted about his passion – football – there was a different engagement. He highlighted as one of the main differences with primary school that they used to play football a lot more. Seemingly the fact the rules need to be followed in football was not a problem for him as the discourse was different and perhaps the act of doing.

6.5 Moulded by rules and discourses in Hani's transition

Hani approached her transition in a content way and with caution in terms of adapting to the new context and fully understanding the rules of the game and pedagogic discourses.

July Year 6: Anticipating secondary school

From Bernstein's perspective due to limited schooling experience, Hani was relying on and actively seeking strong classification and framing to access activities in the classroom. This was providing her with a step-by-step guide how to do school due to her limited exposure to RD. Enlisting the teacher's extra support she had sought ways to modify ID in order to access the curriculum. The strong classification provided her with the distinguishing features of the context, e.g. what was expected of her. She was then able to apply the recognition rule that learning is important for her future success. However, not possessing the realisation rule as a mechanism to express her understanding, Hani appeared differently in Miss Taylor's conceptualisations. She was described as needy and not making the expected academic progress. Bernstein (2000) states that children in similar situations often could recognise the power relations, classification and their positioning in the classroom, but not possessing the realisation rules meant that they could not speak the legitimate classroom language. Hani had not acquired the pedagogic code but was aware of the classificatory system. As such, her experience of school was an experience of the classificatory system and her place in it which explains the way she was seeking strong classification to be able to position herself and make use of the structured pedagogic talk in the form of prompts or additional scaffolding.

Hani's quietness and engagement in lessons could be interpreted in other ways in relation to habitus and capital:

- she was not interested in the lesson content due to habitual differences and lack of experience with and understanding of the dominant schooling field;

- she was interested but unable to engage with the lesson content which was not made accessible;
- she was covertly engaging without demonstrating the signs of engagement recognised by a teacher; or
- she was used to other pedagogic models, hence unsure and uncomfortable with making mistakes.

These scenarios are a useful way of deconstructing Hani's experience of school. They provide different sets of lens to identify what is important in schooling and potential mismatches between teacher's expectations, children's understanding of the overall context and actual manifestations of engagement at the lesson level. The scenarios highlight the complexity of schooling, the multiple worlds that children navigate and their interaction in making sense of the world, particular individual circumstances that may have impact on schooling, but looked at through pedagogic lenses actually pre-define schooling outcomes.

As a recent arrival, Hani's primary schooling demonstrated how potential mismatches between the habitus, school field and pedagogic requirements work in practice. At times in lessons Hani was distracted by objects and people, actively trying to occupy herself:

Hani is bored playing with bits of cellotape at the teacher's desk, she's asking me when we are going to talk about transition – she wants to be involved. I ask her about her wearing jeans as part of the school uniform and she says that sometimes they are allowed. She tells me her uniform is at her sister's house where she often plays with her little nephew.

(Research log 1 295-298)

Actions like this suggested that she may not be interested in the content in terms of understanding and practicing the recognition rule. Her home and cultural environments provided other types of capital that were not recognised, used or valued at school. Therefore, she could not use these capital and dispositions to progress/succeed in her schooling. In addition to EAL, an obvious label for a child from a migration background, Miss Taylor identified Hani as having learning difficulties:

‘Some of that ties in with EAL but some of it doesn’t. so.. by now children who came at the same time with no English.. as say Hani.. Hani, Decca and Omid all came in Year 4 I think.. there’s children who came in Year 4 who are now working at national average so it’s not just their EAL that’s a problem, they’ve obviously got some kind of learning difficulty as well that hinders them.’

(Miss Taylor 20.06.2012 211-215)

A question I would want to explore further here is: Where is the agency of children in the statement that if they are not progressing as expected the reason would be learning difficulty? Is Hani seen as falling behind simply because of SEN? The reasoning of Miss Taylor seems oversimplified because it does not acknowledge the multitude of factors and histories that constitute a child’s virtual schoolbag. In fact, Miss Taylor’s view here is congruent with the RD as the discourse that sets the tone for pedagogic interactions and her role in the classroom. Hani’s case is linked to other factors - having arrived straight from Somalia, limited prior schooling, experience of the pedagogic code and discourse, literacy, effect of transitions. If the reason was solely lack of developed literacy, then it would take her longer to reach the level of her peers (Cummins 2000). Given the complexity, Hani’s language development was one aspect of her schooling and what was termed as learning difficulties could be debunked using Bernstein’s acquisition and transmission model (Figure 6.1) and Bourdieu’s habitus and field analysis which look at the bigger picture.

In terms of agency, the teacher’s language implied that some students did not actively try to develop and learn. Miss Taylor contrasted Hani with others who had arrived at the same time and made progress but these children’s background and experiences were not on par. The account seems a prescriptive and simplified version of making progress in academic contexts highlighting that children labelled as having EAL may struggle without uncovering the wider social and educational reasons for this. In terms of individual students, it highlights an apparent norm in schools justifying the absence of student specific knowledge and interest with ability and achievement. Similar generalisations in relation to ethnic background have been discussed by Walters (2007) as a powerful mechanism that may predetermine outcomes and engagement with

schooling. For Hani English language was a barrier, particularly in pedagogically framed circumstances – she would struggle to find the right words to speak in lessons even though she appeared confident and knowledgeable in using every-day English. As a result, Hani would rarely engage visibly with learning:

Hani is having great difficulties with spelling and building sentences correctly, she's asking me how to spell a lot of words for her poem, even as simple as 'medal' and 'competition'. Her sentences are not grammatically correct and she finds it difficult to think about what she wants to say, but her motivation is great and she does look for all the support she could get to do the work. Hani is writing a poem that spells down OLYMPICS – the simplest version

(Research log 1 25.06.2011)

Hani's need of support to complete the work was evident. Going back to making sense through seeking strong framing, Hani was using my presence in the classroom as an enabling factor. Asking how to spell, she clarified the rules of the pedagogic discourse and ensured access to ID identifying the steps she needed to take. Finding it difficult to identify things to say emphasised her position as a child learning EAL and lack of relevant experience with RD. It was already stated that the recognition and realisation rules are particularly difficult for children learning EAL who have not shared common pedagogic practice through their schooling. In this example Hani was attempting to engage with the task, but unable to do so due to the absence of specific arrangements such as alternative tasks and TA/bilingual support. The intense scaffolding in the form of one-to-one support may be a two-sided process where Hani readily engaged when supported, but did not attempt tasks on her own in the absence of support due to perceived need of structure.

Engagement is a difficult concept to pin down as practitioners in schools have different ideas about its manifestation. Engagement, in terms of part-taking and involvement, is also a culturally-framed idea. In schools in England engagement is described as confidence and being pro-active. From a theoretical point of view, this would mean recognition of the pedagogic framing and discourses and part-taking in the pedagogic interactions and text in legitimate/appropriate ways as judged by teachers. But the absence of such characteristics in Hani's schoolbag results from habitual and cultural

differences in doing school and interacting with adults. Feeling uncomfortable to make mistakes links with confidence but also with classificatory principles around schooling. It points to a different understanding of education and the classroom as a space where mistakes are made. Albeit teachers' efforts to encourage making mistakes and reflection to enable children to be confident and resilient, Hani's virtual schoolbag and dispositions were preventing her to engage in dominant discourses and practices in the classroom.

As the research progressed, Hani did not engage as I hoped at the beginning as she was not interested in writing or thinking about set topics. With the learning journal activity Hani chose to draw instead of writing after an initial attempt she did not think went well. The drawing intention then turned into cutting and sticking. To some extent this reflected my own lack of understanding of her habitus and capital and being unable to engage her in activities that she was passionate about, or a limitation of my methods which assumed past schooling and willingness to engage with school-like activities:

Hani: I hate science and I like erm I like going outside. I like maths and what else?

Decca: Oh yes, tell us what you like

Hani: I don't know.. I like erm... (taps pencil on the table) Can I write at home? I don't want to write in here?

(26.06.2012 109-120)

Over time I managed to build a picture of her expectations through informal engagement and chats during lessons. In terms of transition to Aster Academy, like the majority of children in her immediate friendship group she thought that the secondary school would be scary because of the number of new people, new massive buildings, and unfamiliarity with the context.

To sum up the primary school experiences of Hani, I will use the notion of her agency. Agency is part of her school life but not necessarily learning. Despite Hani's interest in some lessons and subject areas, she largely remained on the margins of engagement. The unclear specific strategies to engage children from different cultural backgrounds are one of the culprits. Learning the language seemed to be important in Hani's case as

the school and teachers did not recognise her cultural capital as a bilingual child. This is not unusual as there are studies of minority students becoming marginalised based on their backgrounds (Walters 2007, Bhatti 2007) and with the large Somali friendship group this is a very plausible explanation coupled with the teacher's statement that she did not know some of the children who arrived later in Year 4. Hani may have experienced difficulties academically, but due to relative fluency in every-day speech she was fluent socially. However, there were no systems in place to recognise and provide relevant support. Another issue was the lack of clarity over Hani's previous schooling and learning success which, if uncovered, would have contributed to the first point. As a result, Hani exercised her agency in engaging with accessible activities, e.g. asking about my research, and playing instead of writing.

October Year 7: A different type of transition that is meant to improve transition

Hani's Year 7 classroom was located in the far back end of the school building in a corridor through 6th Form and into the transition rooms. In the classroom children sat in small groups organised by Miss Higgins, a young friendly teacher particularly interested in my project. She was coordinating my research within the school so in a sense she was the gatekeeper. In her classroom, Miss Higgins had partnered children with peers sharing a background and language so they catch up with learning and have someone to translate for them, but she would often rearrange them if the arrangements were not working as intended. The internal classification of the transition classes was weak due to the primary-like thematic curriculum and continuation from one subject to the other. Miss Higgins was teaching everything except for music, PE and ICT. A weak classification also worked well with the RD and ID because all the children in this class were catching up with English and not aware of RD and ID in the same ways as those who had been through years of schooling in England. However, there were strongly classified aspects of learning in this same classroom. Literacy, for example, was always

first lesson in the morning, following an established sequence of activities which enabled children to develop their language skills and sense of routines.

A perceived advantage of the one-teacher transition class was that Miss Higgins was able to get to know her students, support them and provide relevant engagement opportunities. Miss Higgins mentioned that a group of girls, including Hani, liked to stay behind during breaks and chat to her. This was not common practice for Hani in primary school. Miss Higgins' approachability implied more fluidity between formal and informal learning and finding opportunities for social engagement.

While in primary school Hani was picking objects to play with in lessons and making excuses to seek support, in Miss Higgins' lessons she had fewer opportunities to disengage. Miss Higgins would collect objects that were distracting Hani giving her no options other than the lesson content. I thought this attention was helpful and Hani did not seem to mind. She liked her lessons and the teacher. Hani's positive dispositions to schooling in Aster Academy and development of a more personal relationship transformed her to be more visibly engaged with schooling. Liking the teacher meant that she wanted to make a good impression through her engagement and achievement, prompting intrinsic motivation to engage with Miss Higgins despite the strong framing. Based on her observations, Miss Higgins quickly identified Hani's areas for development and opportunities that would benefit her learning and social skills. Hani signed up for a social group to boost her confidence and was closely observed by Miss Higgins to ensure she was becoming more forthcoming:

'When you do have somebody all the time when it was the opportunity for the counselling for Hani her name would come to me because when I see her in different situations in school or at lunch and lunch duties or in the morning when *she comes past sometimes or in the evening or lining up she's very different, different person that when she's one to one and when she's in front of the class* so that counselling session I asked her and she seems to think it's good for her so I hope it does help her to become more... [confident] *I think it is actually she doesn't seem that she believes that she's really that good sometimes* but more times she was really, really pleased with her points and she was really pleased in the history lesson so she is very, very pleased with herself a lot now so I think that's good!

(Miss Higgins 29.11.2012 358-364, my emphasis)

Miss Higgins' narration reveals the development of effective relationships with Hani's needs at the heart. Miss Higgins' efforts to recognise her as an individual with strengths and weaknesses play an important role both in social and pedagogic terms. Being separated from her primary school friends revealed a different picture of Hani, and more so as an individual. This meant that Miss Higgins could assess the individuality of Hani without getting distracted by the group aspects of identity. For Hani, this meant that she had to establish her positioning individually instead of hiding behind a group perspective. This uncovered an important part of her habitus – Hani's dispositions seemed to be adapting to the contexts where she was spending more time. For instance, during the first half-term she developed confidence and contributed to lessons more actively, but after the break, Hani came back shy and withdrawn. This shows the role of contexts in terms of dispositions adjustment and navigation through schooling.

The quote also shows identity options highlighted by Miss Higgins – confidence, believing in oneself, being pleased with oneself as opposed to Hani's initial lack of these. Miss Higgins positions Hani in the classroom context through a set of binaries which in Bourdieu's terms is a contrasting language that positions children formally on the one hand, while providing them with a language to construct their identities in particular and pre-specified ways by a teacher (Nolan 2012) on the other hand. These binaries seem to identify a positive or negative positioning as shaped by teachers, e.g. a child is good or not good, confident or not, which assumes lack of flexibility and adaptation of children's positioning in changing circumstances. The reality, however, is different, proving that teachers' understanding of children formed in relation to positioning in the field in pedagogic terms, often dismiss children's agency in shaping their identities and the idea of having more than one persona (Garcia 1999). However, school can provide opportunities that highlight children's agency in a different set of circumstances. For instance, the counselling sessions for Hani provide a legitimate way

in which agency could be acknowledged. Accumulating relevant capital and engagement strategies in this context, children can then be equipped for exercising agency in the RD and the classroom.

Literacy

In literacy Hani's class was following a structured approach with repeated activities every morning that provided consistency for the children and teacher. This structure in terms of ID was a scaffolding scheme but also prompt for children to engage more readily as they knew the sequences. In this class with higher levels of language support needed, the pedagogic structure and strong classification were necessary to organise teaching and learning and activate the underdeveloped recognition and realisation rules. At the same time Miss Higgins shifted the framing moving from strong to weak providing different opportunities for children to engage— children could be teachers leading the lesson in the familiar format and then back to strong framing of her role. The benefit of this approach was that different people orchestrated learning at different times; therefore there was widely shared responsibility and ownership of the classroom. The strong framing that Hani sought in primary school was evident here enabling her to engage through awareness of ID. Miss Higgins was taking extra care in guiding and signposting children while ensuring engagement. Below is described Hani's participation in a reading task and peer feedback:

Hani reads slowly and breaking the words into parts. One student is asked to give her feedback for her reading. She raises the issue of confidence, saying that Hani should be more confident in her reading and feeling the characters she reads [meaning letters].. [...]As the children are occupied with the activity, Miss Higgins passed me a slip about the creative and social skills group she has recommended to Hani. [...] Hani is asked to read again to finish the paragraph. This time she reads a little bit louder, taking on the feedback. While she's reading, the student next to her points in the text and follows where she is reading. Hani has difficulty pronouncing 'shade' and Miss Higgins helps her to pronounce it and asks her what shade is. Hani immediately shies away with her palm in front of her mouth and says 'I forgot', seems like she is shy to admit that she doesn't know.

(Research log 2 07.11.2012)

In literacy lessons Hani seemed engaged and at the rare times of being distracted, the teacher would gently point her towards the expected behaviour. This ID was quickly

recognised by Hani making the recognition rule effective as she was on- task. The reason for this increased engagement in comparison to Eyaz's lessons was not the stark difference in content. Although there was more explicit focus on language and literacy in Transition, the content was similar to the rest of the classes – completing gaps, writing sentences, letters, poems, reports and so on. The main difference in the pedagogic discourse was the strategies used by Miss Higgins to enable children develop interests not only in the lesson but in their peers. She achieved this using:

- fast-paced questioning around key words or topics;
- investigation and use of children's prior knowledge through questions and explanations;
- reading of stories as a whole class activity and narrating understanding;
- small group work and peer support; and
- differentiated worksheets.

Miss Higgins' interaction with the children was active and engaging in itself. The use of peer feedback, small group work and streamlined rewards systems where demerits were not used as motivational strategy, added to the discourse and structure leading to visible engagement:

The wall clock in the classroom is slow this morning and the teacher sets this up as a little activity to finish the lesson:

Teacher: There is a problem that we have in this room, what is it?

Students: No one is listening?... Tidy up?... Visitor?... Read well?

Teacher: Read well? That's not a problem, is it? That's good!

Student: Moving slow?...

Teacher: It's a bigger thing to do with lessons, to do with time...

Students: Time is change?... Cold?

Hani: We need to go?

Teacher: The clock is slow... Why is it so slow?

Student: Battery

Teacher: The battery is gone...

(Research log 2 18.10.2012)

The suggestions that children gave were all related to the RD and realisation rules in the classroom – they made sense of the question by comparing what was usually examined and commented on by the teacher. Prompted to look beyond the classroom discourse, children made use of classificatory systems to guess the answer, which is a

typical strategy for those EAL. It employs relevant cultural and linguistic capitals to decode the context and apply new rules in different ways through conversion strategies. From a pedagogic discourse point of view, this is a possibility for children learning EAL to use what they have already learned. Being aware of the classificatory principles gives them a blueprint to apply in different situations, which albeit mechanical, is a useful first step in making sense of more abstract concepts through contextualising them with classificatory principles and pointers to what may be required. For children learning EAL, this strategy is particularly important as supposedly they do not hold embedded views and classification knowledge in the light of the dominant culture and discourse. In moments like this Miss Higgins was using the context to create learning situations which were engaging for all children and they could contribute. She was working on developing contextual knowledge as the foundations for more advanced learning.

Science

Science lessons were usually taking place in the transition classroom, but occasionally, the science labs were used for experiments. Science was not taught weekly. Miss Higgins would organise her termly timetable and teach science in a block once she had introduced the vocabulary so that children were able to access the content. This meant starting with context specific knowledge (horizontal discourse) to prepare students for more abstract concepts, exemplifying the need for scaffolding and strong classification in order to introduce appropriate language and access to content in vertical discourse terms. The framing was more explicit and strong with ID visible to the students. Like literacy, science was highly structured in terms of content and expectations where children were working to set levels:

On the board are the learning objectives, which are differentiated according to children's levels:

(Lvl 2) All: Name 4 organs and where they are in the body

(Lvl 3) Most: Name 6-7 organs and say what their job is

(Lvl 4) Some: Be able to produce writing about organs and what their job is using scientific language (1-2 sentences)

The students have not done science yet this year so the teacher says that their levels are not known because of this. So that means that the levels will be determined based on their work this week. She then asks them what levels they

think they will be working at showing by raising their hands: 'Who will be working at level 2? Level 3? Level 4?' Hani raises her hand that she will be working at level 4.

(Research log 2 15.10.2012)

Levels, as a form of pedagogic text, were a marker of ability and what students can and should do through strong framing and classification. This was a typical ID for a secondary school and an easier way to frame learning in terms of expectations and achievement as part of the NC. Miss Higgins' strategy of embedding self-assessment was a way to ensure students recognise their own abilities and level leading to weak framing and development of the recognition rule in discussing what learning is for. Hani aimed to work at level 4 according to her self-selection, but in reality her work was at level 3 partly due to the implications of not being a confident user of English yet. In contrast, her maths work was at level 4.

During science, Hani found spelling and writing difficult in her attempts to apply the realisation rule:

Independent work – the children have to label the organs on their own – it looks like the same task is repeated in different scenarios – class, group, pair, individually to reinforce learning and help children memorise the concepts. After completing the words, children are reminded and asked to check the spelling, there is a list of the words at the bottom of the page that they can refer to. Even though the words have been made available, most of the children have not noticed them and they have made lots of mistakes.

Most of Hani's words are with spelling mistakes written in the way she hears them, e.g. 'stomak'.

(Research log 2 15.10.2012)

This example demonstrates Hani's engagement with RD and ID. Although she is aware of ID and task instructions, having EAL and difficulty making sense of the work in the dominant ways lead her to produce different variations of the required outcomes. EAL in Hani's case was related to gaps in verbal and written tasks. However, the context was supportive with strongly framed focus on language, learning and reinforcing strategies that all learners could benefit from. Some of the strategies employed by Miss Higgins to enable children to memorise new words and spellings included:

- individual and group repetition, which Hani enjoyed. These provided her with an opportunity to try new things and take an active part in the lesson. The group nature of the activity made her shyness disappear;
- focus on spelling out loud where sound sequence was learned through strong framing as in literacy; and
- learning in context – using new words with their meanings so that children remember the words within sentences they can use.

In addition to classroom-based science, lessons with experiments provided exciting opportunities for ‘learning through doing’:

Children are all eager to ‘be doing’. There is not enough space for all of them but they all want to be involved and are not happy about observing. I have to keep reminding them who is doing what. Most could not even reach the equipment in the fuss. There was much more focus on seeing and being there than actually observing and articulating what was happening. The teacher kept emphasising the importance of teamwork and having roles but that went on unnoticed. Some managed to write up their results but not all and there was no clear guidance what was happening even though the teacher kept saying about correct, accurate wording and appropriate terminology. When the children saw it was lunch time, some wanted to leave and let the teacher know immediately, others were still in the room 10 minutes later.

(Research log 2 29.11.2012)

In the experiment Hani actively sought my support with the tasks due to my framed position as an insider at two levels – knowing her from primary school and being able to help. She was engaged in learning through doing as the rest of the class. The experiment was to find out about the melting point of chocolate working with two types of chocolate – plain and with fruit:

“Will this affect how quickly it melts? Who thinks dairy milk is going to melt the quickest? Why?” – The teacher starts by helping the children form a hypothesis.

(Research log 2 29.11.2012)

Miss Higgins started the lesson with strong framing and a prediction, following science ID. This was interesting because Miss Higgins was not trained to teach science or supported by science staff and yet she had successfully adopted the relevant discourse.

I was helping Hani – focussed on spelling, getting ideas, [I notice that she is] more independent than primary school. She is quite active now but when picked to report she becomes all shy even though she had volunteered.

(Research log 2 29.11.2012)

Hani was actively engaging trying to use science keywords. Later on in a discussion she described what happened in the lesson and her correct prediction:

“Mine was correct because.. I said that Dairy Milk [...] Because.. are no fruits in it and I was doing you know, I was doing them.. [...] then made with nuts and not , it takes 1 hour to do it, I did it still it didn’t melt! I did it and it still didn’t melt [...] It was so hot, I get a milk one, get a milk one, about two minutes she melts. You have solid in it, the fruit and the nut, and some hard. [...] Would you melt this? Can you melt this? [pointing to the desk]”

(07.12.2012 460-470)

This is evidence of Hani operationalising the ID through the task to benefit everyday language and communication – which is very important in EAL teaching and learning. She applied the melting solids principle to other objects and justified the possible outcomes with her existing knowledge and experimental experience. This was evidence of using a classification principle learned through pedagogic text and interaction with the ID in lessons and applied in a different context. In this respect, science experiments provided important knowledge about the real world in terms of making sense of objects’ properties (horizontal discourse). Miss Higgins’ intention to prepare children for fast-paced learning was working and indeed providing them with necessary frames to use. Learning through doing and active engagement was beneficial to Hani. The practical side of science was exciting, even more so when going into the science rooms was a treat. Perhaps this was difficult in terms of learning outcomes as they all wanted to experience the ‘doing’ even before seeing the tasks. There was a sense of lack of patience and agitation due to the new environment that they were experiencing at the same time as doing the lesson and the weak framing due to circumstances beyond Miss Higgins’ control. Miss Higgins was recognising how the shift between rooms stood in the way but she was not able to regulate the context as the new environment was different and lacking the established structure. There was perceived lack of support which led to drawing on emergency resources such as my presence, to enable the children to work with the equipment correctly and complete experiments without accidents. The strong framing seemed to have dissolved. However, there were potential

barriers to fully utilised ‘mainstream learning’ for the transition classes in the lack of additional support from the science department and Miss Higgins’ lack of specialised knowledge. The latter is not a negative point – Miss Higgins could only have one specialism through training, but in the transition classes she had to draw on a number of these to deliver relevant teaching considering the particular needs of the children.

February Year 7: Summary or reflecting on how we got where we are

At the beginning of Year 7 Hani was timid engaging with lessons or the research, however, as her confidence grew she became chattier. This was linked to developing her dispositions and positioning in the school field, but also growing familiarity with RD and ID. Having the attention of Miss Higgins and a supportive environment, Hani grew confident to try new things and make mistakes. While in the primary school poem example she was reluctant to spell unknown words, in Aster Academy she was giving it a go with me present in both cases:

Me: Hu-ma-ni-ti-es

Hani: N T.. Y [...] yeah, yeas, I forgot the E S

Hani: It have.. see dyoxygen a [...] dioxygen and dioxygen [...] Dioxygen and oxygen

Me: Oxygen and carbon dioxide?

Hani: Yea, right, I like it but I can’t say that word. I can’t say it, I don’t know how to say it

Naadiyo: Right

Hani: Thickkk..

Naadiyo: Oh, right is thicker than the left one

Hani: Noooo, is a right something something left something something

Naadiyo: Oh, yeas...

(07.12.2012 582-594)

The second part of the quote shows how the girls make sense of science concepts and key vocabulary together in a weakly framed environment. As they were not in the same class and the situation occurred during one of my research slots, they were trying to make sense of their separate science lessons taught by different teachers telling me about the lesson. I thought the practice of bringing together these experiences was interesting because they were looking for understanding through their virtual schoolbags and the similarities in the school field – an expectation that they would be

taught the same lesson and would be able to construct their experiences in a coherent account.

Looking at this critical incident with Bernstein's theoretical lenses, it uncovers rich operationalisation of the learning context in a weakly framed informal situation. Interested in their learning experiences I was recontextualising the school context providing weak classification and weak framing that children used to talk about school and lessons. To make use of this, both girls were transferring the classification and framing of their lessons into the informal situation, using their growing understanding of RD and ID to reconstruct the episode. The last sentence where Hani identifies the gaps in her understanding is a testament to her growing understanding of ID and how to apply the realisation rule to classroom interactions and beyond. These rules appear much more developed and in line with ID expectations showing the long way Hani had gone from Poppins Primary School in developing her skills, confidence, engagement and learning, but also ability to apply her learning beyond the classroom. In Bourdieu's terms, this process relates to capital accumulation and mastering of conversion strategies where Hani can more readily make use of the rules of the game to position herself in relation to schooling and teachers' expectations. This happens through her ability to fit in within the field and produce relevant modes of participation

Framing secondary school subjects, Hani used the following descriptors:

| MATHS | ENGLISH | SCIENCE |
|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Enjoyable</i> | <i>Difficult</i> | <i>Useful</i> |
| <i>Challenging</i> | <i>Not interesting</i> | <i>Interesting</i> |
| <i>Fun</i> | | |

Figure 6.3: Subject descriptors activity

She eagerly added mathematics, which was perceived as easy due to the lack of literacy work. She enjoyed the straightforward use of numbers. Science was described as interesting and useful in contrast to primary school experiences. There was a suggestion that in primary school science involved too much writing, but the stronger classification in Aster Academy in relation to other subject areas meant that science

was significantly different and providing new forms of engagement. While English was seen as difficult and not interesting due to language and literacy difficulties, maths and science were more positively described based on classificatory principles around their usefulness, practical and logical characteristic where Hani was able to 'top-up' her knowledge without having gaps in the dominant discourse acting as a barrier.

In terms of social relationships and friendships, in Aster Academy Hani found herself distanced from her primary school friendship group as they were in different classes. In breaks, however, they could get together and chat outside. In relation to Hani's experience, she was using more widely some of the ID and classificatory principles to communicate to friends on a daily basis as in the spelling example. In terms of pedagogic discourse this is her developing recognition rule and using it across contexts. In her case of little internalised pedagogic experience, the strategies she learned in the classroom become a powerful tool to communicate in different situations. This also contributed to her increased confidence and security in the context which allowed her to focus on interactions beyond making a mistake.

Hani was consistent in making sense of the rules of the game, but also moulded by these in different ways. While the first encounters with schooling in the UK were not as positive, Aster Academy provided a host of new opportunities and a fresh start on its own terms. There her identity was productively shaped in a new way that contributed to improving her chances of educational success. Although Hani's agency and engagement were not as explicit as Eyaz's she was nevertheless an active participant in her transition.

6.6 Summary

In this chapter I presented two case studies viewed through theoretical lenses to highlight transitions between primary and secondary school. My focus on social aspects of schooling was theorised with Bourdieu's thinking tools, and particularly habitus, capital, dispositions and their operation in the school field. The academic aspects of

transition such as lessons, engagement and learning were viewed through Bernstein's pedagogic discourse and its structuring functions. The two cases were purposefully selected to exemplify transition to the same secondary school to illustrate the different lived experiences of the children. There are notions of ability and achievement discussed as part of the discourses as these play an important role in shaping children's identities.

What is important in this analysis is the use of EAL. In Eyaz's case EAL was not a barrier in academic terms because of his familiarity with the recognition and realisation rules applied to the context, pedagogic discourses and relevant capitals. Although he was bilingual and bicultural, the main concerns of his teachers were not language but behaviour. In Hani's case, EAL was much more pronounced in both social and academic terms. EAL was actually a structuring element in her transition experience and education. An important take away point here is the diversity within EAL and what it means. Surely speaking the language is critical, but it is just one aspect of the transition experiences. Focusing on EAL as a primary barrier to learning shifts the attention away from the cases described in the chapter. Each of the cases was built on the individual characteristics and strengths of the children shaping their transition alongside active participation in lessons and socially.

Eyaz's behaviour in Aster Academy was substantially different from the moment he entered the field as a contradiction to the way he was in primary school and could be interpreted as evidence of agency in making active choices and engagement with the new environment which are only possible in the context of newness and could be captured over time. Eyaz seemed to operate a number of shifting identities in the secondary school. He was preoccupied with doing 'his own thing' and 'doing his own version of the classroom'. Difficulty to engage coupled with a desire to be noticed did not work well in class. Eyaz was demonstrating a relative playfulness in dealing and navigating through classroom rules and pedagogic discourses in order to negotiate

personal benefit and treatment in the classroom. This included a negotiation of control and power relationships by knowing the boundaries due to experience with the schooling system but still teasing and testing. Eyaz's strategy to schooling and transitions could be linked with curiosity whether the field would resist or oppose, or an attempt to change the status quo by renegotiating boundaries. It could also be a sign of addressing implicit insecurity –whether the teacher will be always there for him.

In both settings Hani was in the lowest set due to academic results and perceived difficulties with the language. SEN was not brought up in the secondary school where different classification and framing provided different interactional practices and possibilities. Hani was placed in the EAL class as her underachievement was viewed as resulting from unfamiliar language which turned into an enabling opportunity to be seen as a good student and capable of achieving through a change of framing. The explicit support with language and learning helped her progress and the involvement of the teacher was prominent. Miss Higgins took the time to get to know all the children and support them individually without making preliminary assumptions what they should know. This was beneficial for Hani as there was no benchmark to be compared against – e.g. other children who arrived in the same year but progressed faster in primary school. In this respect, the secondary school was an enabling environment and an opportunity to be recognised individually. Not being in the same class as her friends meant that she had to take individual decisions, engage and talk to everyone in English. In the next chapter I look at four additional case studies to explain children's experiences.

Chapter 7:

Transition stories through theoretical lenses

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I continue to use the theoretical concepts applied in Eyaz and Hani's cases. Using the same approach as in Chapter 6, I developed four additional cases to illustrate how the framework is applicable to individual circumstances. However, the cases are presented here in a much more condensed form, focusing particularly on explaining the data theoretically. Having already illustrated the use of the theoretical concepts in Chapter 6 relating them to data, the remaining four case studies were further coded in relation to the theoretical concepts. For each of these cases, I selected three broad concepts in relation to the research questions to illustrate a condensed version of the framework. The cases are organised around these themes rather than the chronological approach adopted with Eyaz and Hani. In the process of constructing these case accounts, I actively tried to acknowledge my teacher voice in the analysis and consequently changed it in relation to the theoretical framework.

Two of the children enrolled in schools other than Aster Academy (Ayanna and Hakim) which provided opportunity to theorise experiences in different contexts and school cultures as described in the case selection strategy. The other two (Taj and Subira) were both in Aster Academy but in different sets and classes from Eyaz and Hani. I explain the different experiences of these children from a theoretical perspective, positing the changes in habitus and fields in the course of transition and looking at the way the pedagogic discourses and rules structure their classroom experiences. The following accounts are by no means complete and exhaustive. Their role is to illustrate different

perspectives and explanations of transitions and schooling as experienced by the children moving away from what teachers think these experiences might be or how well children attain in pedagogic terms.

I begin with Subira's case which presents a different experience and engagement from that of Eyaz and Hani, although they all went to Aster Academy. Then I discuss Ayanna's case of transferring to Cluster High away from her social circle. The next case is Taj's transition to Aster Academy highlighting processes of transformation. The last story is Hakim's who moved to Bloom High and developed different positioning. The theoretical framework is used as lens to understand children's experiences and engagement at school and the chapter culminates with four explicit stories of transition.

7.2 Subira's critical approach to schooling

Habitus and capital

In her virtual schoolbag Subira had knowledge of two languages and cultural contexts, love for art, passion for learning new languages, a supportive home environment and understanding of the importance of school. Originally Somali, Subira's migration story was different in bringing her to Kenya with Swahili as her home language. It was not clear whether Subira recognised this positioning in relation to the Somali girls as important or not. She already had a group of friends since nursery and thus did not seek to identify with the Somali children who arrived later.

Subira possessed the social and cultural capital that counts in schools. She could be described as an 'ideal student'; one who is perceived by teachers to learn and engage readily, which was in contrast with other groups of children. Children with highly aligned habitus and dispositions and the necessary capital were pointed out as desirable learners, but I explore further the idea of children's individual positioning in the field and in relation to RD. Moving away from the teachers' point of view, there is a notion of children's coping strategies, agency and choice. Individual habitus and

dispositions are crucial and in Subira's case these could be in contradiction with teachers' perceptions. I use the theoretical concepts to investigate this idea further.

Positioning in relation to pedagogic discourses

In lessons, Subira demonstrated awareness of the RD which was evident in her engagement with ID and her familiarity with the power relations in the pedagogic discourse. She successfully applied classificatory principles to deal with weakly framed classroom interactions. For instance, continuing with class work into break, Subira demonstrated the use of the realisation rule to advance her positioning and accumulate capital in the classroom subfield in order to progress in pedagogic terms. Her habitus was clearly informed by the school field which put her at an advantaged position in her teachers' eyes in comparison to children who did not recognise the rules and language because of cultural and symbolic capital difference. At the same time, Subira would structure her choices in lessons and find things to do that would maintain her positioning without explicitly aiming to accumulate relevant capitals like other children (e.g. Eyaz). This was her dominant strategy in both primary and secondary school where engagement was seen by teachers as 'correct' positioning through the realisation rule in acceptable behaviours and academic work.

Teachers positioned Subira in the 'ideal student' discourse which did not capture her agency and rationale for this approach. Her dispositions, although seemingly in line with the official discourse, were actually a coping strategy within the field. In a weakly framed research context she mentioned she did not like some lessons and others were boring but her behaviour and engagement in these did not differ. For this reason teachers would see her as an engaged and very able learner without further in-depth investigation. She was in the high achieving group before SATs and her expected results were among the highest. She kept working with the girls from the same set after the exams as part of the social and academic capital accumulated through the academic year and reinforcing their advantaged positioning in relation to teachers and ability.

In Aster Academy, she was again in the top set, described as a very able student. She was quiet and diligent in lessons - similar positioning to Poppins Primary School. Although seemingly engaged with learning, when asked to describe her lessons, she mentioned insufficient challenge in relation to her expectations:

In High School
I think this school is good and strict but safe.
The lessons are quite fun and easy.
This is a table showing what lessons are fun and which are not

| Lesson | FUN What makes a subject fun is doing practicals. | AVERAGE Average is when we do worksheets. | BORING Boring is when we do LOTS AND LOTS of WRITING. |
|-----------|--|--|--|
| Maths | | v | |
| English | | | v |
| Science | | v | |
| R.E | | | v |
| ICT | | v | |
| P.E | v | | |
| Music | v | | |
| TECH | v | | |
| Humanit | | | v |
| Geography | | v | |
| ART | v | | |
| Business | | v | |
| BIE | | v | |
| Spanish | v | | |
| German | v | | |
| | 6 | 6 | 3 |

I've come to a conclusion that there are less boring lessons than there is of average and fun lessons. That's good.

Figure 7.1: Subira's learning journal

This is evidence of Subira making sense of school on her own applying classificatory principles in an interview - a situation of weak framing, classification and recognition rule in relation to RD. She demonstrated different attitudes towards different subjects based on pedagogic discourses and interactional practices in lessons. Her description of 'boring' related to learning through doing and focused on being more active in the classroom.

Agency and engagement

Her higher abilities perhaps meant that she was completing work quickly and did not get further challenges. This is interesting because while someone like Eyaz would disturb the pedagogic text and interactional practice to change to something that suits him better, Subira was repositioning and finding her space as a quiet student actively choosing to be that way. This consideration begins to disturb the idea that Subira is an 'ideal student'. The ideal student perception supports her identity in school and in lessons but is in contradiction with Subira's accounts of lessons which was a surprising shift for some of her teachers. They in turn tried to justify their classroom practice that resulted in a lack of challenge for some:

‘I think what I’ve tried to do is I’ve tried to do is may be dumb it down a bit [lesson] and what I should be doing is dumb it down a bit but still giving them still the more able stuff I think but I tend to try to explain things and that’s probably a fault of mine but rather than sort of letting them work things out for themselves. I try to sort of explain things and that’s not always the best way’

(Mr Potter 13.02.2013 103-109)

Subira's effective engagement with RD was evident in the adopted teacher-like language and tendency to give examples rather than answers to questions. When asked about 'big words' in science, she responded 'Tell me what systematic means?' (08.11.12 366). This is an example of her understanding of classroom discourse, applying strong framing from the classroom in a weakly organised situation. Bernstein points this as a strategy employed by children who are familiar with the pedagogic code (2000) and the implicit rules of the field where teachers tend to ask the questions seeking understanding. She had mastered this attitude even though it never came across in lessons where Subira seemed engaged. However, I had begun to accumulate contradictions disturbing her image. She skilfully impersonated her teachers to criticise and highlight the limitations of the field and projected her own position within it.

The science rooms were initially described as 'so nice' with 'real stuff like [...] test tubes that are made out of glass' (08.11.2012 263). She then explained how to use the equipment: 'You take a Bunsen burner, you stick it in there, you put that one, you take

some fire and put it now on the Bunsen burner then to change if you want it really hot, the burning fire, you move the little thing at the bottom...' (08.11.2012 313-315). However, she liked science when doing practicals and described the rest of it as difficult in that teacher-y way: 'As you can see, there's many long words that we don't know, for example radiation' (16.11.2012 357).

The more we talked about science, the more Subira's attitude seemed to change to frame the subject as 'not fun except for the fun parts'. She became more critical:

'See, there's the gas, you use the pipe and you use fire, that's at the start. But now we get a book and we write in it and all of this equipment is out and we're not using it at all.'

(16.11.2012 454-456)

Miss Martin also described Subira as a 'star pupil' who did not deflect her attention from teaching while the majority of the class interpreted the weak framing as lack of structure and opportunities to find their own ways of doing the lesson. The teacher's coping strategy was to ignore them in order to teach. Although Miss Martin claimed to focus on the children who chose to learn, Subira was not feeling challenged enough and perhaps her needs were not fully recognised:

'[In English] it's just the writing you know. [In primary school] we wrote biographies and stuff.. and here we like learn loads of big words and stuff, and they have this.. piece of paper that has all those big words and the definitions next to it, it's like a table and then you stick that'

(08.11.2012 200-221)

She seemed to quickly grasp the field and use this to her advantage in a range of situations, including socially:

Subira: I'm gonna get a nurture pass today. This is just a note that my nurture pass will be issued soon.. So I can just go.

Me: Why do you get a nurture pass? What do you need it for?

Subira: [...] It's like if you don't have friends but loads of people just use it for dinner.. because you get dinner first.

Me: Ok, do you have lots of friends?

Subira: Yes, everyone does, they just take the passes... Dinner is the main thing in here.

(08.11.2012 378-395)

This point relates to navigating the field and exercising different agency with different people – with me and with friends she could openly discuss and criticise the status quo, fully aware that she could not change it while accumulating social capital. In lessons she was getting on with work and expectations to accumulate relevant educational capitals. In this respect, her strategy of working out what capitals count where, her skilful navigation between social and academic aspects of learning was not much different from Eyaz. A similarity between the two of them was their explicit knowledge of discourses and schooling which gave them advantage in playing the game. However, they adopted very different strategies and achieved different recognition and status/positioning in the eyes of teachers.

7.3 Ayanna's journey to visibility

Habitus and capital in the course of transition

Like many Somali children, Ayanna had extensive experience of migrations between countries, schools and languages, which packed her virtual schoolbag with dispositions and skills to manage changes in adapting to new fields. In social situations she pursued capital recognised by her friendship circle, but this was not valued by the school, which contributed to implicit social disadvantage in relation to the academic subfield. Associating her with the rest of the Somali group, Miss Taylor failed to recognise her individuality in a similar way to Hani. The shared cultural and linguistic capital had a bonding role (Spaaij 2012) bringing the girls closer together in their shared experiences of primary school in England. Ayanna was reliant on the support of this closely knit community operating in isolation within the school field. It provided a space to develop identity options as part of her heritage as opposed to values in the dominant context causing tensions and resistance on the part of the teacher who although willing to help children academically, was hesitant in understanding culture, friendships and social capital as a support mechanism. In addition to this, language played an important part in further separating the experiences of Ayanna and Miss Taylor's understanding of her.

It prevented meaningful engagement leading to misrecognition of the types of capital that are important in educational contexts. The ones Ayanna possessed were not seen as important while the ones she needed were not explicitly visible to pursue.

None of Ayanna's friends were transferring to Cluster High which caused anxiety in relation to the change of circumstances. However, the contents of her virtual schoolbag highlighted conversion strategies in responding to the changes:

- attempting to change her parents' plans and go to Aster Academy instead – building on imagined agency in making decisions about secondary school that would bring about change allowing her to benefit from the capital accumulated through her friendship circle; and
- using her friends' transition elsewhere as an excuse not to explore new opportunities and capitals presented through Cluster High - concerned about leaving behind her comfort zone and friendship she was drawing on her own personal experiences and continuously invested capital in maintaining her friendship circle.

Although the first strategy was not feasible, the second one presented a viable option to adopt past experiences of making friends in future encounters as means of agency. After an open day in Cluster High she made a list of new friends demonstrating how her dispositions and capital accumulated in Poppins Primary enabled her to draw options from past experiences.

Academically, Ayanna described her EAL background as an obstacle restricting her access to the school field and classroom subfield and ability to accumulate relevant educational capital. She emphasised the importance of learning English to ensure success:

'My current level is a level 3. But Miss said in the test that we did the first one I got a level 3 but we did after two half terms we did another SAT but a practice SAT and I got a level 4! So Miss said I'll get a level 4 or level 5 because she's got proof that I've done better on this one.'

(09.07.2012 164-167)

Reflecting on her achievement in the practice test, she highlighted that success meant improving her levels in English. In theoretical terms, this success is related to the accumulation of relevant capital as a feasible option in following the dominant educational discourse. Replicating the practice results and relying on the teacher's prediction would enable her positioning as a successful student in relation to pedagogic framing and compensate for EAL from her perspective. Later on, Cluster High presented a different discourse in the way teachers engaged children in the classroom – she used readily available scaffolding structures and direct teacher support to address gaps in her educational experiences – an aspect that was missing in Poppins Primary School but contributed to capital accumulation in the secondary school.

Agency

Ayanna managed her behaviour differently in social and academic contexts adjusting her identity and positioning to make use of different dispositions. Being loud and playful with her friends reflected her social capital and belonging alongside explicit agency. In primary school lessons, Ayanna was a quiet and passive recipient of support from Miss Taylor who maintained the assumption that this particular group would not achieve without additional support– a recurring instructional discourse related to the positioning of children learning EAL and their ability to access the curriculum. These shifts suggested that the teacher had only a limited version of Ayanna in her mind and teaching practice while Ayanna was reacting and acting in different ways depending on the surroundings and expectations. In Bourdieu's terms this is misrecognition where the teacher's assumptions are mistaken but linked to a bigger network of assumptions embedded in the dominant discourse as ways of knowing beyond questioning. In this respect, Miss Taylor is not rejecting Ayanna's engagement consciously, because in fact she is not recognising the actions and behaviours as engagement as would be the case of anyone else from the dominant culture.

In secondary school, however, Ayanna demonstrated more explicit agency in engaging with lessons and meeting expectations. Being seen as an individual highlighted new options to engage with learning, and schooling more widely. This enabled Ayanna to participate in lessons and maximise existing opportunities to accumulate relevant capital through teachers' facilitator role and conversion strategies, demonstrating agency by asking for support, checking her work, active listening and 'doing' of the classroom. Her insecurity inherited from primary school in asking for guidance was related to EAL. Having a good relationship with her Cluster High teachers and facing an expectation for independence meant that she could position herself as a more independent student who sought help when needed meeting higher expectations.

Making use of classification and framing

The pedagogic discourses and ID in primary and secondary school had different impact on Ayanna's learning. She addressed the changing contexts through conversion strategies and agency establishing her positioning in the new school as a high-level learner. Ayanna took steps to actively ensure that her learning was in line with pedagogic targets. Children like her were 'disposed' to engage with teaching in the lessons due to the structure and teachers' explicit engagement in facilitating learning instead of 'talking at' the children. 'Doing' and being active while learning seemed to be of particular importance. Ayanna was no exception describing both English and science as fun, interesting and enjoyable. This suggests that classroom contexts with weak framing and greater flexibility activate more agency and enjoyment. Ayanna was able to see the teacher's strategies to 'make' children learn and recognise the usefulness of subjects for her development and success (see Appendix 13 for quotes). English being a useful subject was perhaps a hint to the needs of children learning EAL – effective support in accessing the curriculum, transferability across subjects and beyond school. She highlighted that English and science complement each other in terms of vocabulary but English provided the foundations. This is an example of employing a

recognition rule in seeing the bigger picture of horizontal and vertical aspects of learning. Ayanna identified the relevance of subjects across their specific boundaries and applied a more precise recognition of learning.

The weakly framed lessons involved increased participation and independence pointing to a different ID from the primary school. Despite the framing flexibility in terms of structure and engagement opportunities, in English strong classification was built in and the teacher and children relied on complex language to frame learning:

As the PEE task is explained, the teacher tells the children about remembering RAF5 – *almost impossible for me to understand all the abbreviations but children know what is expected.*

The teacher emphasises the instructions and how to do the work – worded correctly, no spelling errors, no rushing, capital letters.

She shows them their levels again:

All – Make simple comments on author's choice of language

Most – Comments show some awareness of the effect of writers' language choice

Some – Show in-depth awareness and understanding

The children are then left to do the writing independently – no fuss, all just get on and the teacher is sat at her desk. Ayanna is writing in her book but pays attention while the teacher talks and explains to others.

(Research log 4 05.03.2013)

Having the advantage of being explained the rules of the game at the beginning of Year 7 Ayanna was adopting relevant discourses, as evidence of her realisation of ID, which contributed to changes in her positioning. She was able to make choices related to learning opportunities moving away from her initially limited understanding of schooling, leading to more equal positioning instead. Ayanna was more visibly engaged given the different structures and confidence in her abilities which led to positive experience and views of school:

‘Because in primary school I wasn't feeling as mature but when I am in high school people tell me that I am mature and I am good at anything.’

(15.02.2013 92-93)

Strong framing around levels enabled, if not required, children to work in specific ways in order to be positioned as successful. Even though I would perhaps argue this is a

disabling approach in different circumstances, levels here were an expression of recognition rules made evident which enabled her to demonstrate realisation more easily by producing relevant work. This also relates to her habitus and cultural capital in its amalgamation of different experiences. The explicitness of learning and success criteria is what makes her a learner who distinguishes and follows the rules of the game. From the cases presented so far, there is some similarity between Hani and Ayanna in their invisibility and lack of recognition in primary school that was transformed to acceptance and visible academic positioning in secondary school. However, there were differences at contextual and individual level at the secondary school fields. In the next section the discussion continues focusing on the experiences of Taj in the context of Aster Academy.

7.4 Taj's active transformation

Habitus, capital and positioning

Taj's virtual schoolbag contained a complex family environment comprising different culture, languages and communication strategies with siblings and parents. The constant navigation across languages had made Taj explicitly aware of his learning of EAL and the limitations of the situation highlighting that language knowledge was a significant factor in his own positioning at school and academically. Joining Poppins Primary School in Year 4 placed Taj in a different position socially from the established members of the class. He had to find and negotiate his space in already existing relationships and shared experiences. Having made friends with boys who had arrived in Poppins Primary later than Year 1 and those who happened to be in similar ability set spending time together in ability groups, Taj's friendship group seemed somewhat excluded by the other boys. However, Friendships created and sustained in the low ability teaching groups were openly criticised by the class teacher as a process of continuously disadvantaging children who were not achieving or had joined the school

mid-term. Coupled with her teaching higher sets, she viewed the separation as an institutionally framed barrier to her knowing the children and helping them mix. However, she failed to act on this because of the implicit school and ID rules.

Taj was not happy in primary school because he felt his expectations of both academic and social contexts were not met. He was looking forward to secondary school as a field of new opportunities where he expected to experience new aspects of learning, a notion of choice, increasing complexity and a different physical environment. The perception of choice is particularly important because it relates to agency and being able to decide on navigation and positioning through conversion strategies and dispositions in his virtual schoolbag. It nods towards the transformative potential of the habitus aiming to change the status quo (Mills 2008). Thus secondary school could provide a fresh start coupled with opportunities to establish a desired identity from the very start and transform the schooling experiences from primary school into more meaningful interactions. Taj was clear about his chosen path – academic success and improving his levels, while fostering a supportive friendship circle. He felt empowered to do this in Aster Academy being able to benefit from the new field and negotiate positioning. He felt safe from the onset as his sister in Year 9 introduced him to the older students leading to capital that put him in a social position of advantage in relation to the rest of the Year 7 students.

The rules of the game in interaction with pedagogic discourses

Schooling in the dominant context from an early age presupposes awareness of the pedagogic discourses. In this case, this implicit knowledge was evident in quietness in lessons and willingness to engage in the expected ways. This was important in terms of negotiation of positioning but also from the perspective of his primary school teacher maintaining that Taj was not causing issues in the classroom. However, some identity shifts were not noticed. Occasionally, Taj engaged in outbursts of disruptiveness in response to other children. It seemed that he was led by a desire to be noticed and

acknowledged sometimes in ways not in line with ID and teacher expectations. In such cases, teachers pointed out the behaviour as negative but on the main part failed to name positive engagement in different circumstances – a recurring pattern in both Poppins Primary School and later Aster Academy.

Miss Taylor disclosed not really knowing Taj which was a factor in his positioning and interaction with the field seeking attention and proof of his engagement. He had at the same time accepted this position in class and had focused on academic learning. His understanding and conformity with ID on the most part put him in a position where he could benefit from learning although the relationship with Miss Taylor was not thriving. His perception was that he received the support he needed to progress academically. Socially, Taj recognised the lack of relationship with his current teacher. Talking about a teacher in Year 5 who had spent a lot of time getting to know him revealed the different types of relationships he held with teachers for different purposes – academic and social capitals. Taj was demonstrating agency by deploying social capital differentially in the lack of relationship with the class teacher as a result of the classroom framing and positioning of children who were later arrivals.

In secondary school Taj made more active use of the pedagogic discourses and his academic positioning to focus on academic learning and establishing his position as an able and active student.

Classification and framing

To some extent Taj was unable to consciously exercise choice in Poppins Primary School, which could be explained with the unequal distribution of the recognition rule and experience of the classificatory principles in the school leading to marginalised positioning (Bernstein 2000, p. 17). The application of this theoretical idea was initially illustrated in Hani's case study as an outcome for children from different backgrounds. Taj's experience of the classificatory principles was exhibited through inconsistent participation in lessons in terms of teacher expectations, achievement and engagement.

Although he was aware that achievement was important, he was unable to respond in the 'correct' ways at times which led to positioning as being disruptive.

Taj's clear view of academic success was influenced by prior educational experiences and the ambition to become an accountant. He was finding the subject English useful, recognising principles of classification, because the teaching addressed his EAL and had the potential to change his positioning in relation to achievement and success. He talked about the role of tuition to improve achievement – as a marker of success but also a strategy to accumulate educational capital:

'[The] teachers gave that syllabus from school so I use that in tuition... It's a really good teacher you know! And explains stuff'

(06.02.2013 246-7)

This demonstrates the application of classificatory principles in identifying the place of supplementary schooling in his educational experiences. Evidence of how much he had adopted the pedagogic discourse and text was the use of similar vocabulary as teachers, thus language had an important function as a shared interactional practice:

'Because you need it. When you become older then you're becoming successful with your levels because when I go to Year 9 if I go to T, U then I will be able to do more options, then I go to a nice college, nice university then I get a nice job.'

(06.02.2013 26-8)

The levels are emphasised as a marker of success rather than knowing and doing things, which was perhaps a result of the interactional practice, classification and ID in the RD. Taj's level 4 in Aster Academy situated him in a middle ability class where contributions in lessons were structured explicitly around ID and expectations. This approach worked because of the consistency in teacher engagement and understanding of the children and firm approach to behaviour and engagement with clear pointers to developing the realisation rule. EAL was only one aspect in positioning in the lessons:

'Taj for example is EAL but relatively literate compared to Transition. In transition there are for example kids who literally turned up to school this year and can't speak any English at all.. He does all right actually in that sense'

(Mr Green 18.12.2012 65-70)

Although initially pointing out Taj's strengths in English in relation to EAL, Mr Green focused on the need for guidance, perceived lack of independence, and the need for structured instructions as part of the ID (strong classification over lesson content and expectations as an EAL strategy):

'He requires guidance as most of them here. What they need is guidance with every task that they do. If I ask them to go and complete a piece of work, they will possibly not read the question properly, they'll start writing about what they want to write rather than what the question's asking them which is quite common really for students that age and it comes down to how you answer questions at exam practice and all that sort of thing.'

(Mr Green 18.12.2012 330-335)

Mr Green seems to be working with a binary distinction like Miss Taylor where Taj is doing fine but experiencing barriers at the same time. Language and EAL become detached from the individual child, background, expression and linked to exam technique instead. This leads to reframing of EAL as a problem in relation to the curriculum but not to the experiences of the individual child, leading to yet another generalisation that children learning EAL are likely to experience aspects of the curriculum and schooling in a similar way because they do not know the rules of the game.

In English three teachers joined and left in a term affecting children's behaviour and positioning due to the inconsistent expectations, lack of established ID and interactional practice. Adapting to continuous change led to disproportionate tensions between teachers and children who had found an effective way to manage this instability by not trusting new teachers. Taj was willing to impress but teachers seemed to misinterpret his behaviour as disruptive at times (same experience as in Poppins Primary School). When told-off he would apologise, turn to the front and get on with his work in contrast to other boys who would argue back. This showed Taj's positioning in relation to RD and ID and his habitus already adapted to the continuing pattern of interaction with teachers from primary to secondary school. This raised questions

about fairness and the additional factors that shaped his experiences, including the change of teachers:

‘We first had Miss Long, then we had Miss.. there was another teacher I forgot her name, but then she left then we had Miss Someh and now she is our teacher and we’ve got another erm other teacher so these two have left and these two are our new teachers... I don’t really mind because teachers have different way of.. teaching so you get to learn different ways. It is a bit hard because you get used to one teacher but that’s when you get to another one it’s difficult but then you try to get used to it.’

(6.02.2013 69-74)

Taj remained uncritical of the experience detaching his own agency and views of what enables him to learn and accumulate relevant capital. He focused more on the gain of different teaching approaches not elaborating on the adaptation or conversion strategies required to deal with this, assuming the institutional assumption that children are to get used to the changes through their subordinate positioning in relation to teachers.

Miss Someh, the latest English teacher, had focused on getting to know the children. The notion that Taj was perhaps ‘too eager in certain things’ was in line with his behaviour and occasional eruptions. It is interesting how the environment change had defined this feature more strongly. However, it also highlighted an opportunity to engage more explicitly and he seemed to be adopting the strategy to do this:

‘He is one that I don’t think means to disrupt but he does and he will if he’s got anything to say to someone else, you have to constantly tell him to be quiet and threaten him to get him to be quiet. [...] he just seem happy like when I said before he can be disruptive, but not with the intent to disrupt, it’s sort of.. too eager in certain things, it’s sweet that he’s enjoying it’

(Miss Someh 21.01.2013 51-58)

This is quite different from a rather invisible stance in primary school where he had almost given up showing his work to the class teacher raising questions about the kinds of relationships children were developing with their teachers in the sense that with some it worked, with others it was a struggle. His primary class teacher mentioned him just once in an interview about the class saying that he was one of the children she

never really got to know, but Miss Someh had more to share from three weeks working with Taj.

Understandings of engagement

Breaks and informal encounters with other adults, such as me, provided Taj with different opportunities to engage. He was more articulate in expressing himself and his opinions as opposed to the lack of opportunity in lessons. Perhaps I was seen as an outsider to the field without the background information because of my assumed impartiality and interest in children's experiences. He saw the research as an opportunity to engage in a positive way and find resolutions to some of the mismatches in his schooling experience. Theoretically, my position as a researcher and critical friend provided opportunities for Taj to reflect on his experiences in different contexts and framing. Seeing me at different times and with different children prompted discussions that would not normally take place, enabling him (and other children) to see beyond the classificatory principles in school, and particularly in linking the academic and social contexts in their experiences.

The last account presents Hakim's experiences in the primary and secondary schools.

7.5 Hakim's fresh start

Habitus and capital

Hakim's early arrival in the UK led to growing up bilingual with good awareness of the use of language for different purposes. The linguistic choices he made with friends from the same background, family, school are markers of positioning and navigation between contexts that require different cultural and linguistic capital. Hakim's virtual schoolbag contained different ways of interacting depending on the nature of the context. However, his explicit expertise in the school field perhaps led teachers to disregard other forms of cultural capital that he possessed. The habitus being a by-

product of the interaction of different cultural and linguistic capitals meant that recognising only the existence of one as the marker of school success is nonetheless simplistic but not unusual. According to Thomson (2002) the processes leading teachers to make assumptions about students and their capital are subconscious and not intended to disadvantage students. They depend on teachers' own cultural values and practice and the rules of the educational game shaped by formal power discourses imposed externally which are not necessarily realised.

Hakim recognised the expected and acceptable behaviours in Poppins Primary School being aware of the implicit rules and power relations. To illustrate Hakim's navigation of different fields through dispositions and capital gaining him advantage, I use an example from the school play in Year 6. Hakim was in a lead role, where he would frequently engage in dialogue with his best friend Eyaz. He was excellent at the play, learning the lines and engaging as part of the ID. However, he would also successfully find time and space to banter during rehearsals:

Some children are holding scripts and when told they are moving on to the next scene, they are checking their lines. While Miss Taylor rearranges some children for the next scene, Hakim has climbed on a piece of the equipment and stands very tall – it looks like he's seeking attention but as no one pays any, he sits down and just observes the rehearsal of the scene. In the meantime, Eyaz is talking to the girls across the circle instead of watching and listening. Miss Taylor gives Hakim a script and a pen to remind him his lines that follow. Hakim notices that Eyaz is watching him so he climbs on the equipment again – there's some brief exchange between him and Eyaz across the room, then he goes down and does a dance move. Eyaz tries to run across to get to Hakim, but gives up as he has to pass behind the teacher and is well aware of the consequences if she sees him. A minute later Hakim is back on top as it's time for his part in the play.

(Research log 1 20.06.2012)

Using his knowledge of the context and boundaries, Hakim navigated the field to accumulate capital recognised by his friends – a silly move, social exchanges during lessons, disengagement with the pedagogic discourse. These playful acts are not detrimental to his overall engagement with the rehearsal as when his turn came, Hakim was ready to shine which in turn accumulated capital recognised by the teacher as positive engagement. This two-fold positioning is important because it highlights the

complexity of interactions taking place in the field simultaneously but with distinctive purposes and reveals Hakim's skilful navigation. Speaking later to Miss Taylor, she was aware of similar behaviours that could get the boys into trouble but in the example she did not intervene.

In terms of learning and participation in lessons, Hakim did not cause disruption. However, Miss Taylor was viewing him through a particular group interpretation:

'I think a lot of them in this class are very.. cocky and very sure of themselves and actually not... overly pleasant to other children and I think it's gonna be a shock when people suddenly are cocky and not pleasant to them and then they are not gonna know what to do because they are gonna get a shock. [It's] that group of boys – Eyaz, Hakim, Blain, Jayden, Taban, and it's a shame because some of them are so easily led, they just follow and that worries me that you know they are gonna follow the wrong people, they're gonna try and impress the wrong people at high school and actually if they try to impress the right people, they'd be fine. But if they try and impress the wrong people, they are gonna get themselves into trouble.'

(Miss Taylor 20.06.2012 380-392)

Miss Taylor recognised that schooling was about building networks and connections with other children, in addition to learning but she focused on the consequences of particular friendships affirming the desired characteristic displayed by good students. In her version of the story Hakim is likely to impress the wrong people, get in trouble and become marginalised in the new field. She describes this with her teacher hat on, focusing on what could make a difference for the boys, but Hakim saw the situation differently and was able to navigate it skilfully through his transition.

Pedagogic discourses

By the end of Year 6 Hakim was finding school easy and predictable - he was looking forward to secondary school which had the potential to provide a challenge to his learning: '[looking forward to] more education... Like, doing more stuff [...] Literacy [...] We'll have design and technology [...] .We'll be cooking' (04.07.2012 51-79). Being in the top set meant that Hakim's academic achievement was in line with the pedagogic expectations and discourses in his classroom despite concerns about his behaviour. In the context of Poppins Primary School, this was important as Miss Taylor taught the

high achieving children so Hakim was receiving more attention from her framed by high expectations and learning to be independent and the privilege of being known. Some of the emerging issues around ability setting with children like Taj and Hani who were not well-known to the teacher were already illustrated. Hakim's advantaged position in this respect, linked to Bernstein's pedagogic discourse, meant awareness and engagement with ID and well-developed recognition and realisation rules. From a Bourdieusian perspective this meant utilising capital to position himself as a legitimate player of the education game.

Secondary school was seen as a field of higher level learning and an opportunity to develop learning through doing. This aspect has come across in almost all of the transition stories, highlighting that children learn best through interaction and using their agency in lessons. The approach of learning through doing required weak framing and classification but well-developed recognition rule to enable children to apply knowledge and skills across contexts and subjects. Hakim hinted that he was ready for the challenge and would actively navigate through the newness in Bloom High School and pedagogic discourses, implying that change is eminent. His habitus, therefore, was responsive to the changes and embracing the transformative potential of navigating between fields through conversion strategies of the capitals he already possessed.

The lessons I observed were interactive with strong classification in terms of content, ability and levels, and weak framing that prompted children to learn through interaction with peers and the teacher. As the majority of children were confident with their English and experienced in UK schooling, the recognition and realisation rules led to seamless pedagogic practice. Even with substitute teachers, the children made use of the familiar discourses and routines:

Hakim is taking notes as the teacher quizzes students on the content of their writing. He follows the instructions what needs to be included in the final piece of writing. After that the children feed back their ideas by reading out their answers.
Hakim: 'melancholic because the old lad has lost her family and she has no one'
Teacher: What does melancholic mean?, Hakim: 'A word for 'sad'

(Research log 3 22.10.2012)

The ID that Hakim followed was implicitly set through weak framing but using recognition and familiar classificatory principles, Hakim is able to engage, for example by taking notes, to benefit his further learning and be part of the interactional practice. Volunteering to answer questions is a pedagogic marker of success. From a teacher's point of view, his learning was in line with expectations and pedagogic discourse.

Agency and engagement

Hakim's confidence in the transition to Bloom High School was marked by his siblings attending the same school. Perceiving this as an advantage, Hakim was developing a strategy to maintain a positive stance and make the most of the transition in a supposedly safeguarded environment. One way to explain this is that Hakim felt more secure but also welcomed in an environment where other family members have managed to establish agency. In this respect, his transition is a path following that of his siblings and he explicitly relies on this as a coping strategy. Perhaps a determining factor was that there were no direct friends transferring to the same school so he used other channels to utilise existing relationship as potential strategies unlike Ayanna who was much more anxious. Knowing people who have been through the process was almost his own familiarity with the context, boundaries and power distribution in the field that Hakim was taking advantage of.

Talking about English and science returned references to learning through doing and the practical appeal of some activities (see Appendix 13 for quotes). The challenge in English was perhaps linked to his linguistic background where although schooled in England, Hakim's home language was predominantly at home. From what I gathered his parents did not speak English and did not engage with any of the schools. However, this is only a proposition based on the most common difficulties learners of EAL experience and one way to frame Hakim's positioning. I did not have opportunities to become familiar with aspects of his home environment, so caution is needed with this theorisation.

7.6 Four perspectives of transition as means of a summary

This chapter presented four additional case studies of transition. Its purpose was to highlight the use of the framework in a compressed illustrative way with different children in different circumstances. The cases were purposefully selected to capture a range of backgrounds, genders, abilities and engagement in the classrooms, as well as different schools. It highlighted the following four perspectives of transition:

Transition perspective one – becoming more critical

Highly successful and praised, both in Poppins Primary School and Aster Academy, Subira kept her opinions about school to herself. Teachers had the impression she liked studying because she worked to a particularly high standard and did not disrupt but her strategy to do the work did not mean that she was engaged. Lesson participation was often judged on the teacher perception alone and Subira was willing to conform to the expected positioning. Her coping strategies in transition were a way of positioning in the field to benefit from the ‘ideal pupil’ status given by teachers. The mismatches in understanding pupils like Subira were remarkable and eye-opening in terms of what is important in school and what are the characteristics, positions and RD conformity that teachers focus on. It is interesting how ability and engagement with lessons precede any other aspects of being and agency in a school context. Subira used different positioning with teachers and in the research to accumulate different types of capital and further benefit her positioning as the ideal student and a rebel in each context respectively.

Transition perspective two – from invisibility to visibility

Ayanna’s journey from invisibility in the primary school to visibility in the secondary was illustrated through habitus and capital in terms of social and academic environments and her ability to work through the changes relying on conversion strategies; agency that moved from implicit engagement in her comfort zone in Poppins Primary School to explicit part-taking in secondary school and making active

sense of the context and its requirements; and the role of classification and framing in making sense of pedagogic discourses to negotiate positioning in the classroom. In secondary school Ayanna manifested aspects of her habitus more explicitly in the classroom and established her individual positioning – the environment did not impose group identities prompting her to fit in in particular ways such as in Poppins Primary School and required her to accumulate relevant academic capitals and dispositions. Ayanna attributed the changes in context to the school setting, teachers, more defined curriculum and lesson content: ‘You know what you are doing because the teacher always tell you what you’re doing in the lesson and I think it’s better because you learn more things like there’s different teachers and.. you learn more, also know what you are doing better.’ (15.02.2013 57-60). Through an equal start, she became more engaged in the classroom discourses, developing a recognition rule in line with pedagogic expectations which led to better learning, confidence and visibility. The equal start is a powerful idea, very different to the rationale for explicit learning outcomes and levels, but emergent in several of the case studies.

Transition perspective three – active transformations

The change of school contexts presents opportunities for children to negotiate new positioning and adjust their dispositions and habitus in new environments. Transition provides options for different positioning in relation to the particular contexts and the overall entry point. Taj was restricted in the primary school joining in Year 4 but Year 7 provided transformative options. He then focused on accumulating new forms of social capital and friendships that were restricted in Poppins Primary School to transform his situation. Taj actively sought to be involved in extra-curricular activities, such as form captain or extra tuition as explicit navigation strategies. Taj took up the opportunity to re-examine existing relationships in the new school and successfully managed the transformation that led to more relevant capital and positioning in the field, and enhanced academic positioning.

Transition perspective four – a fresh start

In the process of his transition Hakim highlighted several differences between primary and secondary school, some simplistic and observational, others more in-depth. He recognised the differences in the building and student body structure where younger meant more vulnerable, although he did not explicitly state this. He talked about the differences in learning - school was not all of a sudden more difficult and he could recognise the efforts of teachers to make it easier using different strategies to explain the content. He also highlighted the importance of active learning and doing in the process of learning explaining that the most engaging subjects are those involving active participation, e.g. PE, science, drama highlighting his engagement and agency and the importance of doing when learning. In terms of Miss Taylor's assertion about the right and wrong people, her prediction was wrong. Her categorisation related to his agency, which she did not have control over, and which had little legitimate space to operate in primary school. By contrast, in Bloom High School Hakim found opportunities to manifest his agency through his engagement in lessons and with the realisation rules which made his experience 'just fine' from both academic and social perspective.

The key points to take away from the case studies in this chapter are the unique experiences and engagement strategies of each of the children coupled with different extents of understanding on the part of teachers. Ayanna and Taj, initially isolated in primary school, thrived in their transitions being empowered to take charge of their learning and challenges. Subira developed as a critic of the secondary school field covertly engaging to maintain her position, and Hakim proved his primary school teacher wrong demonstrating that the new interactions provided a fresh start rather than a continuation of the self-fulfilling prophecy.

Reflecting on the process of developing these case study accounts, this chapter provides food for thought while highlighting important aspects of the children's agency and

experiences in transition between primary and secondary school. In the next chapter, I present my findings and the main points from the analysis to compare and discuss in relation to literature in the field.

Chapter 8:

Discussion of findings

8.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters presented a series of case studies of individual experiences of primary to secondary school transition of a group of children labelled as having EAL. The case studies were discussed in the light of a theoretical framework incorporating Bourdieu's field analysis and Bernstein's sociology of education in order to position them within a wider debate. Chapter 6 provided analysis of two stories – Eyaz's and Hani's providing the context in which I was able to elaborate and develop my application of the theoretical framework. Chapter 7 further illustrated the use of the framework with four additional cases of transition in three different schools, again utilising theoretical concepts to make sense of the stories and highlight similarities and differences in the experiences of transitions of children learning EAL. The case studies analysis contributed to a more contextualised understanding of the application of the two frameworks in real settings and practical situations.

Some initial findings around the diversity of ways in which children experience their transitions and relationships in schooling, and teachers' perspectives of these have already begun to emerge in the case studies and through my justification in selecting the cases (see Figure 4.11). This chapter presents the answers to the research questions pulling together evidence from the case studies to lead to an answer of the main research question. Clarifying the core of my thesis, I relate it to literature in the field of EAL and transitions more widely as means of positioning my research into the bigger picture. I also discuss the value of the theoretical framework in highlighting aspects of children's experiences, and more specifically engagement and agency, which may remain hidden in different circumstances.

The answers to the research questions are informed by the theoretical framework and relevant concepts to make sense of the data and interactions between peers, children and teachers, and children and myself in a differently framed context. I used field analysis to find out how children navigate through informal school contexts actively employing the concepts habitus and capital to understand positioning and interactions with peers and teachers. Bernstein's framework of pedagogic discourses enabled me to analyse structuring relations in the classroom through the ideas of classification, framing, instructional and regulative discourses and the way children make sense of these through recognition and realisation rules as means of navigation. The figure below outlines the research questions and the following structure of this chapter:

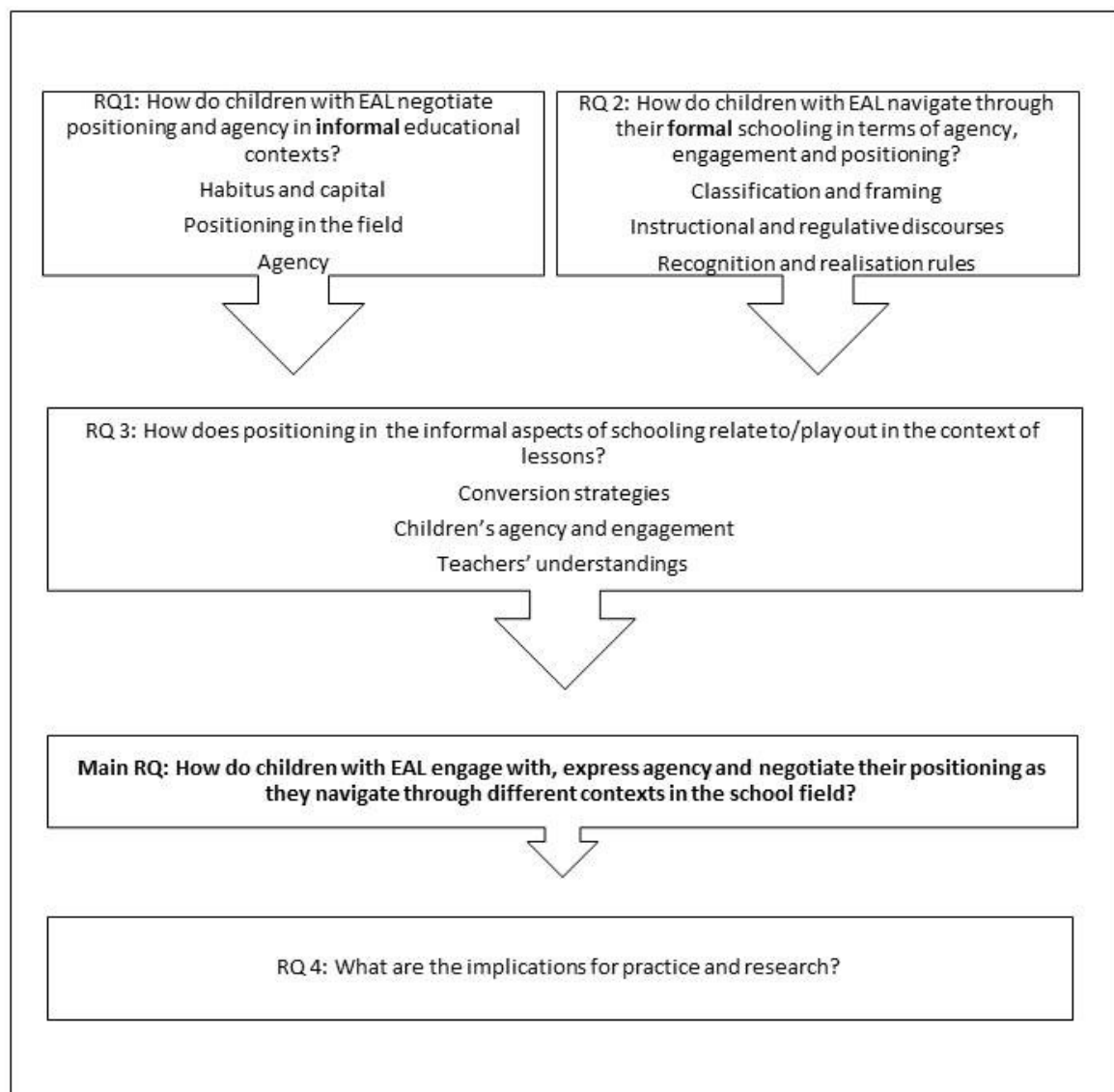


Figure 8.1: Research questions and implications

The answers are presented in relation to the first three questions using the theoretical concepts in order to link back to the context of my study. Although the three questions answered here are leading towards a structured answer to the overarching question, this main question is addressed in the discussion section. The final question in the figure is concerned with the research implication and is answered in Chapter 9 where I focus explicitly on implications for further research and practice.

8.2 Negotiating positioning and agency in informal educational contexts (RQ1)

Children's experiences are shaped by the different contexts and interactions they have at school. The contexts explored in this study were informal and formal aspects of schooling in the light of primary to secondary school transition. The interactions include teachers and friends in these respective contexts.

The theoretical concepts of particular importance in terms of children's informal schooling experiences are habitus and capital, positioning and agency. It is worth emphasising that these informal contexts (break time with friends, research discussions, insights into afterschool activities) were differently, more flexibly structured than the formal pedagogic contexts as it will be illustrated in the second research question section (8.3). The children made active use of this variation between contexts to navigate and negotiate their positioning which had an impact on their engagement in academic contexts where they employed agency and conversion strategies (8.4).

Habitus, capital and positioning

The transition stories highlighted children's uniqueness through exploring habitus and the strategies they employed to accumulate relevant capital in informal aspects of schooling. Children's experiences were shaped by their habitus and relevant capitals which in turn informed positioning. The habitus is constructed from past and present

experiences which inform particular ways of being, doing and possibilities for change. The possibilities were framed by children's migration trajectories, cultural upbringing, prior schooling, experience of the UK, personal interests and aspirations and realised through the accumulation of relevant social capitals to change or maintain their positioning. Strategies for accumulating capital included:

- Creating and maintaining friendship groups on the basis of similar educational background and experience (social capital through peers);
- Friendship groups based on shared cultural backgrounds;
- Individual ideas of positioning in the school field (capital that informed change in positioning).

Some children relied on shared social capitals to reaffirm group belonging as a mechanism to support their habitus and positioning in relation to friends and background. This was evident for both high achieving children who sought the friendship of peers of similar ability and children characterised as lower achievers or those who had arrived in Year 4. For instance, children with UK schooling experience were able to accumulate academic alongside social capital while those who had arrived in the country recently focused on different types of social capital that strengthened their home identities through friendship groups and shared backgrounds. In the first instance, children became more aligned with the rules of the schooling game because of their familiarity, and in the second instance, they became further marginalised because they were unable to find ways to fit in the field. In this respect, shared experiences seemed to determine friendships and the social circle of children.

Others, by contrast, attempted to establish new positioning through alternative ways of being in different contexts. The transition between different schools provided opportunities for this because children's positioning in the new contexts was no longer framed by existing relations in the former school field. Such positioning was enabled by familiarity with the rules of the schooling game where informal schooling was seen as

an arena for social expression and exchange, testing different engagement strategies in the context of transition between formal and informal, primary and secondary, home and school with the purpose of realising the boundaries of the field and the possible options for transformation of the status quo.

There were two general groups of children – those familiar with the dominant context because of their schooling in the UK who supposedly had a positive schooling experience because they knew the rules of the game; and children who had arrived not long ago who did not know the rules of the game and struggled to find acceptable positions in the field making their experiences much different to the first group. Children's familiarity with the rules and school context was an advantage that enabled the advance of positioning. Those who had been through the English educational system from the very start presented themselves as more confident both socially and academically, skilfully navigating the field. By contrast, those who had experienced multiple transitions between countries and schools were positioned in isolation to the dominant discourses as they joined primary school with a negative impact on the relationship they had with primary school teachers.

Transition to secondary school however, provided an opportunity to negotiate new positioning with everyone joining the school at the same time. This is further illustrated through the findings related to research questions two and three.

Agency

Agency was demonstrated through children's actions and behaviours in the field, shaped by their individual relationships and practice. For children learning EAL who were still unsure of the rules of the game, agency was more visible and less restricted in informal contexts because of their ability to accumulate relevant social and cultural capitals through friends and shared backgrounds. In this respect, children were able to draw on their habitus to maintain their positioning socially and had applicable

experiences in their virtual schoolbags. However, not knowing the rules of the game they were not always able to actively apply this knowledge in changing contexts. For instance, there was a perceived barrier in moving to secondary school without their friends leading to a negative view of a lonely future, or overreliance on siblings who went to the same school to predetermine positioning. Gaining experience and awareness of the rules in the field through schooling, children found ways to draw on conversion strategies that could benefit their social and academic positioning.

The agency of children labelled as having EAL who had extensive schooling in the UK was particularly visible in that they were able to apply conversion strategies much more successfully because of their implicit knowledge of the pedagogic and social game. They relied in group identities much less in comparison to the recent arrivals. They also engaged differently in demonstrating their agency in secondary school by challenging the dominant discourse and the positioning assigned by teachers through either open disagreement in contrast with expectations or adopting a quiet but highly critical stance.

Children's agency and navigation through formal schooling is further discussed in the next section.

8.3 Navigating through formal schooling (RQ2)

Children's experiences and navigation through formal schooling and contexts are explained through concepts related to pedagogic discourses: classification and framing, regulative and instructional discourses, recognition and realisation rules. This section looks at the differences between primary and secondary schools as pedagogic contexts that shaped children's experiences. Highlighted are the barriers and supporting factors in transition enabling particular types of engagement for children learning EAL.

Classification and framing

Classification and framing in schools referred to the structure of the knowledge discourses and interaction between teachers and children. Primary and secondary schools provided different framing for children learning EAL in terms of teaching and transition which had an impact on their engagement and experiences. The primary school focused on preparation for strongly classified and framed secondary school through a zero-tolerance policy, high expectations, independence and ability-based teaching. This was a process aiming to prepare children for the pedagogic game in secondary school and classification of subject content. In this process some children were better equipped to cope with secondary schools through their awareness of the rules of the game, while others were struggling to negotiate their positioning unable to distinguish the preparatory aims of teachers in primary school. As a result, the children who were equipped with schooling experiences and awareness of dominant pedagogic discourses and interactions had a perceived advantage in pre-negotiating their place in the secondary schools. Some chose to maintain their previous academic positioning through reinforcing the impression that they are engaging with classroom rules and interaction in expected ways, while other manipulated their awareness into practices of bending the rules, testing the boundaries and challenging discourses with the intention to change the status quo for their own benefit. Children with limited schooling in the UK expected to experience an increased structure in secondary school. Although initially this seemed as a negative aspect of their transition, later on their schooling experiences were transformed through the strong classification enabling them to find their place in the system and the boundaries between different subjects, interactions and expectations leading to an overall positive secondary school experience.

However, the strong framing and classification expectation of secondary schools was somewhat decisive. All of the secondary schools had adopted a nurturing approach to

welcome the new Year 7 cohorts and make them feel comfortable in the 'big school'. This added the notion of time to classification and framing allowing children to actually learn the perceived new rules of the game leading to more positive engagement and experience. Through time, children with less UK schooling experience used the strong framing and classification to make sense of schooling and establish agency through engagement.

On the whole, engagement was seen in a positive/negative binary by teachers who used this idea to position students in the classroom. Strong classification and framing proved to be an enabling mechanism at secondary school for children who were unsure of ID. Weak classification and framing, by contrast, created a set of opportunities to challenge the dominant discourse. Looking at classification and framing from the perspective of children learning EAL was a novel way to understand their agency and dis/engagement from a wider perspective where language and achievement in class were not the only markers of success.

RD and ID

Analysis of how children engage with ID enabled me to explore their understanding of the formal schooling context and the underlying RD. Positioning children as EAL or recent arrivals meant that they were less likely to operate within ID because of the implicitness of RD and lack of experience and understanding of pedagogic talk. From a teacher's point of view independence and engagement with ID were a factor in defining academic success. However, children from the lower ability sets or those with less developed language skills struggled to fit into this ID. As a result, children who relied heavily on guidance and clues from the pedagogic discourse in order to engage were framed as over-reliant on support contradicting my finding about the role of classification and framing as additional support. So then the accumulation of relevant capital in the form of engaging with support led to increased dependence which could be misinterpreted as lack of appropriate engagement with ID, leading to

misrecognition about the engagement of children with different experience of the school field on the part of teachers. There was also misrecognition on the part of students who sought particular types of interaction believing this was the expectation. By contrast, those with more experience of the field were characterised as independent and engaged if their behaviours were in line with the preconceptions of teachers. In this case, not only the expectations were different but engagement meant different things based on visible engagement in line with expectations.

Children's different ways of engaging manifested through behaviour had an impact on ID by changing the dynamics of the classroom and disturbing power relations. This in turn affected children's experiences in the classroom through changes in pedagogic practice. In response to particular behaviour, teachers changed and adjusted the classroom rules and ID. Due to the consequences of these behaviours, they were framed as disruptive from a teacher's perspective. However, children's perspective was not necessarily the same. Indeed some actively stirred the context by consciously bending the rules of the game while others did so without realising their agency. The shifts in the classroom led to unstable environments which further impacted the framing. In addition, there were cases when disturbances were caused by forces beyond children, making pedagogically framed engagement impossible as ID were changing too often with different teachers' expectations or styles.

On the whole, children giving the impression of collaborating with ID were seen as engaged, but this was not necessarily the case in differently framed situations. Particular children navigated the classroom discourses by not disrupting, but not engaging either, contrary to teachers' views of the situation. These findings illustrate different patterns of children's engagement with RD through ID and reveal the contradictory interpretations of engagement by teachers who viewed engagement in relation to disruption of their pedagogic role and practice.

Recognition and realisation rules

Recognition and realisation rules are directly linked with children's engagement and agency in the classroom. The recognition rule refers to the ability to distinguish pedagogic contexts and expectation and all children had developed it through their experience in school including those who were actively learning EAL. They used recognition rules to modify their behaviours based on the context and specific expectations. The realisation rule refers to children's ability to produce interactions in expected forms within the pedagogic discourse. Contrary to the case of recognition rules, children with more explicit language needs were at a disadvantaged position while in the process of developing realisation in their primary school context. Recent arrivals to the school were more likely to struggle with realisation rules being unable to demonstrate engagement in the expected ways. This reinforced the positive/negative engagement binary in teachers' views influenced by children's ability to produce the expected behaviours or work as a realisation rule. As a result, particular children were seen as not listening, not engaging, less able or with special needs. This created marginalised positioning to an extent, particularly in Poppins Primary School, where based on the teacher's experience of the class new arrivals were seen as a discrete group of different and not known to the teacher children.

While at primary school new arrivals did not manifest realisation rules in producing expected work or behaviours, the change of context, attitudes and structure alongside an equal start developed their ability to draw out personal benefits from the increased structure. As children progressed into secondary schools and the ID alongside classification, framing and expectations changed, they seemed to be positioned in a more equal field in terms of relationship with teachers. Perhaps this was due to the equal start in terms of being all new and similarly inexperienced, but also the strong framing that had an enabling function in providing the context for developing a realisation rule and building confidence. Hence, the distinction between new arrivals

and established students seemed to disappear in a context where everyone had an equal start and similar experiences of the power discourses at the bottom of secondary school.

Those who had long-term experience of schooling and related expectations in the UK were praised for their engagement and producing the expected work. However, there was a single case of a child negotiating positioning through different interpretations of the realisation rule and attempts to challenge the contextual contains. In this case, the student was particularly aware of the rules to an extent that he questioned and renegotiated them. Children interpreting realisation rules could be seen as a strategy to change positioning, and in this case the secondary school provided other ways to navigate the field and differentiate engagement from the power discourses and challenging the rules of the game.

8.4 The impact of positioning in informal contexts on formal schooling (RQ3)

This section builds on the findings from the previous two questions by linking informal and formal in how children experience schooling and transitions. I highlight findings related to the conversion strategies used by children to advance their positioning, varying understanding and expressions of agency and mismatches in teachers' perspectives due to symbolic violence and positioning of children categorised as having EAL as a discrete group of learners.

Conversion strategies

Children's positioning in different contexts is not isolated. Transitioning between national or educational contexts children made use of conversion strategies to adjust their positioning through existing dispositions and capital in their virtual schoolbags and through making use of resources in the field. Children, who initially felt not ready to meet the expectations of transition, were indeed equipped in various ways to make

the change seamlessly having previous experiences to build on. However, they were not aware of these. By contrast, children with awareness of their relevant capitals seamlessly and intentionally applied conversion strategies in the change of learning environments. Some patterns of the use of conversion strategies include:

- Creating new friendships circles in secondary school to benefit academic and social positioning;
- Applying experiences of dealing with change in the past to ease the perceived loss of primary school;
- Viewing secondary school as a field of new opportunities and removal of old constraints.

In academic contexts, conversion strategies were related to highlighting the importance of schooling for future success and identifying strategies and knowledge from Poppins Primary School that would benefit positioning academically, i.e. what are the expected behaviours and types of engagement. Those with limited experience were again enabled to activate these strategies through the change in framing and overall supportive attitude.

Children's agency

Children actively adjusted their agency in different contexts with the aim to maintain different identities and engagement patterns based around relevant capitals. Those who expressed limited agency in formal contexts were much more active in the informal domain where they were supported by shared backgrounds and familiarity with the implicit rules of a different game. However, the expression of agency in lessons was somewhat regulated by the teacher who would set an expectation around legitimate contributions to the dominant discourse depending on children's production of the expected text. By this definition, again children with limited experiences were set to be seen as not engaged because of their lack of understanding of the rules and context in

lessons. They did not demonstrate ‘correct agency’ either. The key here is the social construction of engagement and agency in relation to particular pedagogic discourses so recent arrivals were not supported enough to succeed. Children with enough experiences demonstrated their agency as learners in addition to individuals which was reinforcing teachers’ views of engagement and disengagement in particular ways.

The views attached to definitions and categorisations of EAL as a label were of particular importance in relation to children’s agency. For most of the children EAL was a norm rather than a point of difference. Those who recognised themselves as still learning EAL viewed it as a barrier to learning because they could not work the realisation rule and therefore respond ‘correctly’. This led to marginal positioning in relation to ID and lack of recognised realisation. Even though some children did not work the realisation rule, they still expressed agency and attempted to engage with the dominant discourses. However, these attempts were not recognised by teachers. In terms of academic achievement, the focus on levels through strong classification and consistent focus in lessons, academic ability and achievement were shaped as markers of success. In this instance, overt agency was remaining passive in order to increase academic success and engagement was dictated by the dominant pedagogic discourse of ability and levels where children could not apply realisation rules. Later in secondary school the different framing, equal positioning and additional experience enabled children to develop realisation work and begin to express their agency more visibly.

Teachers’ understandings of children and their experiences

Teachers’ understandings of children and their experiences are important because of the tensions between different interpretations and ways to see agency, engagement and the impact of formal and informal schooling. There was an evident lack of consistency with regards to teachers’ definitions and understandings of EAL. The labels attached to individual children seemed to shift in different situations and contexts and teachers could not decide whether EAL was solely related to language or included culture,

background and bilingualism. These shifts led to inconsistent positioning of both teachers and children and shifting expectations in lessons in relation to contribution, engagement and support. Such positioning was confusing for children and led to behaviours justified by the confusion but at the same time disapproved by teachers as not in line with the dominant expectations suggesting that the perceived lack of engagement is resulting from children learning EAL. This view failed to recognise the intricate nature of EAL beyond language and the additional factors that led to inconsistent understanding of children's engagement and agency, such as pedagogic framing and interpretations, lack of understanding of the social aspects of schooling and friendship circles as support mechanisms.

Children also seemed to exchange different forms of capital with their teachers as means of negotiating positioning. In primary school the more established members of the class benefited from relevant social and academic interactions transformed into capital with their teacher while those who arrived later in Year 4 remained somewhat marginalised in not being known or considered full members of the class as they did not possess the same forms of acceptable and desired capitals. The secondary schools somewhat addressed this binary as all children joined in Year 7 having an equal positioning in this respect. However, as they progressed, they again exchanged different capital with their teachers leading to changes in positioning in relation to the idea of good/bad, engaged/disengaged students. What seemed to attract teachers' attention was children's disengagement with lessons rather than their engagement. Teachers, as carriers of dominant pedagogic values, would focus on the children who challenged the values, rather than attend to the quiet ones who seemingly got on with learning. As a result, children's positioning in the school and in relation to teachers was informed by their disengagement and pedagogic aspirations to amend this. However, there were contrasts in different study areas – in some classes teachers had different approaches to get to know the children before making assumptions which predetermined much more accurate understanding and consequent engagement on the

part of children. This approach led to better and fairer mutually beneficial positioning and exchange of capitals.

In addition to this, children themselves had different expectations of adults which were informed by their schooling and further reproduced as they progressed. Through interactions with their teachers, children sought to validate and set the expectations in their own terms, especially the more established members of the class and those with more visible agency and relevant social capitals. Others aimed to use scaffolding and guidance provided by adults as a tool to access learning, moving away from the importance of social capital in pedagogic contexts and focusing solely on learning. A third group of children sought appropriate ways of engagement in lessons but challenged these explicitly in out-of-class situations questioning the framing and discourses of what schooling is about. These sets of expectations on the part of children led to different behaviours and agency in the classroom subfield.

Viewing agency in the context of individual histories, background, experiences and friendships provides a powerful way of looking at the experiences of children and young people categorised as having EAL adding particular value to the potentially limited interpretations of teachers and a theoretical explanation of engagement and power discourses in the school field. The ways in which children interact with different people in the field and demonstrate their agency was different because of power relations, relevant capitals and expectations. In the next section, I reflect on these findings in relation to the main question posed in my thesis and further elaborate the role and importance of agency in the school field.

8.5 Answering the main research question

So how do children labelled as having EAL negotiate their positioning, engagement and agency as they navigate between primary and secondary school contexts? This study situates the experiences of children in a broader framework than the classroom, which

is the space usually used by teachers to interact with children and understand their experiences. While the study is not concerned with teachers' conceptualisations of agency in terms of academic achievement and participation in pedagogic discourses, their views are important in identifying the contribution of my findings. Namely, the focus on classroom engagement and behaviours shape teachers' understandings, but these are not always accurate measures of children's experiences, particularly when children from diverse backgrounds are concerned. I look beyond the classroom attempting to understand agency in social aspects of schooling before focusing on classroom experiences from the perspective of children. In doing this, I aim to understand how agency operates in being constrained and enabled by different processes in the school field.

On the one hand, agency is enabled by the relationships children hold with key players of the schooling game, including both peers and adults, and the capital they share or accumulate in collectively navigating the school field. Recognising children as contributors in the field and their own education is important in making their agency more visible. Involving them in research activities provided evidence about the agency they had in relation to their learning or framing of school experiences as positive, beneficial or not enriching. In this respect, I observed different agency at the different stages of transition, but generally speaking, the more children progress in secondary school, they became more independent and open about their experiences. On the other hand, agency is constrained by pedagogic discourses and objective power rules which reproduce the educational system and field through misrecognition. Children learning EAL are not consciously disadvantaged by teachers, but as carriers of authority and the dominant ways of doing and knowing, teachers are unable to recognise particular agency exercised by those categorised as having EAL as a conceivable way of navigating the school field and transitions. The research involved paying close attention to children's work and experience of it and observing them in a range of different situations provide insight into the complexity of agency and the specific contribution of

their EAL-ness in the way some (particularly late arrivals) shape their experiences and expectations of school in relation to their language abilities and related achievement. Teachers' limited understanding of these children in terms of language, cultural and symbolic barriers, lead to generalisations about their experience which do not always appear to be the case.

My research highlights that all children demonstrate agency and engagement in navigating their schooling, utilising a number of conversion strategies in the process of transitions, which results from their previous experiences of shifting contexts and environments, be it national, local or international. While the study demonstrates how children make their way through informal aspects of schooling more easily because of the supportive social capitals, I also suggest that the structuring pedagogic discourses have a particular function to maintain the status quo. However, children are active in finding ways to either challenge or fit into these discourses, which is demonstrated through the different stories of transition presented in the thesis. In other cases, the dominant structure and discourse provides much needed scaffolding to access the field and associated resources in navigating through schooling and education more generally. This study presented aspects of education that have not been previously explored in depth. Therefore it is looking into important claims about the ways in which children experience schooling in relation to how their teachers see and frame these experiences from their limited version of the classroom and school (resulting from dominant ways of knowing and doing). In the next section I discuss how these findings add coherence to already existing literature and research in the field. The implications of my findings relate to the notion of giving voice to children's experiences and rich knowledge of conversion strategies in making sense of transitions between contexts. There is a wealth of information readily available to teachers if they are to get to know their students and perhaps the contexts and influences that have contributed to shaping children's worldviews and habitus.

8.6 Linking back to the literature

Discussing the findings in the light of existing literature with its gaps or mismatches, I begin to address gaps in EAL research in relation to experiences of agency, engagement and navigation through different educational contexts. I argue that my thesis provides an illustration how children's experiences could be understood through theoretical lenses providing insights for teachers and schools in the context of schools with highly diverse student populations.

In Chapter 3 I identified some of the disparities and gaps in EAL and transition literature alongside evidence of how children's experiences of schooling are perceived by teachers and school professionals. My analysis then further identified the flexible nature of the term EAL and its shifting meaning for both children and teachers based on individual circumstances, context and expectations. Throughout the analysis I provided a detailed account of how children's experiences of schooling and their agency could be explored through direct interaction in order to understand their positioning and engagement in classrooms. By engaging with the same group of children over a prolonged period of twelve months, I explored the co-creating of understanding of their experiences and generated valuable data that secondary teachers could use in getting to know students in Year 7. In the process, I collated knowledge and insight into teachers' practices and framing of children learning EAL and some of the social and cultural factors undermining the process of capturing agency and engagement.

My study sought to explore the importance of recognising the agency and engagement of children categorised as having EAL through their transition between different contexts and the strategies they employed or developed in the process. Children are active agents in their schooling but their ways of engaging are not always recognised as legitimate because of the dominant power discourses, cultural context and specific pedagogic rules, potentially leading to marginalisation and issues of visibility in the school field. In addition, peer groups and relationships with teachers played a role in

creating more or less desirable positioning and agency. However, the occurrence of marginalised positioning is conscious for neither teachers nor students because it is predetermined by overarching social dominance and power. The implications of this power influence were articulated through the case studies illustrating different stories of transition and types of engagement of children in the context of their own understanding of schooling and through theoretical lenses employed for consistency.

Much of the literature focuses on the language and cultural aspects of EAL disregarding the wider implications of such positioning and experience. My study contributes a different perspective on EAL: using longitudinal data with the same group of students to explore what EAL means in a range of contexts and to different stakeholders in the field, such as children themselves, teacher of different subjects and year groups, and school leaders. By doing this, I explored the meaning and role of EAL in children's experiences beyond language and focused on capitals, conversion strategies and interactions that determine or change children's positioning in schools. These findings complement studies describing EAL from a wider perspective suggesting that children should be seen as actively shaping their own educational experiences and trajectories in changing contexts, even when these are not the immediate observations of teachers (Coffey 2013, Osborn et al. 2006, Topping 2011). This also takes the focus away from the pedagogic function of teachers into a more holistic perspective on the experiences of children and the complexity of schools as social and academic places operated by power and dominance discourses.

Little has been written about the agency and perspectives of schooling of children learning EAL as a distinctive group in schools whereas there is a more comprehensive body of literature and research engaged with student voice as a methodological tool, its advantages and pitfalls (e.g. Ainscow et al. 2012, Greig et al. 2007) and potential in improving school contexts. Although school improvement is a valid agenda to involve student voice and experiences in research, my study provides a different perspective. I

explicitly focused on understanding the agency of children as a project to show that there is more to their experiences than what teachers capture through pedagogic lenses. The contribution of my knowledge to teachers' understandings in the secondary schools was a coincidence rather than an aim and the focus remained on communicating the engagement of children seen from a different perspective. Children's engagement seems to be viewed traditionally through the adult perspective and framing of teachers as to what constitutes acceptable engagement (Topping 2011), or policy documents (e.g. OECD 2010) that explore engagement as a prerequisite for successful teaching and learning. By contrast, Bhatti's work (2007) around perceptions of teachers held by children learning EAL provides an indication of the importance of the relationship children have with their teachers in perceiving schooling positively. Relationships were key in the context of my study where children's agency was partly determined by the way teachers viewed them which in turn were related to relationships and positioning in terms of arrival and background. In this respect, the importance of understanding children's experiences should be placed on the perceptions of children as a shaping factor in their navigation and negotiation of positioning. Although I did not focus on perceptions of teachers explicitly, characteristics that make a difference were mentioned repeatedly proving that perceptions matter on each side of the field.

While my thesis addresses some of these issues, it also provides a more longitudinal approach to exploring agency and giving voice to children's experiences through direct engagement in research activities that shift power relations from the usual classroom context. This was achieved through careful and detailed planning, research methods triangulation and discussions with research supervisors. The use of theoretical lenses to uncover the complexity of schooling experiences and adopt a language for expressing it coherently is a particular strength. By doing this I positioned my study in the intersection of social and academic experiences emphasising the linkages and influences between these two and providing explanations of how one affects the other

but not necessarily in the views of teachers. Other studies have explored EAL through a single theoretical lens – either using Bourdieu to position children in the wider social context (Pagett 2006) or Bernstein to dissect classroom discourses and practice (e.g. Straehler-Pohl & Gellert 2013, Tsatsaroni et al. 2003). These are two separate ways to look at EAL and schooling while my study brings the social and academic experiences together building a more complete picture of the complex contexts navigated by children learning EAL and building on Garcia's notion that EAL is more than two personas in different contexts (1999). My finding that the theoretical framework provides a powerful way to understand children's experiences is important in the context of practitioners' mismatched understandings and shifting definitions of EAL, but much more timely in the disjointed literature presenting different ways to look at EAL as if a child could be reduced to categories such as language, achievement, engagement and culture independently. My research adds coherence to this by a consistent language focus and theoretical interpretation that could be applied in different contexts, and by building explorations over time and in different contexts with the same group of children. In the case of children learning EAL and frequent migrations, capturing experiences in consecutive contexts is difficult due to the logistics and timeframes involved. Indeed, I encountered some of these challenges by losing children from the sample due to further family migration, but the design was such that I could present a perspective of two different contexts and explore strategies to navigate these.

The main findings of the thesis related to children's positioning in different contexts, using transitions as a lens to uncover conversion strategies and negotiation and the understanding of children's agency as important aspects of their experiences. In the sections that follow I focus on each of these implications individually suggesting how they relate to other ideas in the field and the concept of EAL more broadly. By doing this, I aim to clarify the positioning of my thesis in the educational research context and draw out conclusions about the ways children's experiences and agency could be

interpreted to maximise the value for those navigating the school field on a daily basis. This includes both students and teachers who are involved in the educational game and contribute to its complexity through interaction and transmission of the official pedagogic discourses and subjective power relations and views of the field and its social and academic purpose.

Positioning of children

One way of viewing children learning EAL is in relation to the official educational discourses and values leading to labelling and disadvantaged positioning because they do not possess the recognised capitals or social prerequisites for success at school. Walters (2007) points out that this view is deficit-driven in failing to recognise the strengths and potential contribution of children from different backgrounds and classifying them as particular students that fit into dominant categories instead. Her metaphors of the 'ideal' and 'bright but lazy' students ring true in many educational contexts, but they are also a result of the social organisation of the school field as valuing particular types of capital. So in this respect, classifying children as particular type of students is neither new nor surprising but nevertheless carries major implications for children. In my research, I paid attention to such categorisation practices and there was evidence that the need to name categories of students and organise differentiated practice sometimes related to easily visible characteristic without further confirmation whether EAL or the background was the reason for educational underachievement or lack of independence. So in academic terms, pedagogic language and practice had an impact on children's positioning in academic contexts. Relating this to Bourdieu's idea of the habitus as embodiment of culturally and socially (un)acceptable behaviours contributes to the positioning of children in relation to the objective power discourse.

Socially, children tend to form informal relationships with peers based on gender, ability, ethnic and religious background, particular types of social capital. Using social

and linguistic capital and understanding of the context to negotiate positioning in relation to peers and social interactions has been well described (see Chen 2009, Conteh 2003, Pagett 2006, Welply 2010). Spaaij (2012) adds to this body of research the notion of 'bonding social capital' as a survival strategy in the case of international migration and individual sticking within groups formed by people from similar backgrounds. This process supports the idea of the original identity and fosters particular agency that may not be recognised by the dominant field. From the perspective of EAL children and their positioning in school, this means accepted/recognised agency and relevant positioning in informal contexts at odds with lack of recognition in the academic context. Peers are an important source of relevant capital and positioning in informal contexts but this is not in isolation to the formal aspects of schooling. However, negotiating positioning in the latter context requires the development of realisation rules and behaviours that are acceptable (Pagett 2006, Walters 2007). Children learning EAL experiencing that certain ways of behaving are less acceptable than others in formal contexts uncover their agency in making decisions about relevant capital accumulation and engagement over time. Such decisions lead to different types of positioning in relation to the dominant context and more flexible weakly framed informal interactions and positioning. Theodorou and Symeou's (2013) idea that identities are ascribed to children by their schools is similar to Bourdieu's view of the role of the dominant structuring role of the field. The roots of such practice could be sought in the lack of regard for difference as a resource and sweeping assumptions based on background, friendship circle or time of arrival in the school. Perhaps this recurring problem with the primary school positioning was rectified in secondary school as a result of the fair fresh start and ought to be an area for further exploration.

In terms of learning EAL Rassool (2004a) suggests that children modify their diversity through processes of adaptation and hybridisation of cultures in order to fit in new fields while retaining particular unique identities. This idea is in line with the virtual

schoolbag metaphor highlighting the complexity of the habitus and schooling experiences of children. EAL does not mean separate identities, rather an amalgamation of experiences that foster multiple and complex ways of knowing and doing schooling. Children create unique identities in the intersection of cultures as a two way process where they work out positioning in relation to the dominant context figuring out what elements of what they know and do fit in (Bhatti 2007, Welply 2010). Children learning EAL move effortlessly between different cultural and linguistic contexts without an obligation to choose a specific value system, so 'it does not have to be either/or' (Garcia 1999, p. 98). Therefore, the notion of two personas in the same body is simply naïve and not representational. The habitus of children learning EAL is marked by linguistic, social, cultural and economic advantage as a result of accumulated relevant capitals and dispositions to navigate in different fields. Therefore, the positioning of children learning EAL should be considered in its unique position in time and the field, rather than a disadvantage in relation to the dominant culture and context. The challenge is to communicate and embed this view in pedagogic fields and discourses.

Primary to secondary school transition as lens

In the literature transition has been framed as a stressful experience for children in the change of contexts, framing and expectations (Green 1997, Rice et al. 2011). However, as pointed out by Waters et al. (2014) the overarching perspectives are concerned with snapshot data of expectations that is not consequently followed up at the later stages of education. Transitions between primary and secondary school ought to be explored in their complexity and multiplicity of contexts in order to gain an overall view of the processes and feelings that children experience. With this exact starting point, my strategic focus on primary to secondary school transition aimed to develop a study that investigates experiences in a longitudinal aspect. Understanding transitions from the point of expectations through the actual change of contexts into becoming used to the

new context provides a different perspective of the experience. As such primary to secondary school transition was a feasible option. However, there are many potential limitations to exploring transition in their unpredictability, geographical spread, and lack of continuity of relationships in some cases. Perhaps this is why this aspect of children's experiences is largely missing from the literature. Although, I have chosen primary to secondary school transition, the process and findings provide insights that may be similar in other types of transitions, particularly in the multiplicity of these in relation to EAL. Transitions should be considered as vehicles to sustain or challenge particular trajectories for children, and enable agency and participation in different contexts with various framing. Therefore, transitions are an interesting source of data on how children manage changes and respond to contexts and interactions based on their present and past experiences and with future aspirations in mind.

On the whole transition research has been more concerned with provision and support rather than the experience of interactions and contexts. In this respect, children are viewed as passive movers from one context to the next and yet again their agency is missing. Brewin and Stetham (2011) project a concern about the disjointed provision and lack of continuity in transitions. This is a widespread focus shared by teachers alike but it seemed that little could be done in practical terms given the nature of schools. My study gives insight into simple strategies that address the lack of continuity and information sharing between schools. It happened unintentionally, but the value of sharing my experience and knowledge of the children was commended on several occasions. There is a lesson in this, that through adopting practices from research, such as the learning journals, or other tools described by Ainscow et al. (2012), teachers can enrich their understanding of children and their experiences. This is dictated by a need to listen to children and not assume that their experiences are based on background, performance or culturally shaped perceptions of engagement.

Paying close attention to children and their agency

Agency is a contested term in the intersection of different disciplines and philosophical traditions but nevertheless important in understanding social relations and order. Aiming to provide clarity and coherence, I defined agency in the light of Bourdieu's framework in Chapter 2 as the ability of agents to change their positions in the field through past experiences in their habitus and accumulating relevant capitals in shaping the presence and future. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) define agency as informed by the past of individuals but also having a projective capacity of potential possibilities in the future. They criticise Bourdieu's limited view of agency as habitual, repetitive and taken for granted and develop the concept further claiming that the full complexity of agency is only uncovered when situated within time. What is interesting in EAL is its snapshot nature of particular sets of experiences in particular circumstances which do not capture the full picture of children's experiences of their complexity. Without consideration of Emirbayer and Mische's ideas of the temporality of agency, my study followed a path that led to uncovering the importance of contextual and longitudinal positioning of children's agency. My findings stated the importance of context in shaping children's experiences of schooling, capital accumulation and expression of different agency. This reinforces the previous argument providing evidence on how children have different agency in different times because of the specific time and context leading to actions based on the enabling or constraining factors in the field. Such factors are social capital and positioning in informal encounters and academic capital and teacher framing in academic contexts. In this respect, agency is shaped by past habitual circumstances, the possible trajectories of action and a practical evaluation of the present moment. These are manifested through conversion strategies and thus emergent social events and interactions shape agency making it relational to others in the field and to overarching power context.

Seeing agency as a social construction and in relation to time and space in addition to interaction provides a different interpretation of children's experiences. Such interpretation is missing in the EAL and transitions landscape, but also in Bourdieu's work focusing on the dichotomy between objective and subjective power relations or the distinction between structure and agency. Adopting the view that agency is influenced and shaped by a number of factors which are not easily categorised as objective or subjective, rather operating simultaneously in the field, its recognition in the experiences of children is of paramount importance. This view provides a more nuanced perspective informed not only by the objective dominant power, i.e. the teacher, but also by the subjective personal and past experiences of children and their aspiration to change the status quo. Thus, children's agency not being recognised raises questions about the organisation of classrooms and student-teacher relations. It seems that a widely recognised model of student engagement is the one related to behaviour and compliance with the rules of the game as shaped by teachers and the school field (Sugarman & Sokol 2012). More recently, there has been a recognition that engagement is linked to achievement and educational success leading to a shift towards student experience and new ways of making curriculums relevant, however, the experiences of diverse students and those learning EAL have been missing or not considered beyond language.

If we were to learn from past experiences of educating children learning EAL and narrowing the gap in achievement and difference, and if we were to consider that in some schools EAL is the norm rather than an isolated issue to deal with, there should be a drive towards a differently shaped curriculum informed by students and their experiences of the educational system. The wealth of information and strategies to navigate the school field evidenced by shadowing children categorised as having EAL provides a striking insight into the opportunities for misinterpretation that teachers face in their daily practice. This is not a conscious process of ignoring children's experiences and ways of doing school, but a discourse informed understanding of what

schooling is about and what children should be doing in the process. Schooling is a complex game but the insiders are the ones who have the power to challenge the rules and uncover the processes that drive individuals through the field. Children's agency is important and it should be recognised in its multiplicity and shifting nature in different field and in relation to capitals. Furthermore, seeing agency through such lens provides much needed interpretations of why children behave and experience schooling in particular ways and what could be done to shape their experiences more positively to build on the transformative potential of the field and pedagogic practice.

8.6 Summary

For children learning EAL diversity seems to be the norm and they can skilfully navigate such fields through their habitus, conversion strategies, capital accumulation and negotiation of positioning through interaction with pedagogic discourses. Collecting and interpreting children's experiences, agency and engagement begin to shed light on how EAL-ness operates on the ground and for individual children – quite different from perceptions that employ comparison and contrast with the life and experience of adults.

In this chapter I presented the research findings in relation to the research questions and discussed these in the light of research and literature in the field of education, EAL and transition. The main points of the discussion highlighted the significance of the theoretical framework in pointing out agency and engagement, and the difficulty of defining socially and pedagogically constructed concepts that had varying meaning in different contexts and practice. The importance of understanding how agency operates in schools and how it is part of children's experiences is crucial for making use of children's experiences. Uncovering the role of formal and informal contexts in shaping children's experiences and relating these to their past and present experiences provided insight into the complex navigation of school fields. Transferring between

school contexts is not a straightforward process for all children and it is informed and shaped by different influences, including home and cultural capital, social networks and pedagogic discourses. I argued that adopting the dominant pedagogic position is not enough in interpreting the experiences of children as it fails to acknowledge all forms of individual agency and its role in schooling and making decisions. In addition, agency played a role in how informal and formal contexts of schooling operated in interaction through the children's experiences of these and their active navigation of discourses and expectations through engagement.

The theoretical framework added value in understanding the complexity of experiences and agency and in providing a systematic language to present this. The changing positions of children in relation to dominant discourses and power were supported through both theorists' views; however they provided insight through differing focus on the formal and informal. Bourdieu's field analysis provided focus on the informal aspects of schooling and negotiation of positioning, while Bernstein's pedagogic discourses uncovered power relations and interactions in the classroom. My involvement enabled bridging of the two and provided framing for children to reflect on their experiences. I could then in turn feed these back to teachers and begin shaping the practical implications and contribution of this project.

Chapter 9:

Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises my research and its implications. The chapter begins with a reflective account of the research process. It then continues by outlining the limitations of my work and the implications of the findings for both practice and research and a discussion of the theoretical and academic contribution of my research project. I conclude with an afterthought on what my research means for a range of audiences.

In the previous chapter I presented and discussed the research findings in the light of ideas about the importance of noticing and working with children's agency in processes of change. Using primary to secondary school transition as a lens to capture children's agency and engagement in changing contexts, I highlighted how at times their agency is dismissed or misunderstood in structured pedagogic contexts and interactions. This, combined with the perceived lesser importance of children's social domains, creates mismatches between the way teachers and children understand schooling and position themselves in the field. The strength and unique contribution of this thesis is in highlighting how different interpretations lead to different actions and positioning. In investigating this I aim to formulate a set of recommendations for practitioners and future research in order to uncover children's agency as a resource in the classroom and in transitions more generally.

9.2 Reflexivity in the research process

Reflexivity is a necessary aspect of any research project. Reflections on the process ensure professionalism, transparency in decision making and openness about the interpretation of research methodologies and findings. I approached my PhD research

as a development project and abided by Tracy (1010) and Thomson and Walker's view that it is about the skills of doing research well in addition to the social purposes of asking important questions and looking for creative solutions. I developed both personally and professionally by learning new skills, experimenting with new knowledge and approaches and applying numerous ideas in the fieldwork and writing process. To capture my journey, I kept a research journal to record my thinking, interactions with supervisors and respective decisions that shaped the final version of this thesis. Although at times I attempted to remove myself and my values from the research project in an effort to acknowledge the influence of my background on the analysis and interpretation, constructive conversations with my supervisors about my role in the project enabled me to I regain clarity and be more aware of the nuances of my involvement and interactions with research participants which shaped my interpretations of the research process and evidence. Reflecting on this, I positioned myself as a mediator of the experiences of my research participants providing a much needed link of interpretation between teachers and children at the different data generation stages and through theoretical lenses to influence practice (Robbins 2012).

The aim of my study was to find out more about the experiences of children labelled as having EAL in their transition from primary to secondary school through qualitative research methods. I framed the study in terms of aspects of children's experience and their significance in formal and informal educational contexts. Thus, the theoretical framework had a particular role in sustaining this framing of different aspects of schooling experiences. I looked at children's engagement, agency and negotiation of positioning as means to capture individual experiences. Transition between primary and secondary school was used as lens to ensure that I could observe and interact with the children in different environments that would pose different challenges and opportunities for agency expression, engagement and positioning. Bringing in the formal and informal aspects of education, meaning interactions in the classroom and beyond, added another layer to the study intended to reconstruct the complexity of the

social and pedagogic situations that children learning EAL find themselves experiencing.

I carried out the research in one primary school following a class of Year 6 students categorised as having EAL into three local secondary schools. Working with the same group of children was a strategic decision to get to know them and their contexts before the formal transition and then be able to explore their agency, engagement and positioning in the secondary schools in the context of my knowledge and understanding of primary school experiences. I assumed that children would be positioned differently in relation to their experiences with each of the context. For instance, being more established in primary school meant confidence and familiarity with the rules of the game, while six weeks later in secondary school the same children were positioned as the youngest and least experienced (Muschamp 2009). Therefore, I was aiming to capture shifts in positioning and engagement resulting from the change of context and expectations in secondary school. Detailed understanding of the primary school context was going to ensure my alertness to shifts in agency and positioning. I carried out my research in two distinctive stages of data generation followed by data organisation and initial analysis. The aim was to keep everything organised and ensure gaps in my knowledge are addressed as soon as possible, but also keeping the project complexity in check.

In terms of selecting children to take part in the research, I considered the area and type of primary schools I was most interested in. I decided on a highly diverse area which coincidentally featured considerable levels of socio-economic deprivation. I approached two primary schools. I used networks from the University to establish contact with Poppins Primary School and ensure a supportive attitude towards my research. I met with the headteacher initially to discuss my project and after their immediate interest we arranged the first visits. The Year 6 class was selected by the headteacher. Once I became familiar with the two Year 6 classes I thought perhaps the headteacher tried to match Miss Taylor because of her openness to research. If I were

to do the research with the other Year 6 class, I would have had to work with a different teacher-student relationship, rules and positioning. I would have had different access and engagement with the children and their views and experiences. In this respect, the research process was framed by the main gatekeeper who had her own views of what would constitute a good overview of children's experiences based around her insider experience of the school. With Miss Taylor's class I was solely responsible for deciding who to involve in the research and she did not advise on particular children. My research was described as a 'transition project' and I included everyone in the focus groups and discussions but only recorded data from the children categorised by teachers as learners of EAL. Having included others meant that everyone could talk to me in their friendship groups and children did not feel any different for not being selected. Thus I ensured weak classification of the research process as the pedagogic discourse in the classroom at the time. It became clear in Chapters 6 and 7 children were regarded and known differently by the teachers. My inclusive approach was important to make sure I was not marginalising anyone based on sample criteria fit disregarding the wider picture. The class teacher was happy with this approach. During the summer holidays I reflected on the potential cases for the thesis but the final sample was not selected until the final stages of analysis and write-up.

Miss Taylor was the actual gatekeeper in the primary school ensuring access to research time and space to speak to the children. This was further facilitated by the fact that it was the end of the academic year with weaker framing of teaching so children were not missing out while taking part in interviews or focus groups. It was important to establish quickly which secondary schools children were going to in order to gain access. Once I had a list of all the schools, I used my network and initiative to establish contact before the end of Year 6. I secured access to three of the schools, though for some of them it took longer to arrange visits. I had a named contact in each of the schools acting as a gatekeeper. Some of the schools were more flexible than others but the fact that Aster Academy was the most open and the majority of children transferred

there made access much easier. It was more difficult in the other two schools where there were only two children.

It was important for me to engage children in a meaningful process during my research so I exercised caution while planning research activities. I also involved children in the planning to ensure they were interested and willing to share their experiences. This was a way to reduce the power imbalance, raised as an issue in research with children (Erickson et al. 2008, Greig et al. 2007, Robinson & Kellett 2004) For instance, the learning journals were co-created with children who decided on their use and content, I was determining the broad focus of informal discussions but children took on from there deciding what, how and when to share. They were also given choice when they wanted to talk to me and respected if they did not. Part of the success was perhaps in my positioning and attempts to become an insider to their schools and classrooms by spending extensive periods observing and helping out.

On the whole, teachers were interested in my research because they recognised the importance of transition support and the impact of changing schools on children of this age. In some cases they also saw me as a helper in the classroom because of my teaching background and habitus in the classroom context. The other aspect of my research – EAL, was particularly relevant as all the schools boasted large numbers of children from different national and linguistic backgrounds. In the secondary schools I had an additional aspect to my researcher role where I provided knowledge about the children and an informer in terms of what the children were like in primary school and how they had changed or not. This positioning and habitus as an informant rather than a researcher was useful in getting the teachers to trust me and share their views openly. I spent over five months visiting mostly Aster Academy but also Cluster High and Bloom High School and generating data from the children and teachers. After this, I organised and transcribed the dataset ready for analysis and embarked on my theoretical journey.

The process of familiarising myself with Bourdieu and Bernstein's theories and finding a productive and systematic way to use them with my data was not straightforward. Following conversations with my supervisors aiming to pin down my thinking in a constructive direction, I tried different approaches with mixed results. Discussing the successes and pitfalls of each approach, we identified strategies for data analysis that seemed to fit with my thinking and preferred methods of work. Following suggestions to focus on different layers of analysis, a three-column approach of writing the case studies emerged where I could separate these (Appendix 12). The first column contained a retrospective account of the case, engagement and participation in schooling. In the next column, I added critical questions interrogating the accounts to start making sense analytically. The third column contained the theoretical analysis with clearly identified sections for each of the theorists. I separated the text of my initially mixed accounts into each of the columns based on whether I was describing, making assumptions, raising questions or theorising. I then focussed on writing up each of the layers of the account – one at a time – adding emerging questions in the second column. The process enabled me to focus on different aspects and themes within the case studies in a coherent and consistent way across children and schools. I followed this process for eight case studies but as a result of the size and complexity of these accounts, only six were included in the thesis. While writing, I kept consulting my research diary about the different decisions I had made and the directions of my thinking. Writing was another activity I saw as professional development as only through it my research came to life and the case studies evolved at their present state. Once I was writing and referring to theory, I could see their increasing complexity and the interesting ideas that emerged through the theoretical focus and how they could contribute to knowledge and practice.

Applying the theoretical concepts to my involvement in the school fields as a researcher, focusing on transition between schools and experiencing the process longitudinally with the children (e.g. the secondary schools were new for both me and them) enabled

me to learn the rules of the game myself in the specific contexts and position myself as a participant researcher rather than outsider who comes in with the sole purpose to find answers to their own questions (Ely et al. 1991). In the research process my questions shifted in theoretical terms to ensure I was capturing interactions and experiences in enough depth so that they could be deconstructed through Bourdieu's field analysis and Bernstein's pedagogic discourses. Adopting a middle ground as a participant researcher into the framing and classification of the classroom and school field, I was able to observe the past and present activity of children and build understanding through our interactions which was later interpreted for teachers and for the thesis. Particularly at the secondary school stage, when I had obtained valuable knowledge and insights about the children and their primary school context, I was able to understand the complexity of their experiences through my own attempts to make sense of the schools and transition stories and questioning my own assumptions as a teacher. My understanding was enhanced by the use of the theoretical framework and clarifying my own position while interpreting the case studies and discussing the process with my supervisors. Although initially concerned with understanding experiences more broadly, later on I focused on pointing out children's agency in situations where the pedagogic attention was perhaps concentrated on formal engagement as a main project of the thesis.

9.3 Limitations

Qualitative research is not definitive, generalisable or applicable across a wide range of contexts. These are some of the most obvious limitations of my study alongside the interpretative stance. I have remained open about my position as a professional and researcher to clarify the processes of data generation, analysis and interpretation but these were constructed in interaction with the participants in particular contexts and timeframes so they are in a sense unique knowledge (Fraser & Robinson 2004). However, reflecting on the wholeness of the project, I recognised several logistical,

theoretical and methodological limitations and challenges, alongside aspects of my involvement. Lastly, a consideration of the way data was used in the analysis and discussion is made.

Logistics

Involving a large number of schools (for a qualitative study) and adhering to very strict timeframes due to the duration of the research and progression of the children through schooling meant little flexibility in getting access and compensating for factors beyond my control. I was delayed getting access to all schools except one, because of an OFSTED inspection, busy diaries and issues with senior clearances. This meant that I spent less time in some of the schools. My timetable in the schools and access to children was structured by the gatekeepers so again, I had little control over when to see children and in what contexts, which could have influenced my findings and the overall research process. Although I tried to approach all schools in the same way, different relationships and dynamics were developed. This was useful in understanding the cultures of schools and relationships with outsiders, but it meant less access to the children. Coincidentally, this was the case in the schools where there was just one child. The different relationships led to different numbers of lessons observed and amount of data obtained.

Methodology and the researcher within

Blair (2007) raises a question about the myth of neutrality in educational and social research where researchers are in positions of power in relation to the dominant context. I tried to reduce my powered effect on participants through my positioning in the classroom and school. I aimed to be viewed as subordinate to the class teacher, therefore in the same position as children, and achieved this by taking guidance during the research and openly seeking advice how to support the children during lessons. I also made it clear that I was not a teacher, but a researcher, and explained where I work and what I do to ensure children's understanding. Their initial thoughts were that

I was to become a teacher but after realising this was not the case, our relationship developed differently. I tried to keep my promises of what we would do as part of the research and what we would not to keep clear boundaries and maintain my positioning. When I first arrived in secondary school several children remarked that they were happy to see me there as they were unsure if they would after we all left Poppins Primary School.

I used diverse methods for data generation and opportunities for multiple interpretations to recreate a mosaic approach to constructing the children's stories (Greig et al. 2007). However, there is an indication that perhaps different combination of methods and type of researcher involvement would have yielded different data and findings.

Theory

I undertook a lengthy and complicated theoretical journey in the sense that I was reading and trying to apply theory to my research once the fieldwork was under way. Using two different frameworks meant I could present a unique view of my research, but it also required a substantial consideration how the different theoretical strands fit together. By differentiating the formal and informal aspects of education I have achieved a complementary application of the theoretical frameworks, but this is indeed subject to interpretation.

In using theory to present the case studies, I was self-critical in building the accounts of children through several stages of rewriting to ensure I was using a voice that is clearly defined and independent of judgement and not making assumptions based on my personal or professional values. I used discussions with supervisors and the three columns method to ensure I have the correct thinking hat on. I also kept a reflective diary tracing my investment in the personal and group lives of the case study children and research process.

Use of data

Data gathered from students and teachers was used primarily to illustrate the application of the theoretical framework in analysing the experiences of children labelled as having EAL in their transition between primary and secondary schools. In this respect, the presentation of data is at times limited by the theoretical framework and concepts, and detailed illustrations of how they work in practice. In doing this, I moved away from the notion of children's voice to the idea of interpreting their stories from a theoretical perspective and providing an interpretation of their experiences. The limitations around the use of data could be viewed as a learning journey where I practised a particular way of using evidence to develop and apply theoretical concepts which in turn created limited opportunities for the children's stories to unfold and speak for themselves. This is why the analysis throughout the thesis has been organised around theoretical concepts rather than themes emerging from the data. In a sense, this approach has provided coherence across the study.

9.4 Contribution to knowledge and implications

My research has several contributions to knowledge which I have summarised as novel understanding, theoretical and methodological. Each of these contributions is closely linked with implications for practice and research.

Contribution

Although the research confirms many concerns already discussed in EAL and diversity literature, it provides several fresh perspectives:

- A longitudinal understanding of primary to secondary school transition of children labelled as having EAL in a case study setting. The strength of this is the richness of detail and holistic presentation of lived experiences in social and pedagogic contexts with clearly defined EAL focus.

- Theoretical, in terms of using a different perspective to present the positioning of children by developing a theoretical model from two different frameworks – Bernstein and Bourdieu’s work is not often cited together, but through my study I demonstrated a way in which a symbiosis could be achieved to understand a multi-layered social context in both formal and informal education aspects.
- Methodological, in the development and use of the learning journals as a method co-created with children and means of obtaining valuable information. This contribution is potentially valuable to teachers who could use children’s captured experiences and knowledge as a resource.

So what is the value of this research project and its findings? Looking at the experiences of children in schools has yielded valuable insights for both practice and research. While I could make suggestions to practitioners about the richness of easily available data out there, I do not aim to influence policy because the scale of this project is not suitable for this and I also cannot offer practical solutions different from what is already out there in the literature (e.g. Conteh 2012b, Walters 2007). However, further research could potentially have policy-related focus and contribution.

Implications for practice

The findings from my research could be of interest and benefit to teachers and other practitioners in schools. Although I focused specifically on children described by teachers as learners of EAL, the findings are applicable across different groups as those without EAL are likely to have similar experiences. In summary, the main benefits would be:

- Viewing EAL as a broad term that encompasses different abilities, educational trajectories, cultures and backgrounds. This means moving away from labelling practices aiming to structure and orchestrate learning according to language and other specific needs and into inclusive notions of the value of student diversity.

- Teachers have access to a wealth of knowledge about their students if they are prepared to invest time and curiosity in understanding these. Where teachers adopted this approach in the research, they were supporting children more effectively, e.g. in the transition classes, without major time investment.
- Information and suggestions are readily available from children. Including them in decision making and opportunities to share perceptions and experiences could lead to more positive relationships in the classroom, honesty and transparency about what works. The learning journals are a tool that could be easily embedded in a classroom setting.
- Understanding agency and engagement in the formal classroom environment means a shift in roles. The transition classes were very successful in breaking the boundaries between teacher and students and making learning a cooperative process rather than orchestrated by the teacher as an expert. Agency and engagement could be better nurtured through the realisation that both children and teachers have something of value to say; therefore their experiences, knowledge and practice are equally important.

Implications for research

With this project I intended to address a gap in the literature about the experiences, agency and engagement of children labelled as having EAL in changing school context and in different subject areas. The findings could be of interest to other researchers aiming to:

- Conduct research on the transition experiences of children labelled as having EAL or other groups of children misrepresented in research literature.
- Use theory to situate children's experiences in a broader context. My research is an attempt to do this but due to the time and format constraints, I have illustrated one way to use the framework.

- The theoretical framework could be applied in different contexts and subject areas that could yield similar or different findings.
- Illustrate the use of theory to help understand educational experiences outside of the usual thinking pattern of a teacher which could be achieved by linking theory and practice.
- Research children learning EAL who may not readily engage with traditional research methods. My methodology has combined a variety of methods to break potential barriers and relied on active student participation and engagement as part of the research process and methods modification.

9.5 Recommendations for further research

As a result of my study, further research might be conducted in order to find out more about the experiences of children learning EAL in different circumstances:

- Other school subjects;
- Specific backgrounds not represented in my sample due to the composition of Year 6 in Poppins Primary School;
- Focus on very recent arrivals whose experiences may be different.

The theoretical framework could also be further developed to look at children's experiences in academic subjects in more depth and in relation to language in addition to interaction, positioning and agency. Alternatively, other sociological theories could be brought in to understand the experiences of children learning EAL. Last, but not least, it would be interesting to find out whether a similar study would produce different findings in different school contexts of similar or lesser diversity. This would provide insight whether the findings and frameworks are applicable across a wider range of contexts and beyond EAL.

9.6 Concluding remarks

In this closing section I gather and summarise my findings and reflect on the theoretical and personal positioning of this research project.

Answering the research question

The premise for this research was to provide a theoretical explanation of how children learning EAL experience transitions and shifts in school contexts in terms of agency, engagement and negotiation of positioning in the fields.

My research was a qualitative exploratory case study of transition between primary and secondary school of a group of children having English as an additional language. I found in answer to research question (1) that children actively use agency to negotiate their positions in informal contexts in relation to peers and the dominant school cultures. Informal contexts were navigated through friendship groups and peer support contributing to the accumulation of relevant social and cultural capitals. Based on positioning in relation to cultural capitals, teachers made assumptions about the overall engagement and success of children learning EAL leading to misrecognition that did not reflect reality. In answering research question (2) I found that pedagogic discourses, framing and classification have a structuring role in terms of learning, but to different extents in the primary and secondary schools. Children with more apparent EAL needs relied on strong framing and classification to advance their learning and positioning and become able to use the weak framing and classification later on. In terms of positioning in the field, I found that some children had unequal start of schooling in England due to their mid-term arrivals in primary school but their secondary school provided an equal and fair start and transformation opportunities into secondary education. Children who were familiar and established in their school contexts were more confident in navigating them and their transition successfully. Research question (3) prompted reflection on the interaction between informal and formal contexts in terms of understanding children's agency and engagement. I found

that at times teachers make assumptions about children based on their perceived backgrounds and positioning in relation to peers leading to processes of misrecognition or confusion over what constituted appropriate engagement. This created further mismatches between children's and teachers' positions in the classroom in relation to power discourses. I also found that my positioning enabled children to reflect on their schooling experiences in an informal setting that was influenced by their engagement with classroom discourses. In summary, the answer to the main research question is that children learning EAL experience constant positioning, repositioning and navigation that take place simultaneously in formal and informal contexts. This process is influenced by social capitals and formal positioning alike so in order to understand children's experiences their contexts should be explored in their wholeness. Repositioning may be interpreted by teachers in different ways based on their dominant culture and pedagogic discourses. However, there is a wealth of data readily available for teachers to utilise in achieving better understanding of children. Although at times assumptions about children's ability and positioning were evident, the secondary schools and informal schooling contexts provided opportunities for negotiating new positioning.

My work contributes to a body of literature on children's experiences of transitions, agency and diversity more widely by presenting case study account of six transition cases analysed through sociology of education theories. In terms of the schooling of children categorised as having EAL, my findings replicate a widespread concern about the lack of consistency in teaching strategies and the increasing diversity of this group of learners (Conteh 2012b, Lyons 2010). The unclear meaning of EAL is also related to language and confirming that the term encompasses more than speaking English to access the curriculum (Wallen & Kelly-Holmes 2006). The idea about multiplicity of experiences is consistent with Bourdieu's field theory (Jenkins 2002, Grenfell 2012), and the ideas of researchers investigating contemporary contexts of migration (see Garcia 1999, Rassool 2004a). My work is concerned with giving voice to children's

experiences and the importance of these in negotiating classroom interactions and decision making which is in line with the work of Ainscow et al. (2012) and Bhatti (2007). Finally, the use of learning journals is a creative method that contributes to methodological literature.

Theoretical reflections

Using two different theoretical frameworks enabled me to address both formal and informal aspects of schooling through concepts that were suited for each of the contexts. Bourdieu's field analysis was particularly relevant to the informal/social aspects of schooling while Bernstein's pedagogic discourse was aimed at understanding classroom contexts and interactions. There have been comparisons between the two frameworks in the literature (Apple 2001, Harker & May 1993) with a critique from Bernstein (2000, p.175) so I approached the symbiosis with caution and as a learning exercise. Being clear about the applicability of the frameworks in certain contexts enabled me to create consistent descriptions of children's experiences and to open up understanding to a wider social context. My attempt, however, was to illustrate how the two frameworks could complement each other to build understanding and additional work needs to follow to create a model or disseminate further research.

Looking forward

This thesis is the final product of a three year-long journey in understanding the experiences of children learning EAL. Through this journey I not only developed as a researcher, but also personally and professionally in terms of learning how I work, recognising my values and how far I would stretch the balance in my life to achieve my ambitions. I came to conclusions about my aspirations and the quality of this piece of writing working through my emotions that the PhD will never be perfect, just a reflection of my development as a researcher. Much like the children in my research who had expectations that secondary schools would be grand and different and almost magical, I expected that at the stage of writing my thesis I will know all the answers,

feel at ease and have a sense of closure. Without understating the importance of this project, my keen interest in EAL and improving school practices and contexts for these children, I feel like I have only achieved a fraction of my expectations. This thesis is in no way perfect, but it is an honest reflection of learning, experimenting and researching with children. I do not know all the answers, in fact, I have more questions than before I started. And there is no closure but a sense of new beginnings. I am excited about the next steps in my career as a researcher and the future projects that I will embark on. I would like to see this thesis as a stepping stone to bigger and better research that will continue to learn from children learning EAL and disseminate valuable lessons about what works and what could be made better.

I keep recalling key moments in my fieldwork that remind me of how much I have grown and learned as a result of meeting all the children and teachers in Poppins Primary School, Aster Academy, Bloom High School and Cluster High. I enjoyed the discussions we had during breaks and in small groups, listening to children's stories and reflecting on my own transitions, schooling and EAL. I was asked once what kind of student I was, realising I had not thought about this since I left school, but more importantly, no one ever asked me before. So to end on a fair note, I thought I would answer another question that I asked the children one and a half year ago: 'In your transition, tell me one thing that you like, one thing that you worry about and one thing that will make you feel better'. In my transition towards the end of a PhD journey I like the opportunities I had to get to know Eyaz, Hani, Subira, Ayanna, Taj, Hakim, and all the rest; I worry about not having asked all the questions I should have, but knowing that I was open about the process of carrying out my research and its limitations makes me feel better.

The children have moved on and are now Year 9 students. I am moving on too hoping to continue to use the concepts of agency, engagement and positioning to understand children's experiences in different contexts and fields.

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Appendix 1: Timeline of the research

| Year | 2011 | | | | 2012 | | | | | | | | | | | | 2013 | | | | | | | | | | | | 2014 | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|----|----|----|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Timetabled activity | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Panel and ethical clearance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Preparation of research tools | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Primary school recruitment | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Primary school data generation (Poppins Primary School) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Preliminary observations | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Research with children | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Research with teachers | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Secondary schools recruitment | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Transcription | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Data analysis Stage 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Research tools adjustments | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Data generation (Secondary) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Preliminary observations (Aster Academy, Bloom High School) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Preliminary observations (Cluster High) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Research with children | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Research with teachers | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Transcription | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Data analysis Stage 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Data analysis Stage 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Thesis write up | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

* During the period 7-12/2013 I was away from the University to complete an ESRC internship in central government.

Appendix 2: Student profiles (primary school data)

| Name | | Background | | Born | Languages | Came to UK | Came to Claremont | High school | SEN | Consent | | |
|----------|---|--------------|---|-----------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|--|--|
| Seyhan | F | Pakistani | O | Pakistan | Urdu, Arabic, English | 2009 with little English | Y6 / 2012 | Cluster High | N | Y | | |
| Naadiyo | F | Somali | B | Holland | Dutch, Somali, English | 2009 with no English | Y4 / 2009 | Aster Academy | Y - LDiff | Y | | |
| Decca | F | Somali | B | Somalia | Somali, Ethiopian, English | 2009 with no English | Y4 / 2009 | Aster Academy | Y - LDiff | Y | | |
| Aisha | F | | O | n/a | English, Urdu | n/a | Y4 / 2009 | Aster Academy | N | Y | | |
| Nafisa | F | Somali | O | Kenya | Swahili, English | in 2004 | Nursery | Aster Academy | N | Y | | |
| Subira | F | Somali | O | Kenya | Swahili, English | in 2003 | Nursery | Aster Academy | N | Y | | |
| Taban | M | Somali | B | UK | Somali, English | n/a | Nursery | Aster Academy | Y - Beh. | Y | | |
| Adhra | F | Somali | B | Somalia | Somali, English | n/a | Y4 / 2009 | Oakfield High | N | Y | | |
| Jamilla | F | Somali | B | Holland | Dutch, German, Somali, English | 2004 with no English | Reception | Aster Academy | N | Y | | |
| Hani | F | Somali | B | Somalia | Somali, English, Ethiopian | 2008 with no English | Y4 / 2009 | Aster Academy | Y - LDiff | Y | | |
| Ayanna | F | Somali | B | Sweden | Somali, Swedish, English | 2005 with no English | Y4 / 2009 | Cluster High | N | | | |
| Omid | M | Iranian | O | Iran | could not tell me | 2008 with no English | Y3 / 2008 | Aster Academy | Y - LDiff | Y | | |
| Taj | M | Bengali | O | UK | Bengali, English | n/a | Year 4 / 2009 | Aster Academy | N | Y | | |
| Ghedi | M | Somali | B | Somalia | English, Somali | in 2010 | Year 4 / 2009 | Aster Academy | ? - LDiff | Y | | |
| Eyaz | M | Kurdish | O | Kurdistan | Kurdish, English | in 2005? With no English | Nursery | Aster Academy | N | | | |
| Hakim | M | Iraqi/Yemeni | O | Iraq | Arabic English | 2000, 2 months old | Nursery | Bloom High School | N | Y | | |
| Sonny | M | British | W | UK | English | n/a | Year 5 / 2011 | Aster Academy | Y - LDiff | Y - UK | | |
| Liam | M | British | W | UK | English | n/a | Nursery | Aster Academy | N | Y - UK | | |
| Ubah | F | Somali | B | Denmark | English, Somali, Swedish | in 2003 | Nursery | Oakfield High | N | Y | | |
| Katie | F | British | W | UK | English | n/a | Nursery | Solace high | N | Y - UK | | |
| Sadie | F | British | W | UK | English | n/a | Nursery | Bloom High School | N | N | | |
| Jayden | M | | B | UK | English | n/a | Nursery | Oakfield High | N | Y | | |
| Mikaella | F | British | B | UK | English | n/a | n/a | Cluster High | N - Beh. | N | | |
| Keyon | M | | B | n/a | English | n/a | Nursery | Oakfield High | N | N | | |
| Tayah | F | Somali | B | Somalia | Somali, English | n/a | Nursery | Al Shabab | N | Opted out | | |
| Mina | F | Somali | B | Somalia | Somali, English | n/a | Nursery | Aster Academy | N | Opted out | | |
| Blain | M | Zimbabwean | B | UK | English, Shuto | n/a | Nursery | Aster Academy | N | N | | |

Appendix 3: Primary school data generation schedule

| Week | Activities and research days | Comments |
|------|---|---|
| 1 | <p>Week commencing 23/04/2012</p> <p>Get to know the school and Year 6 class – observe lessons and play time, speak to children about the school, speak to teachers – <i>whole day observations</i></p> <p>Learning walk with a group of 3 students– <i>30 minutes</i></p> <p>Learning walk with a group of 3 students– <i>30 minutes</i></p> | <p>2-3 days</p> <p>Type up notes</p> <p>Design questions</p> |
| 2 | <p>Week commencing 30/04/2012</p> <p>Get to know the school and Year 6 class – <i>whole day observations</i></p> <p>Talk to class teacher about student sample – <i>20 minutes</i></p> <p>Observe Science and English lessons – <i>2 lessons – 2 hours</i></p> <p>Learning walk with a group of 3 students – <i>30 minutes</i></p> <p>Learning walk with a group of 3 students – <i>30 minutes</i></p> | <p>2-3 days</p> <p>Type up notes</p> <p>Sample description write-up</p> <p>Design questions</p> |
| 3 | <p>Week commencing 7/05/2012</p> <p>Observe Science and English lessons – <i>2 lessons – 2 hours</i></p> <p>Individual learning walks – <i>2 (1 hour)</i></p> <p>Individual learning walks – <i>2 (1 hour)</i></p> <p>Learning journals intro – <i>30 minutes</i></p> <p>Head / EAL staff interview – <i>30 minutes</i></p> | <p>2 days</p> <p>Type up notes</p> |
| 4 | <p>Week commencing 14/05/2012</p> <p>Observe Science and English lessons – <i>2 lessons – 2 hours</i></p> <p>Learning walk with focus group students – simplify it to ‘Take me to the best place in your primary school!’ (<i>15 minutes</i>)</p> <p>Focus group 1 – expectations of secondary school (<i>30 minutes</i>)</p> <p>Individual learning walks – <i>4 (2 hours)</i></p> <p>After-school clubs –</p> | <p>2 days</p> <p>Type up notes</p> <p>Ketso</p> <p>Transcribe discussion</p> |
| 5 | <p>Week commencing 21/05/2012</p> <p>Observe Science and English lessons – <i>2 lessons – 2 hours</i></p> <p>Individual interviews – <i>4 (2 hour)</i></p> <p>Individual learning walks – <i>3 (1.5 hours)</i></p> <p>Teacher interviews – <i>2 (1.5 hours)</i></p> <p>Learning journals – tell the stories activity (<i>20-30 minutes</i>)</p> | <p>2 days</p> <p>Type up notes</p> <p>Transcribe interview</p> <p>Notes / record</p> |
| 6 | <p>Week commencing 28/05/2012</p> <p>Observe Science and English lessons – <i>2 lessons – 2 hours</i></p> | <p>2 days</p> <p>Type up notes</p> |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| | Individual learning walks – 3 (<i>1.5 hours</i>) Teacher interview – 1 (<i>45 minutes</i>) EAL staff interviews – 1 (<i>45 minutes</i>) After-school clubs | Transcribe interview |
| 7 | Week commencing 4/06/2012 Catch up on notes, transcribing and questions for after half term Plan research for the remaining weeks | Half term week |
| 8 | Week commencing 11/06/2012 Observe Science and English lessons – 2 lessons – 2 hours Individual interviews – 4 (2 hours) Learning journals – tell the stories activity (20-30 minutes) | 2 days Type up notes Transcribe interviews Notes / record |
| 9 | Week commencing 18/06/2012 Observe Science and English lessons – 2 lessons – 2 hours Starter activity – take me to the best place in your primary school? (15 minutes) Focus group 2 – expectations of secondary school (30 minutes) Non-teaching staff interview – 2 (1.5 hours) After-school clubs | 2 days Type up notes Ketso Transcribe discussion and interviews |
| 10 | Week commencing 25/06/2012 Observe Science and English lessons – 2 lessons – 2 hours Individual interviews – 4 (2 hours) Head / EAL staff interview (30 minutes) Learning journals – tell the stories activity (20-30 minutes) | 2 days Type up notes Transcribe interviews |
| 11 | Week commencing 2/07/2012 Observe Science and English lessons – 2 lessons – 2 hours Individual interviews – 4 (2 hours) After-school clubs | 2 days Type up notes Transcribe interviews |
| 12 | Week commencing 9/07/2012 Observe Science and English lessons – 2 lessons – 2 hours Individual interviews – 4 (2 hours) Learning journals – tell the stories activity (20-30 minutes) | 2 days Type up notes Transcribe interviews |
| 13 | Week commencing 16/07/2012 | Last week of school |

Appendix 4: Secondary school timetables

| | B Mon | B Tue | B Wed | B Thurs | B Fri |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| 1 | Omid Lit Miss Al-Adhiri C6 Naadiyo Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Taban Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Decca Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Hani Lit Miss Higgins CS7 | Omid Lit Miss Al-Adhiri C6 Naadiyo Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Taban Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Decca Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Hani Lit Miss Higgins CS7 Aisha Sci Mr Potter B9 Subira Sci Mr Potter B9 Nafisa Sci Miss Grant B12 Eyaz Sci Miss Grant B12 | Jamilla Eng Miss Williams C4 | Omid Lit Miss Al-Adhiri C6 Naadiyo Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Taban Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Decca Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Hani Lit Miss Higgins CS7 | Omid Lit Miss Al-Adhiri C6 Naadiyo Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Taban Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Decca Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Hani Lit Miss Higgins CS7 |
| 2 | | Jamilla Sci Miss Someh B11 | Aisha Sci Mr Potter B9 Subira Sci Mr Potter B9 Nafisa Sci Miss Grant B12 Eyaz Sci Miss Grant B12 | | Aisha Eng Miss Martin C6 Subira Eng Miss Martin C6 Nafisa Eng Miss Williams C8 Eyaz Eng Miss Williams C8 |
| 3 | | | | Aisha Eng Miss Martin C6 Subira Eng Miss Martin C6 Nafisa Eng Miss Williams C8 Eyaz Eng Miss Williams C8 | |
| 4 | Jamilla Eng Miss Crawford C4 Aisha Eng Miss Martin C6 Subira Eng Miss Martin C6 Nafisa Eng Miss Williams C8 Eyaz Eng Miss Williams C8 | | Aisha Eng Miss Martin C6 Subira Eng Miss Martin C6 Nafisa Eng Miss Williams C8 Eyaz Eng Miss Williams C8 | | |
| 5 | Aisha Sci Mr Potter B9 Subira Sci Mr Potter B9 Nafisa Sci Miss Grant B12 Eyaz Sci Miss Grant B12 | Aisha Eng Miss Martin C6 Subira Eng Miss Martin C6 Nafisa Eng Miss Williams C8 Eyaz Eng Miss Williams C8 | Jamilla Sci Mr Smith B10 | Jamilla Eng Miss Crawford C4 | Jamilla Sci Mr Smith B10 Aisha Sci Mr Potter B9 Subira Sci Mr Potter B9 Nafisa Sci Miss Grant B12 Eyaz Sci Miss Grant B12 |

| | R Mon | R Tue | R Wed | R Thurs | R Fri |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Omid Lit Miss Al-Adhiri C6 Naadiyo Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Taban Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Decca Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Hani Lit Miss Higgins CS7 Aisha Sci Mr Potter B9 Subira Sci Mr Potter B9 Nafisa Sci Miss Grant B12 Eyaz Sci Miss Grant B12 | Omid Lit Miss Al-Adhiri C6 Naadiyo Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Taban Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Decca Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Hani Lit Miss Higgins CS7 Jamilla Sci Miss Someh B11 | Omid Lit Miss Al-Adhiri C6 Naadiyo Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Taban Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Decca Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Hani Lit Miss Higgins CS7 Jamilla Eng Miss Williams C4 | Omid Lit Miss Al-Adhiri C6 Naadiyo Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Taban Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Decca Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Hani Lit Miss Higgins CS7 | Omid Lit Miss Al-Adhiri C6 Naadiyo Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Taban Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Decca Lit Miss Al-Adhiri CS6 Hani Lit Miss Higgins CS7 Aisha Eng Miss Martin C6 Subira Eng Miss Martin C6 Nafisa Eng Miss Williams C8 Eyaz Eng Miss Williams C8 |
| 2 | Jamilla Eng Miss Crawford C4 | Aisha Sci Mr Potter B9 Subira Sci Mr Potter B9 Nafisa Sci Miss Grant B12 Eyaz Sci Miss Grant B12 | | Jamilla Sci Mr Smith B10 Aisha Sci Mr Potter B9 Subira Sci Mr Potter B9 Nafisa Sci Miss Grant B12 Eyaz Sci Miss Grant B12 | Aisha Eng Miss Martin C6 Subira Eng Miss Martin C6 Nafisa Eng Miss Williams C8 Eyaz Eng Miss Williams C8 |
| 3 | | Jamilla Eng Miss Crawford C4 | | | |
| 4 | Jamilla Sci Miss Someh B11 | | Aisha Sci Mr Potter B9 Subira Sci Mr Potter B9 Nafisa Sci Miss Grant B12 Eyaz Sci Miss Grant B12 Jamilla Sci Miss Someh B11 | Jamilla Eng Miss Williams C4 | |
| 5 | Aisha Eng Miss Martin C6 Subira Eng Miss Martin C6 Nafisa Eng Miss Williams C8 Eyaz Eng Miss Williams C8 | Aisha Eng Miss Martin C6 Subira Eng Miss Martin C6 Nafisa Eng Miss Williams C8 Eyaz Eng Miss Williams C8 | | | Jamilla Eng Miss Crawford C4 |

Appendix 5: Sample research instruments

5.1 Classroom observation focus sheet

Classroom observations focus sheet

Two levels of classroom observation – individual case study students and the whole class

Q: What do students make use of during lessons?

Q: What's expected of the students?

ENGLISH / LITERACY

1. Use of language – are the students looking at different genres, e.g. letter, biography?
2. Vocabulary in a broad sense
3. Use of words in context
4. Reinforcement strategies
5. Grammar focus – is it useful for EAL pupils? Can they use it with other languages?
6. Evidence of process based approach to language teaching – e.g. research / drafting / peer critique / final draft / celebration. How do pupils engage in this process? How easy / useful do they find that?
7. What issues are being addressed in lessons? How are students making sense of that? - cultural experiences integrated in the English curriculum and big issues brought into the classroom, e.g. racism

SCIENCE

1. What do teachers do with students' prior knowledge? How is their prior knowledge recognised and used?
2. Evidence for conceptual development and how it works for these children? – e.g. language dependent
3. How does the teacher learn about what a pupil knows / doesn't know?
4. Group work and practicals – How do students talk to each other specifically in terms of making sense of experiments? How do students make sense of what is happening in front of them? What are the case study pupils doing? What roles are they taking?
5. Be aware of maths' influence on learners

5.2 Children interview scripts

| Question/theme | Link to the research questions |
|---|---|
| Primary school | |
| Can you tell me a bit about yourself? Where do you come from? When did you come to this school? | Getting to know the children |
| Let's talk about this school, what are your favourite subjects and why? | Positioning in relation to and engagement with school subjects Agency Question 2 |
| What are the subjects that you don't enjoy as much? Why do you think is that? | Positioning in relation to and engagement with school subjects Agency Question 2 |
| What would you say to someone coming to study in your school? What should they know? | Exploring how children's perspectives change in different contexts and circumstances Question 3 |
| Which school are you going to in September? What do you know about the school? | Expectations of secondary school |
| Have you been in the new school before? What was it like? | To find out more about their experiences and perceptions of transition and changing contexts Question 3 |
| Do your teachers talk to you about 'big school'? How does that make you feel? Is there anything that you would like them to do differently? | Exploring the role of teachers in shaping children's experiences Pedagogic discourses Exploring how the transition process could be improved from the children's perspective Questions 1, 2, 4 |
| Secondary school | |
| Tell me about your new school. How has it been? | Initial positioning in the new context and in comparison to primary school Questions 1, 2, 3 |
| Let's talk about this school, what are your favourite subjects and why? | Positioning in relation to and engagement with school subjects Agency Question 2 |
| What are the subjects that you don't enjoy as much? Why do you think is that? | Positioning in relation to and engagement with school subjects Agency Question 2 |
| How is this school different than the one last | To explore differences between the |

| | |
|--|--|
| year? | two school contexts Engagement and positioning negotiation Questions 1, 2 and 3 |
| What is it that you like most about this school? | To understand children's experience formally and informally Academic and social positioning Questions 1 and 2 |
| Is there anything that worries you at this school? | To understand children's experience formally and informally Academic and social positioning Questions 1 and 2 |
| How do you cope with studying at this school? What about friends? Who are your friends? | To understand children's experience formally and informally Social positioning Questions 1 and 2 |
| How well do you think your teachers know/understand you? Is that any different than primary school? | Positioning in relation to teachers and discussing the perceived role of teachers in secondary schools Academic positioning in different contexts and framing situations Questions 2 and 3 |
| Do you think that your teachers care about you? How do you know that? How do you know when a teacher cares about the children? | Positioning in relation to teachers and discussing the perceived role of teachers in secondary schools Academic positioning in different contexts and framing situations Questions 2 and 3 Potentially could lead to an answer to Q 4 |
| Do you think that teachers care the same for all children or is it different in some ways? | Positioning in relation to teachers and discussing the perceived role of teachers in secondary schools Academic positioning in different contexts and framing situations Questions 2 and 3 Potentially could lead to an answer to Q 4 |

5.3 Teachers interview scripts

| Question/theme | Link to the research questions |
|---|---|
| Primary school | |
| How does the school categorise EAL pupils? When they come to school how are they assessed? Who are the EAL children in your class? | To understand formal EAL procedures and how teachers frame this group of children Question 2 |
| How do you define your role at school and beyond in terms of children learning EAL? How do you go about such a big class without any immediate support? How do you manage the diversity of your class? | To understand formal EAL procedures and how teachers frame this group of children Question 2 |
| Who do you know best in terms of the children in your class? Are there any pupils that you don't really know? Why is that? | To understand how teachers view children in their classes both academically and socially Children's engagement and agency to be discussed Questions 1 and 2 |
| What teaching strategies do you use to provide access to learning and opportunities for all children to participate in lessons? How is that different with different (groups of) children? | To understand teaching in relation to EAL and the support children get academically Pedagogic discourses Question 2 |
| What is your view of high school? What do you think next year is going to be like for your class? Can you give me examples with specific children as well? | Teachers' perception of transition and children's experiences, this has direct impact on the way they shape options for children in talking about secondary school Questions 3 and 4 |
| Does the forthcoming transition cause any problems to you? | Transition in relation to pedagogic discourse Question 2 |
| Could you clarify the existing grouping schemes and how they work to benefit students? | To understand formal EAL procedures and how teachers frame this group of children Question 2 |
| When do you get to know parents? Do you know some parents better than others? Why is that happening? | To understand home-school relationships and EAL assumptions Question 4 |
| Secondary schools | |
| How does the school categorise EAL pupils? When they arrive in the school how are they assessed? Is there a difference between mid-term and standard arrivals? Who are the EAL children in your class? | To understand formal EAL procedures and how teachers frame this group of children Question 2 |
| Is there an EAL team based at the school? What is the role of this team? What is the | To understand formal EAL procedures and how teachers frame |

| | |
|--|--|
| rationale for additional support for some children? | this group of children Question 2 |
| Who else is involved in the teaching and support of EAL children? | To understand formal EAL procedures and how teachers frame this group of children Positioning of EAL Question 2 |
| How do you manage the diversity of your Year 7 classes? | Prompt beyond EAL, intending to look at ability as well Question 2 |
| What teaching strategies do you use to provide access to learning and opportunities for all children to participate in lessons? How is that different with different groups of children? | Supporting EAL in the classroom Pedagogic discourse and positioning Question 2 and 3 |
| How do you use children's prior knowledge in your subject area? How do you learn about what the children in your class know and don't know? | Supporting EAL in the classroom Pedagogic discourse and positioning Continuity of children's experiences Question 2 and 3 |
| Can you tell me about the use of language in your subject area, especially with respect to EAL students? | Supporting EAL in the classroom Pedagogic discourse and positioning Question 2 and 3 |
| What is your view of primary school? What do you think children's experiences have been there? | Continuity of children's experiences Assumptions about primary school Questions 3 and 4 |
| Could you clarify the existing ability setting schemes with regards to year 7 classes? | To understand formal EAL procedures and how teachers frame this group of children Question 2 |
| When do you get to know parents? In your view, what is the parental role with regards to the education of children learning EAL? | To understand home-school relationships and EAL assumptions Question 4 |

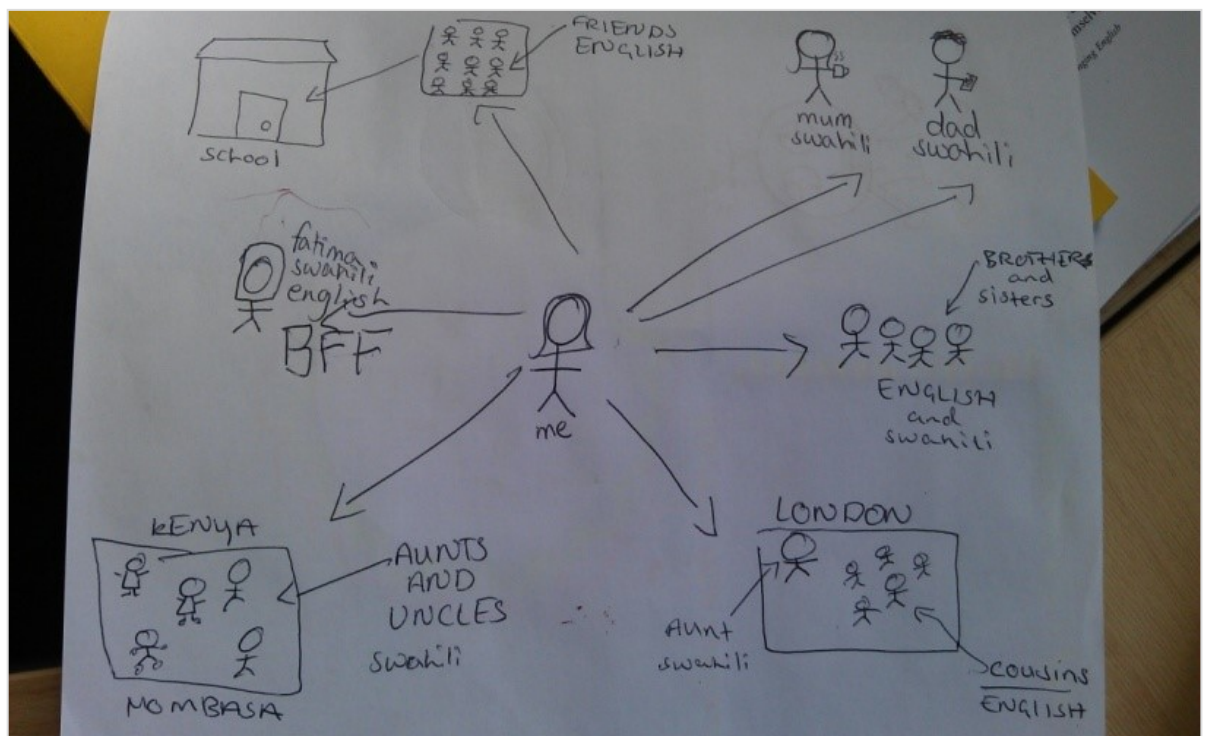
5.4 Learning journals activities

| Activity | Description |
|--|---|
| Memories from primary school | <p>I asked children to use their journals and record their memories from primary school as an activity to ease them into the process of keeping a journal and negotiate its purpose together. They could do this in writing, with pictures, by sticking cut-outs.</p> <p>I also hoped to use this work at the secondary school stage to prompt a discussion about their primary school and how things have changed.</p> <p>The activity was useful in capturing what was important to the children at this particular stage of their education.</p> |
| Language map | <p>We created maps of the languages we spoke to different people around us. I used this to find out what languages children spoke and to whom. It prompted a discussion about identity and communication with different people to convey different meanings and nuances.</p> <p>The method relates to linguistic capital and dispositions.</p> |
| Schooling timeline | <p>Children were asked to produce a timeline of their schooling so that I can see their journeys. Some of them also reflected on how each transition/new school made them feel and what they enjoyed about the experience.</p> |
| Blob pictures | <p>Used to establish positioning in the school. I used a picture of a classroom and playground and invited children to circle who they are in the two settings on a weekly basis. This then led to a discussion of the person they chose and the reasons behind this.</p> <p>The method relates to positioning and shifts in the classroom and play contexts.</p> |
| Out-of-school and out-of-lesson activities | <p>I used a worksheet to capture children's activities beyond lessons in a less formal and interactive way. Instead of asking them individually, we worked through the sheets as a group and they shared their activities with me and the rest of the group. I could then ask for clarifications around their decisions, agency and what was expected of them at home. I used these to understand better children's informal positioning and identity processes.</p> |
| Subject word cards | <p>To identify how children feel about the lessons in their school, focusing on English and science and providing them with words to express this.</p> |
| Language questionnaires | <p>As I worked with a large number of children, I asked those who did not keep a journal to complete language questionnaires so I have a record of the languages they spoke and how they made choices about these.</p> |

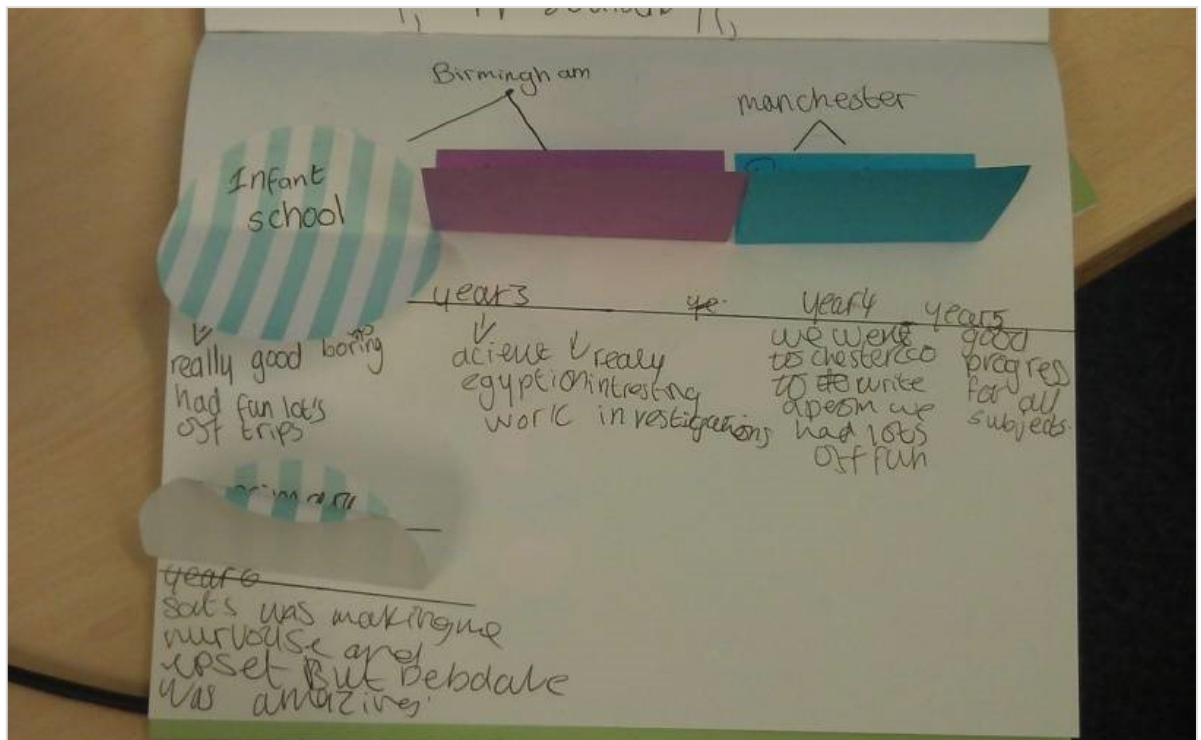
Memories from primary school



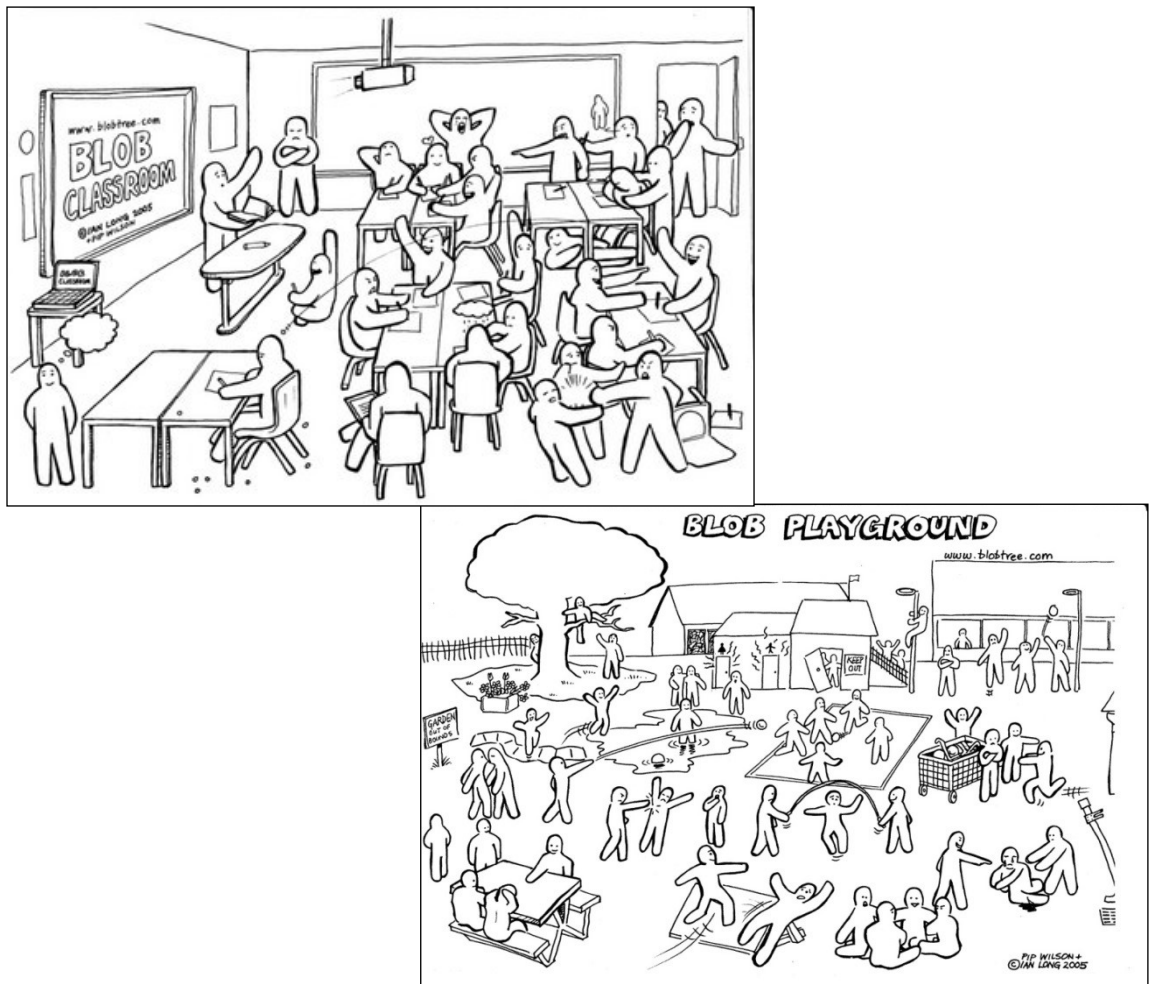
Language map



Schooling timeline



Blob pictures



Subject word cards activity

Objective: To identify how children feel about the lessons in their school, focusing on English and science

Materials: Word cards – subjects, adjectives, blank

Time: 15 minutes

Working in groups

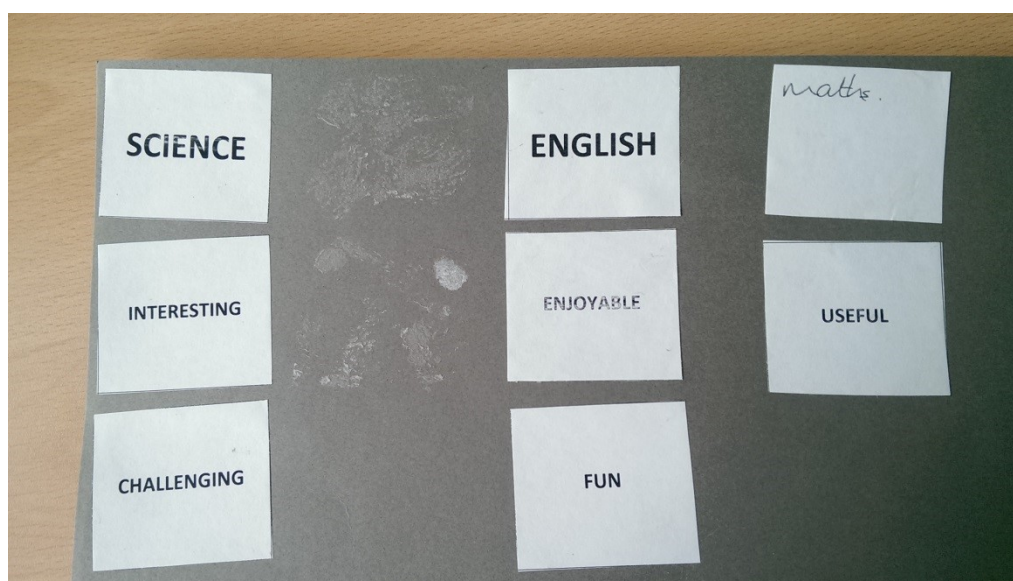
Activity:

1. Pupils are given the word cards with adjectives and blank cards.
2. Pupils have to discuss the adjectives and their lessons in their groups and decide how they are going to match the cards with school subjects. They could also write additional adjectives on the blank cards that they feel correspond to the lesson and explain why.

Comments: The activity is observed by a researcher taking notes on what pupils say about the lessons in their school

Ethical issues: Children should speak in such a way that does not offend any teacher

| | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| SCIENCE | USEFUL | FUN | NOT INTERESTING | INTERESTING | BORING |
| ENGLISH | ENJOYABLE | CONFUSING | DIFFICULT | CHALLENGING | |































Out-of-school and out-of-lesson activities worksheet (from Manchester Inclusion Standard)

Timetable

1 Fill in the following table to indicate what kind of activities you take part in – out-of-school activities or out-of-lessons activities.

2 Circle or tick one of the facial expressions to indicate what you think about each activity.

| | Mondays | | Tuesdays | | Wednesdays | | Thursdays | | Fridays | | Saturdays | | Sundays | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Out -of- school activities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| |  Love it |  It's ok |  Love it |  It's ok |  Love it |  It's ok |  Love it |  It's ok |  Love it |  It's ok |  Love it |  It's ok |  Love it |  It's ok |
| School activities outside of lessons | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| |  Love it |  It's ok |  Love it |  It's ok |  Love it |  It's ok |  Love it |  It's ok |  Love it |  It's ok |  Love it |  It's ok |  Love it |  It's ok |

If you don't go to many activities, can you say why not?

Language questionnaires (adapted from Conteh, J. (2006) Promoting learning for bilingual pupils 3-11. London: Sage)

Student questionnaire

Name: _____

Date: _____

About me

I was born in _____ (country). My parents came from _____.

I came to live in England in _____ (year).

My first school was _____ (name).

My languages – at home

When I speak to my mum/dad I speak in _____ (language).

When I speak to my grandma/grandpa I speak in _____.

My older brother/sister speaks to me in _____.

My younger brother/sister speaks to me in _____.

When I speak to my friends _____, I speak in _____.

I can read/write/speak:

Read: _____ Speak: _____ Write: _____

At home I have books written in _____.

At home the language that I use the most is _____.

My languages – at school

At break time I speak in _____.

In the classroom I speak in _____.

At school the language I use the most is _____.

This questionnaire was



Appendix 6: Methods triangulation

| Question | Method | Lesson observations | Informal observations | Discussions w/children | Learning walks | Focus group | Learning journals | Interviews w/teachers |
|---|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Main: How do children labelled as having EAL express agency, engagement and negotiate positioning as they navigate through different contexts in the school field? | | X | X | X | X | | | X |
| 1. How do children labelled as having EAL act on their positioning, agency and engagement in informal educational aspects? | | | X | X | | | X | |
| 2. How do children labelled as having EAL navigate through their formal schooling (meaning positioning, agency and dispositions in formal educational aspects)? | | X | | X | X | X | | X |
| 3. How does positioning in the informal aspects of schooling relate to/play out in the context of lessons? | | X | X | | | | X | |
| 4. What are the implications for schools in the light of my research? | | X | | | | X | X | X |

Appendix 7: Ethics forms

A summary of my research project

Title: Understanding the experiences and engagement of children with English as an additional language in their transition from primary to secondary schools

My research project is looking into the process of transition from primary to secondary school of children having English as an additional language and specifically how this group of children manage the process of change of their learning environment, their perceptions of the rules and expectations associated with the different stages of education.

My plan is to look at the experiences of children categorised as having EAL as they progress from primary to secondary school. I am interested in the way children think about transition and the feelings they associate with it. I intend to follow a group of students from the last two terms of Year 6 into Year 7 in their new secondary schools. This is not just an exploratory study of children's views; I will aim to give voice to students preparing to make the transition to contribute to the development of appropriate and well-judged school support practices. In addition, I am currently developing an idea of using learning journals as a methodological and personal reflexive tool that will enable children to articulate their views, especially in consideration of the practicalities associated with English as an additional language. As part of my research I will also consider the views of teachers in both primary and secondary contexts, where I will focus on two contrasting core subject areas – English and Science.

In terms of practicalities, my research plan has been reviewed by the Progress Review Panel held in January 2012 at the University with no corrections pending. I have also obtained an Ethical Committee approval (Ref: PGR-7796292-A1) allowing me to proceed with this research project and I hold an enhanced CRB check.

I very much hope that my project is of interest to you and your school. I would be very happy to give you more information and answer any questions you have in an informal meeting – without obligation of course. My research is fully supported by my supervisor Dr Andy Howes. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Dimitrina: dimitrina.kaneva@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

Andy: andrew.j.howes@manchester.ac.uk

Many thanks for reading this introduction to my project. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Dimitrina

Dear parent/carer,

My name is Dimi Kaneva and I am a research student from the University of Manchester. I am currently working with Poppins Primary School to understand and improve the experiences of children as they move from primary school to secondary school.

I am spending 2 days per week at school and I would like to ask your child some questions about his/her expectations and thoughts about going to secondary school in September. I will be interviewing children at school individually and in small groups and then meet them again in their secondary schools after September. I will be asking them about their experiences of learning English and preparing to make the change to high school.

It is expected that the project will provide us with important information about how the transition of your child could be better facilitated. We would like your son/daughter to be involved in this project, which has already been explained to him/her.

Please would you sign below to give your permission and return the slip to the school as soon as possible. Many thanks.

Should you have questions or you would like to discuss the project with me, I would be happy to help. I will be available after school on the following dates:

15 June; 19 June; 20 June; 25 June; 4 July; 9 July.

Yours faithfully,

Dimi Kaneva

Research Student (University of Manchester)

.....
Manchester University / Poppins Primary School Project on Transition from Primary to Secondary School


PLEASE RETURN TO Miss Taylor / Ms Kaneva in Y6

I give permission for my son/daughter
to take part in this project.

Signed Date

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| <div> The University of Manchester </div> <div> MANCHESTER 1824 </div> <div> <p>Transition from primary to secondary education: Understanding the experiences of children and young people learning English as an additional language (EAL)</p> </div> <div> <p>Participant Information Sheet (School staff)</p> </div> <div> <p>You are being invited to take part in a study looking at the experiences of children and young people learning English as an additional language as they progress from primary to secondary school. This study is part of my research degree and will take the form of a thesis in order to complete my studies in 2014. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why this study is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.</p> </div> <div> <p>Who will conduct the study?</p> </div> <div> <p><i>Dimitrina Kaneva</i></p> </div> <div> <p><i>Research student at the University of Manchester, Oxford Road, M13 9PL</i></p> </div> <div> <p>Title of the study</p> </div> <div> <p><i>Transition from primary to secondary education: Understanding the experiences of children and young people learning English as an additional language in the North West / Greater Manchester area</i></p> </div> <div> <p>What is the aim of the study?</p> </div> <div> <p><i>The aim of this study is to present the experiences of children and young people who are speakers of English in addition to other languages as they progress from primary to secondary school. The study will look at ways in which the children can be supported through their worries of changing schools, if any, and explore their ideas of how schools can be made a better place for all children.</i></p> </div> <div> <p>What would I be asked to do if I took part?</p> </div> <div> <p><i>You will be asked to take part in an interview where you will be asked questions about the inclusion of students learning EAL in Year 6/7 and the ways in which they are prepared to make a transition from primary to secondary school in terms of both academic curriculum and informal school experiences such as friendships, clubs, etc. (In addition, I would like to observe one of your lessons weekly and have a debriefing chat after some of the observations.) You are not under any obligation to respond to a question that makes you feel uncomfortable and you could stop the interview at any time if you feel discomfort.</i></p> </div> <div> <p>What happens to the data collected?</p> </div> <div> <p><i>All the data collected during this project will be carefully analysed and any inconsistencies</i></p> </div> | <div> <p><i>will be further checked with you to make sure that the views of all participants are represented accurately. Data will be stored securely, it will be only used for the write up of my thesis and related academic publications and will be destroyed in 5 years after the last publication is submitted. .</i></p> </div> <div> <p><i>All names of people and locations will be erased from the data and will be substituted with fictional names so that the identities of participants are protected.</i></p> </div> <div> <p><i>However, if disclosed information suggests that either you or someone else at school is at risk, I will have to report the case to a designated member of staff who is the main contact for this research. Then the necessary measures for protection will be taken.</i></p> </div> <div> <p>What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?</p> </div> <div> <p><i>It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Participation is entirely voluntary and you will not be made to participate against your will. If you decide not to take part, no undue influence will be applied in order to persuade you to do otherwise.</i></p> </div> <div> <p><i>If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. In this case data collected from your participation will be destroyed.</i></p> </div> <div> <p>What is the duration of the study?</p> </div> <div> <p><i>The duration of the whole project is between March 2012 and January 2013 where the sample students will be followed from the primary school into the secondary. Your participation will be required for either March – July 2012 (primary school staff) or September – January 2013 (secondary school staff). This is the time when the observations and interviews will take place in a time that is convenient to you.</i></p> </div> <div> <p>Where will the study be conducted?</p> </div> <div> <p><i>The study will be conducted at the school where you work.</i></p> </div> <div> <p>Will the outcomes of the study be published?</p> </div> <div> <p><i>The details of the study will be in the form of a thesis and they will be further disseminated in the form of academic publications in peer reviewed journals or conference proceedings.</i></p> </div> <div> <p>Contact for further information</p> </div> <div> <p><i>If you are interested in the research and would like more information, assistance of help, please do not hesitate to contact me: dimitrina.kaneva@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk</i></p> </div> <div> <p><i>If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093</i></p> </div> |
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|  | <p>Transition from primary to secondary education: Understanding the experiences of children and young people learning English as an additional language (EAL)</p> <p>Participant Information Sheet (Parents)</p> <p>You are being invited to take part in a study looking at the experiences of children and young people learning English as an additional language as they progress from primary to secondary school. This study is part of my research degree and will take the form of a thesis in order to complete my studies in 2014. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why this study is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.</p> <p>Who will conduct the study? Dimitrina Kaneva Research student at the University of Manchester, Oxford Road, M13 9PL In addition, the details of the main contact within the school will be provided as well.</p> <p>Title of the study Transition from primary to secondary education: Understanding the experiences of children and young people learning English as an additional language in the North West / Greater Manchester area</p> <p>What is the aim of the study? The aim of this study is to find out about the experiences of children and young people who are speakers of English in addition to other languages as they progress from primary to secondary school. The study will look at ways in which your child is supported through their worries in the time of changing schools, if any, and explore his/her ideas of how schools can be made a better place for all children.</p> <p>What would my child be asked to do if s/he took part? Your child will be asked to take part in the following activities during the course of my research: - Two learning walk around the school for no more than 30 minutes when I will be asking questions about the different rooms in school and different activities taking place – one in the primary school and one in the secondary; - Two interview that will last no more than 30 minutes. I will ask your child about his/her experiences at school and how these could be improved – one in the primary school, one in the secondary; - One focus group lasting no more than 30 minutes where a group of students will be asked to reflect on their expectations and worries about secondary school – this will only take place in the primary school; - Weekly lesson observations in agreement with the class/form teacher. I will be looking at how your child's learning is supported in class activities and how they choose to take part or not.</p> | <p>- Your child will be asked to keep a journal – a notebook at school where s/he can write and draw about his/her future transition to big school. The journal will be kept at school. During the conversations your child will not be obliged to respond to any questions that make him/her feel uncomfortable. Part of the data may be audio recorded and later transcribed.</p> <p>What happens to the data collected? All the data collected during this project will be carefully analysed and any inconsistencies will be further checked with you to make sure that the views of all participants are represented accurately. Data will be stored securely, it will be only used for the write up of my thesis and related academic publications and will be destroyed in 5 years after the last publication is submitted. All names of people and locations will be erased from the data and will be substituted with fictional names so that the identities of participants are protected. However, if disclosed information suggests that either you or someone else at school is at risk, I will have to report the case to a designated member of staff who is the main contact for this research. Then the necessary measures for protection will be taken.</p> <p>What happens if I do not want my child to take part or if I change my mind? It is up to you to decide whether or not to allow your child to take part. Participation is entirely voluntary and you will not be convinced in any way to take a certain decision. If you decide for your child not to take part, no undue influence will be applied in order to persuade you to do otherwise. If you do decide to allow your child's participation, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. In this case data collected from your participation will be destroyed.</p> <p>What is the duration of the study? I will be at your child's schools between March 2012 and January 2013. During that time your child will be asked to take part in the outlined activities.</p> <p>Where will the study be conducted? The study will be conducted at the school attended by your child. A permission from the school has already been obtained and they have a copy of my CRB check.</p> <p>Will the outcomes of the study be published? The details of the study will be in the form of a thesis and they will be further disseminated in the form of academic publications in peer reviewed journals or conference proceedings.</p> <p>Contact for further information If you are interested in the research and would like more information, assistance of help, please do not hesitate to contact me: dimitrina.kaneva@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093</p> |
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| <div>  </div> | <div> <p>Transition from primary to secondary education: Understanding the experiences of children and young people learning English as an additional language (EAL)</p> </div> <div> <p>Participant Information Sheet (Children)</p> </div> <div> <p>You are being invited to take part in a study looking at the experiences of children and young people learning English as an additional language as they progress from primary to secondary school. This study is part of my research degree and will take the form of a thesis in order to complete my studies in 2014. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why this study is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.</p> </div> <div> <p>Who will conduct the study? Dimitrina Kaneva Research student at the University of Manchester, Oxford Road, M13 9PL In addition, the details of the main contact within the school will be provided as well.</p> </div> <div> <p>Title of the study Transition from primary to secondary education: Understanding the experiences of children and young people learning English as an additional language in the North West / Greater Manchester area</p> </div> <div> <p>What is the aim of the study? The aim of this study is to find out about your experiences as you progress from primary to secondary school. I will look at the ways in which children are supported at the time of changing schools, and I would like to talk to you about your ideas of how school can be made a better place for all children.</p> </div> <div> <p>What would I be asked to do if I took part? You will be asked to take part in two interviews (one in Year 6 and one in Year 7), two walks around the school campus where you will be asked a few questions about your experiences at school, and a group discussion with other students where you can talk about your expectations of 'big school' and your worries about it, if you have any. You should not respond to a question that makes you feel uncomfortable. In addition, I will be observing some of your lessons to see how teachers are preparing you to go to the new school. You will be also provided with a notebook where you can write and stick pictures about your preparation to go to your new school in September. I may ask you to look at your book and a conversations about the writings and pictures.</p> </div> <div> <p>What happens to the information about me and my school? All the information collected while talking with you, your friends and teachers will be carefully</p> </div> | <div> <p>analysed and any questions will be checked again with you to make sure that I am saying exactly what you meant during our conversations. Everything I write and record will be stored securely, and it will be only used for the write up of my project and related academic publications. Information will be destroyed in 5 years after the last publication is submitted. All names of people and locations will be erased and will be substituted with fictional names so that the identities of participants are protected and no one can recognise who are the people I have spoken to. However, if disclosed information suggests that either you or someone else at school is at risk, I will have to report the case to a designated member of staff who is the main contact for this research. Then the necessary measures for protection will be taken.</p> </div> <div> <p>What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind? It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Participation is entirely voluntary and you will not be made to participate against your will. If you decide not to take part, no undue influence will be applied in order to persuade you to do otherwise. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. In this case data collected from your participation will be destroyed.</p> </div> <div> <p>What is the duration of the study? The duration of the whole project is between March 2012 and January 2013 when I will be meeting and talking to you in your primary school and the secondary school next year.</p> </div> <div> <p>Where will the study be conducted? The study will be conducted at your school.</p> </div> <div> <p>Will the outcomes of the study be published? The details of the study will be in the form of a thesis and they will be further disseminated in the form of academic publications in peer reviewed journals or conference proceedings.</p> </div> <div> <p>Contact for further information If you are interested in the research and would like more information, assistance of help, please do not hesitate to contact me: dimitrina.kaneva@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk</p> </div> <div> <p>If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093</p> </div> |
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Consent forms – teachers, parents, children for: observations, learning walks / interviews, focus groups

Transition from primary to secondary education in England: Understanding the experiences of children and young people with English as an additional language in the North West / Greater Manchester Area

CONSENT FORM (generic)

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

**Please
Initial
Box**

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

3. I understand that the interviews will be audio/video-recorded

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

5. I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

Transition from primary to high school

You are being invited to take part in a research project. I am here to help you learn more about the project before you decide to take part.

What is research?

Research is a project looking for the answers to important questions. With this research I want to find out about going to high school. I want to know how you are getting on at your new school. This will help me and the school to learn about what you and other children find difficult when going to high school and we will try to make it easier.

The project is part of my university and I will have to write a report about it. University is just like a school where we have projects, ask questions and then talk to different people to find the answers.

If you have any questions about this, you can ask me or Miss Higgins (Transition).

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. If you decide to take part you will be asked to write your name below - this is to show that you know about the research. If at any time you don't want to do the research anymore, just tell your teacher or me. We will not be cross with you.

What would I be asked to do?

You will be asked to take part in a discussion with me. I will ask questions about your experiences at school. If you don't want to answer a question, you don't have to. I will also come to two of your lessons to see how the teachers are helping you.

Name _____ Date _____

I am happy to take part in this research. 😊 ☹️

Transition from primary to secondary education in England: Understanding the experiences of children and young people with English as an additional language in the North West

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

- | | Please
Initial
Box |
|---|---|
| 1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> |
| 2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> |
| 3. I understand that the interviews will be audio/video-recorded | <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> |
| 4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes | <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> |
| 5. I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> |

I agree to take part in the above project

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------|-----------|
| | | |
| Name of participant | Date | Signature |
| | | |
| | | |
| Name of person taking consent | Date | Signature |
| | | |
| | | |

Appendix 8: Primary school case account

Naadiyo (Aster Academy)

Naadiyo is of Somali origin but born in Holland. She arrived at Poppins Primary School in Year 4 in 2009 with no English at all. She was part of a group of Somali children who joined the school this year. Naadiyo is preoccupied with growing up and being cool more than anything. She is not much into learning, reading or writing and she gets easily distracted during lessons. Furthermore she seems to have the need to be the centre of attention as much as possible, so sometimes she would do silly things or be loud just to get noticed. These silly incidents also include lying on a small scale for example when asked where she has been that she ended up being late for lesson, she would tell some bizarre unrealistic story and keep changing it every time the teacher asks her to start again. She also likes making up stories and at the beginning of my research while I still did not know her very well she would quite happily 'inform' me by sharing made-up events.

In terms of learning Naadiyo is one of the children who are not easily engaged in lessons. She finds most of the work hard and she is unable to cope with it on her own. Being in the bottom set, she has been taught by a different teacher preparing for the SATs. It is then, Miss Taylor believes that children have been spoon-fed and developed the tendency to rely on adult support to manage their learning. Naadiyo is aware of her achievement and abilities, however she does try to be a star pupil even though her results would tell a different story – she says she's predicted 4b for the SATs but that is actually a higher result.

Naadiyo is a supporter of justice and fairness at school. She is quite sensitive to teachers' attitudes and responses to her actions and behaviour. This is why there seems to be an ongoing disagreement, if not a battle, with Mrs Norman who is the class teacher of Year 6N. Naadiyo thinks that Mrs Norman treats her unfairly and that she is mean to her without any reason and as part of the school day I had observed a numerous cases of Naadiyo desperately clinging onto her story trying to convince Mrs Norman that she's wrong and unfair. To be fair though, sometimes Naadiyo is just avoiding work, she is very talkative and gets distracted at every opportunity but the problem seems to be more that teachers fail to engage her as her interests and learning ideas are clearly different from the other high aspiring children, Naadiyo seems to know her position and abilities quite well and does not aspire any higher than that other than making up her levels to look more impressive. It was not surprising that during my work with her she was more interested in socialising and chatting on random topics than listening to the other children and following the task instructions. Miss Taylor described Naadiyo as having SEN and being difficult to engage in lesson activities. This is why at the end of the year when children were not working in sets, Miss Taylor would sit with her as much as possible to make learning accessible by breaking it into manageable chunks and steps of actions.

Language: Seemingly good while speaking but quite poor academically, her writing is not very good either – quite big letters and spelling mistakes (see picture below). She finds it difficult to write independently and to research information on the computer for the tasks. When asked to do so, she would start initially but then lose interest as the task requires patience and focus. Then she would just begin disturbing the other children chatting.

Naadiyo took an active part in the research at first but then got bored. She has not been keeping a learning journal even though she asked for one. Possibly try to engage her in keeping one in high school (Aster Academy).

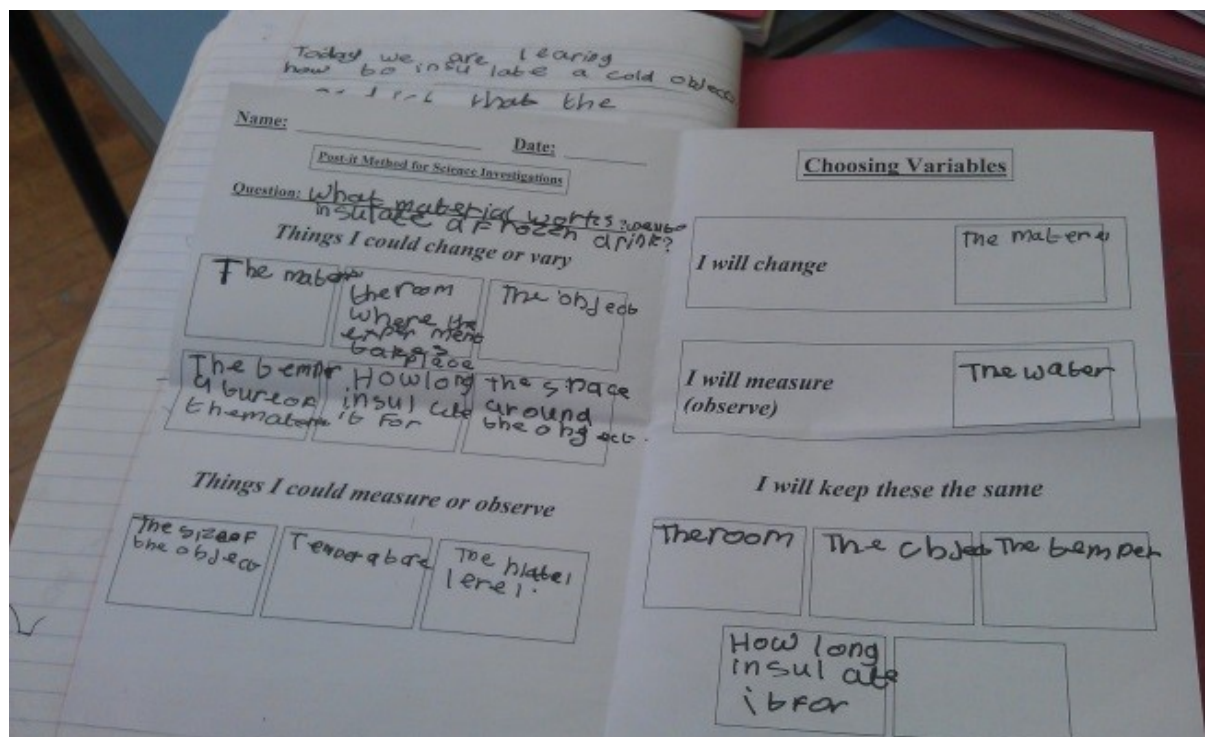
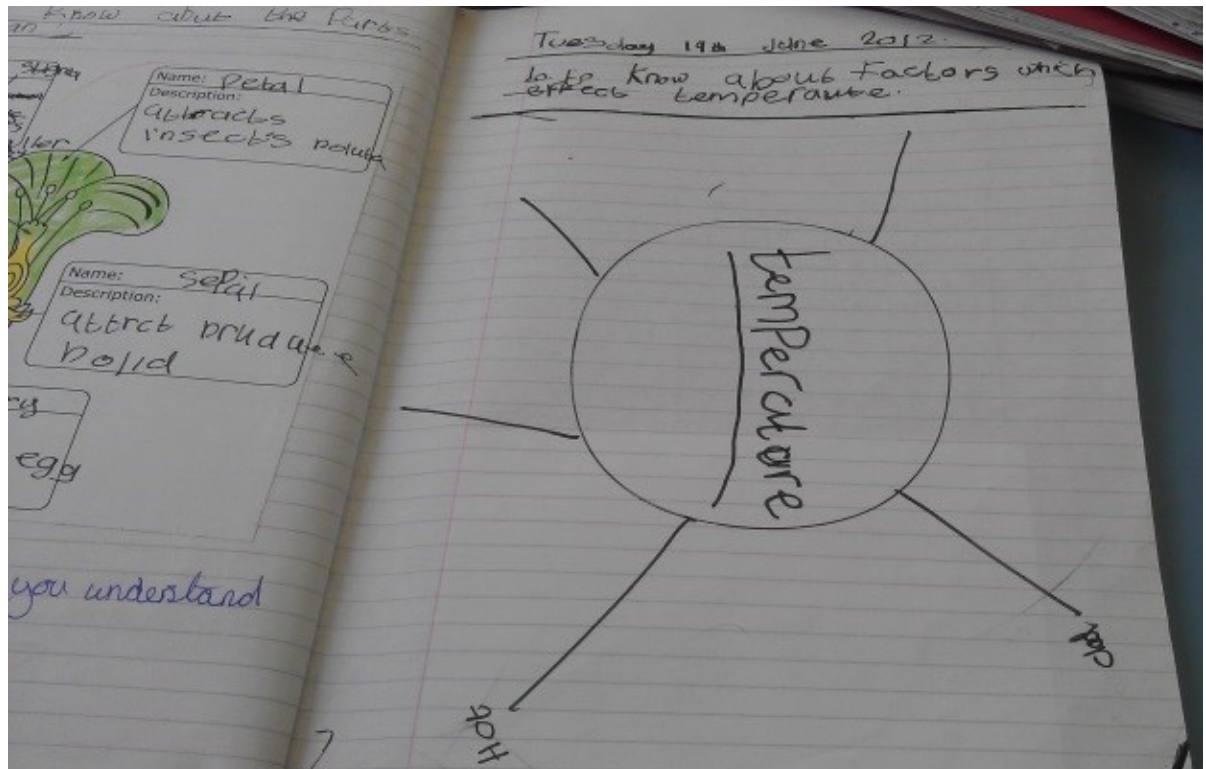
Dear Henry

You don't have to leave
me you can stay with
me your wife. ~~Maybe~~
Maybe ~~god~~ god will
give us a son stay
with me Please if you
go and marry someone
they will think you are
user. How about Mary
You can't leave us
without you. You are her father.

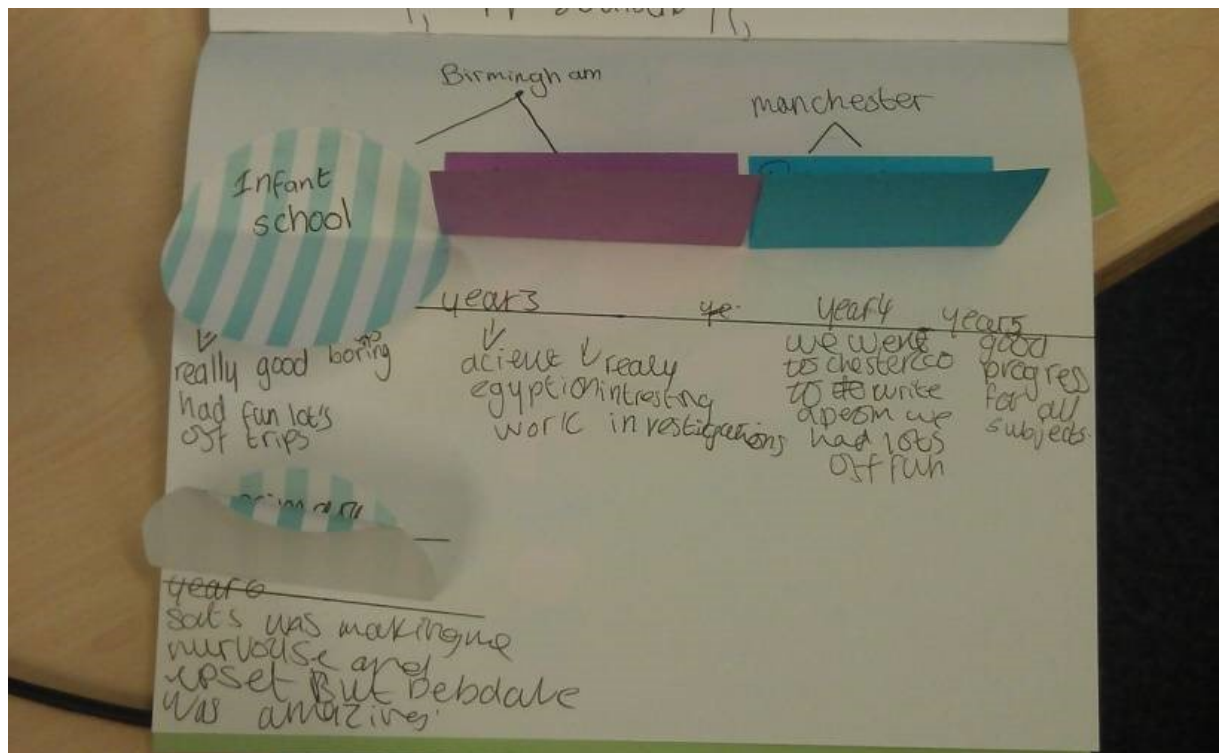
Photo: Naadiyo's writing, outline for a letter to Henry the VIII, Literacy lesson 15/06/2012

Appendix 9: Children's work (with reference to the case studies in Chapter 5)

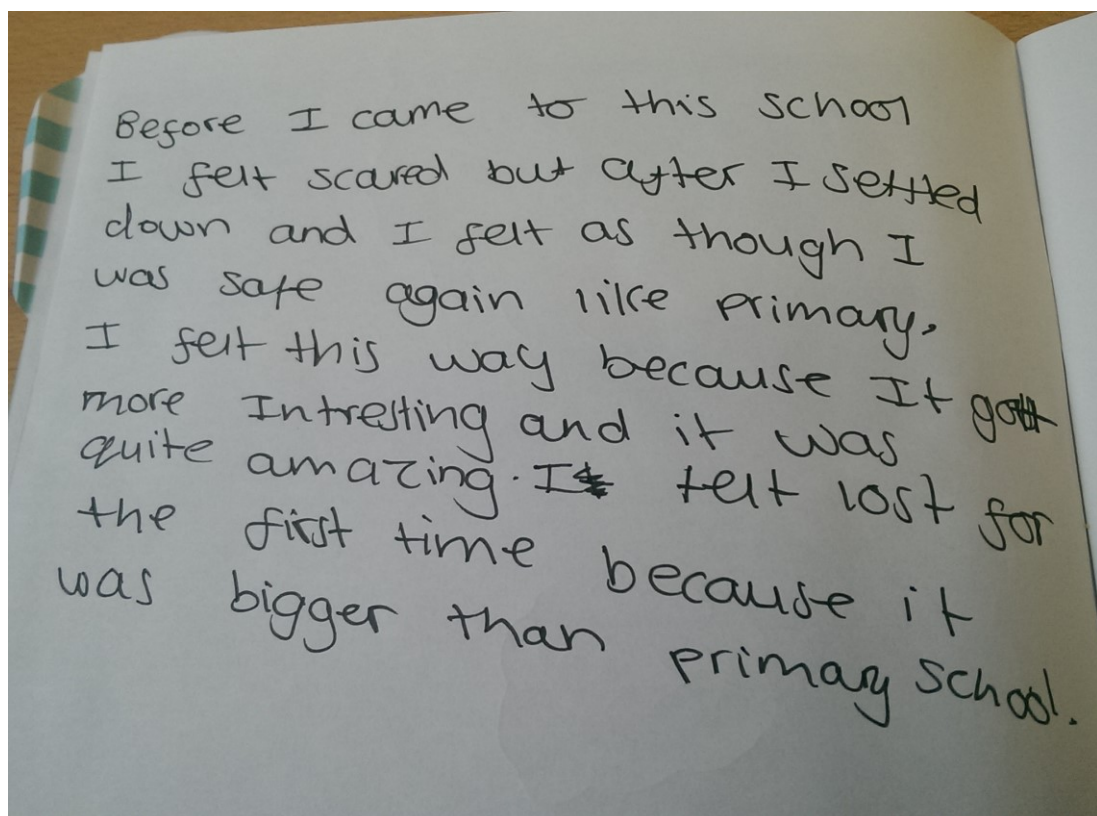
Hani's science work in primary school

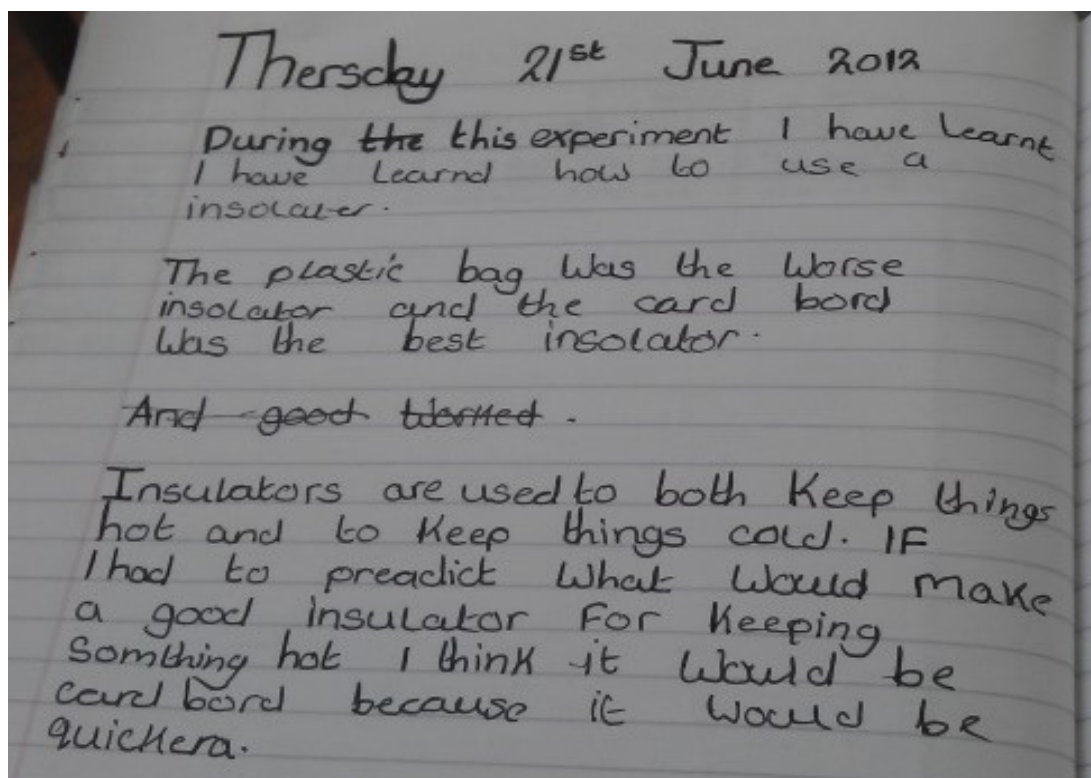
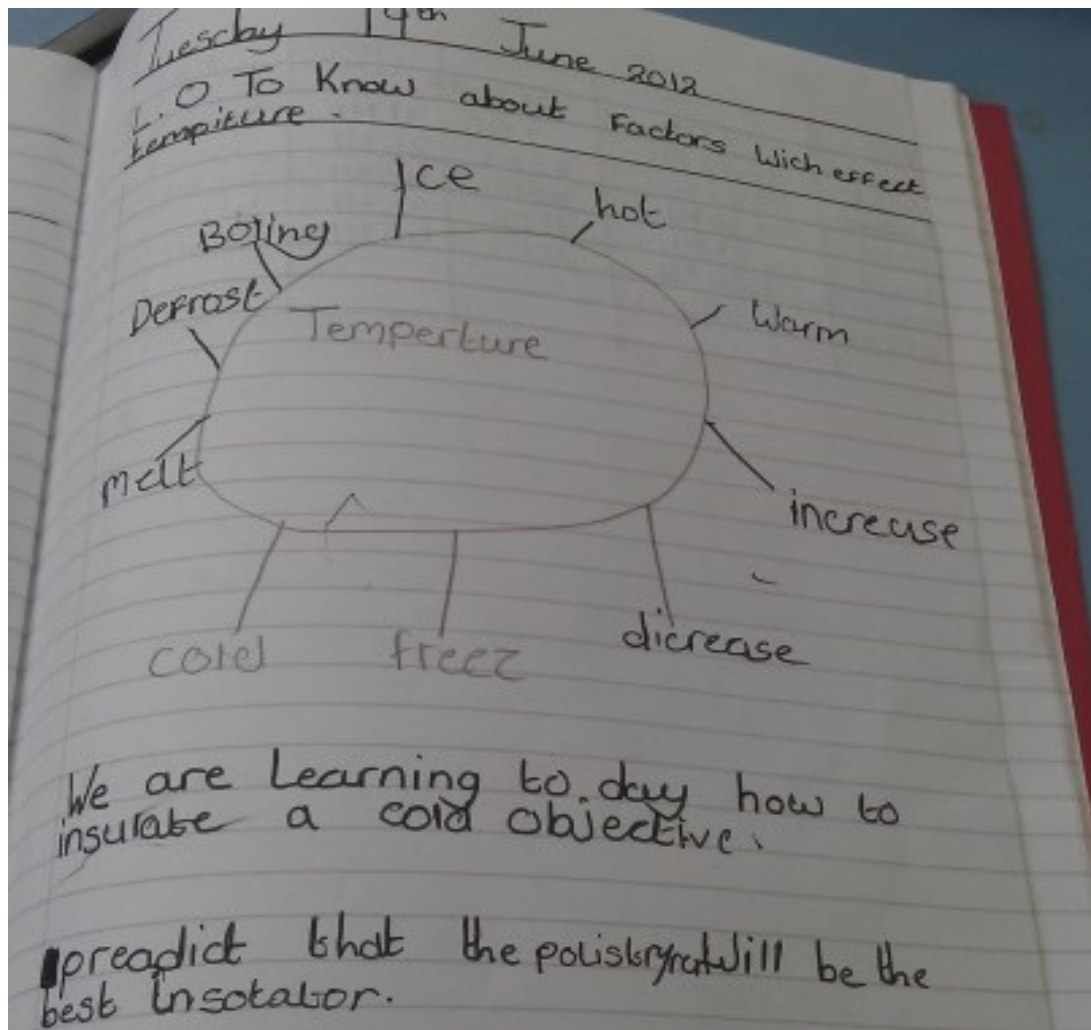


Ayanna's learning journal in primary school



Ayanna's learning journal in secondary school

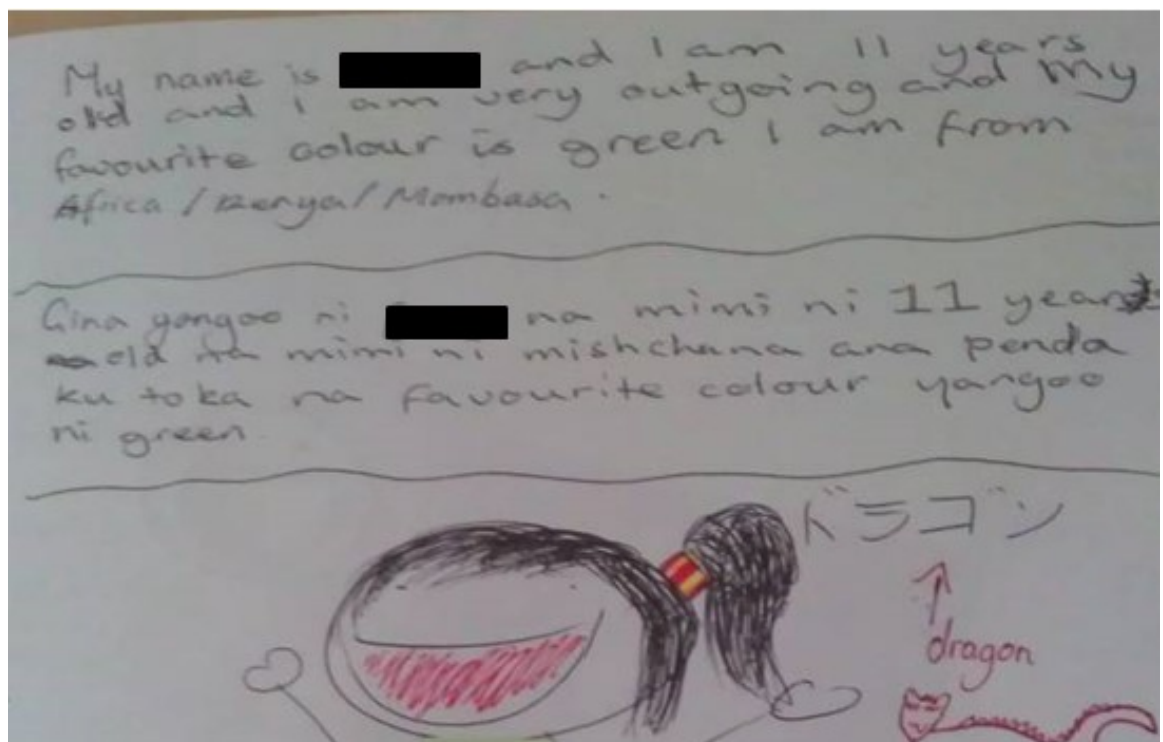
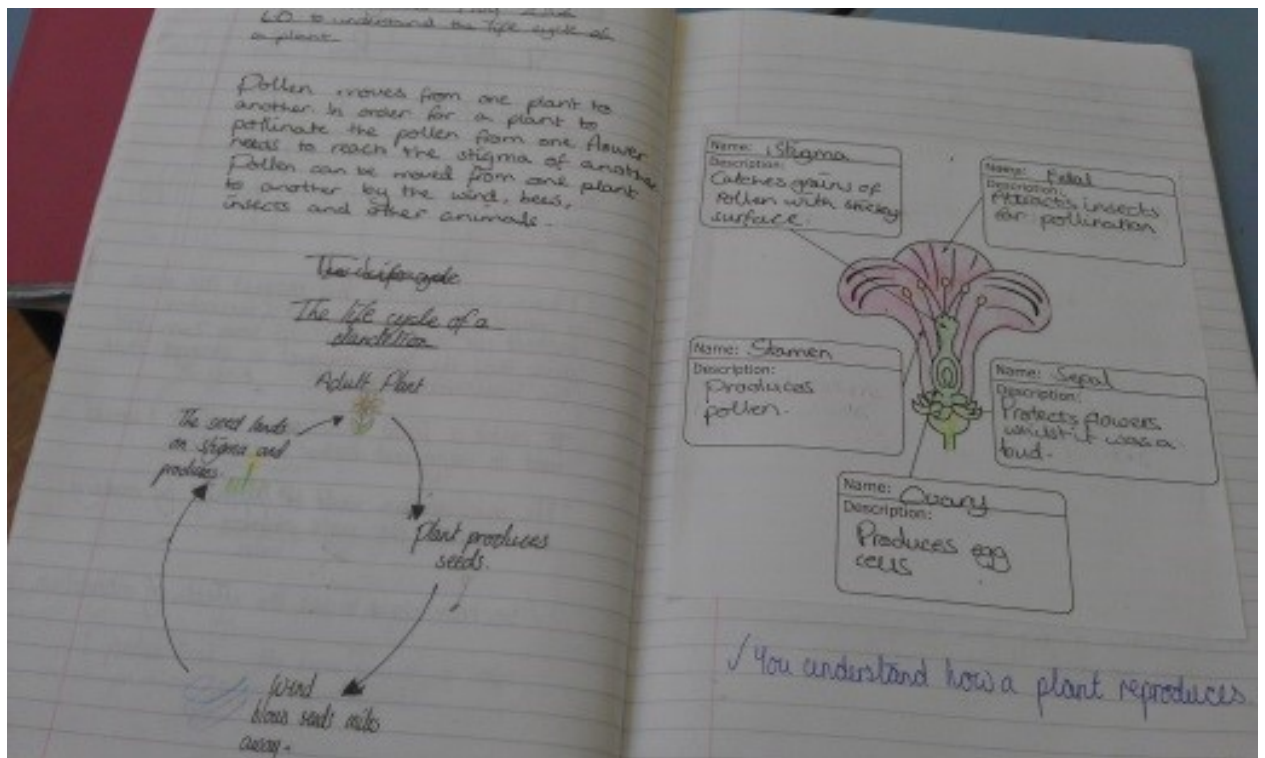




Taj's literacy work in primary school

Deare Henery I am Sending to say and remind
how ye We alwis cared for each other
and had a reay nice family
And When We alwis use to ride on hourses
All fomatie night and see if you could
train mery how to ride one.

But now Look she is can a reay sad
chired and now she is full of sorrow
if you come back then you won't have
your power any more mery When she become
older she anshud get get the crown and
becomes queen She could get the tide
contry. and you can



23/10/12

In High School

I think this school is good and strict but safe.

The lessons are quite fun and easy.

This is a table showing what lessons are fun and which are not.

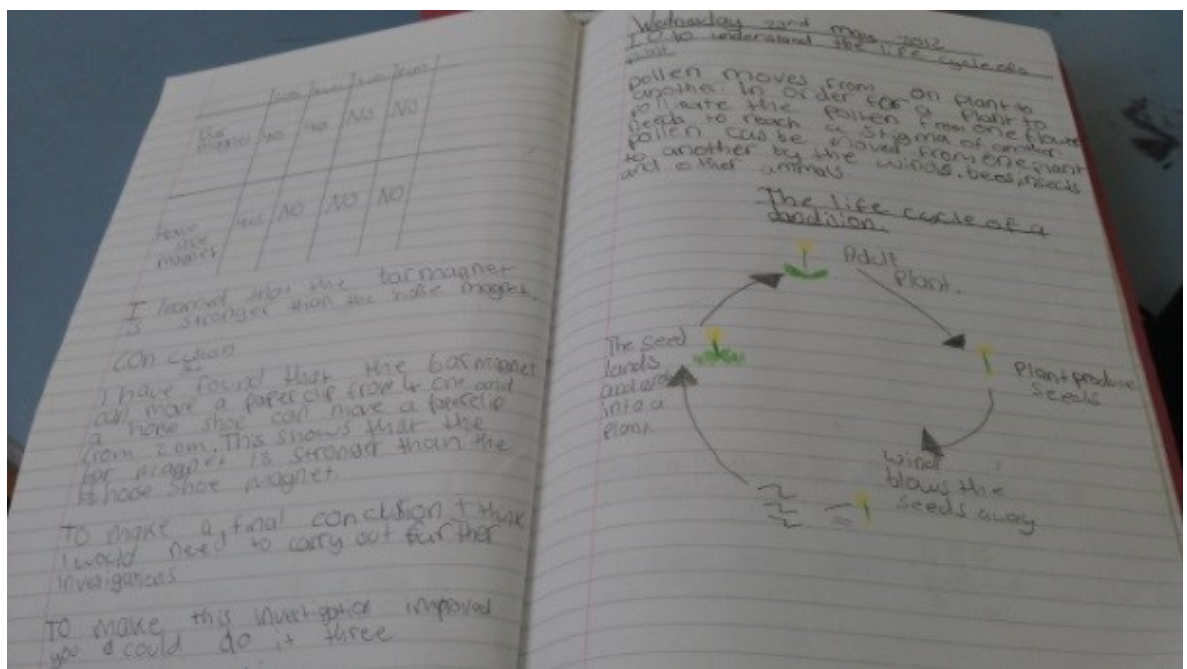
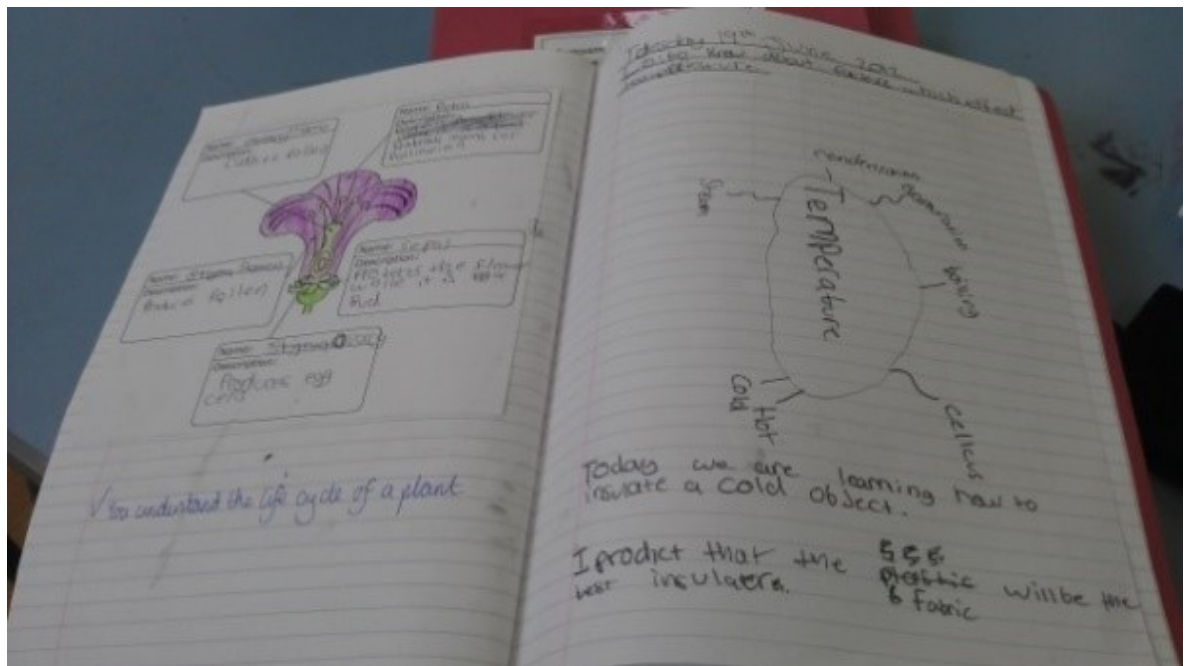
| LESSON | FUN | AVERAGE | BORING |
|-----------|-----|---------|--------|
| MATHS | | ✓ | |
| ENGLISH | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SCIENCE | | ✓ | |
| P.E | | | ✓ |
| ICT | | ✓ | |
| P.E | ✓ | | |
| MUSIC | ✓ | | |
| TECH | ✓ | | ✓ |
| HUMANIT | | ✓ | |
| GEOGRAPHY | | | |
| ART | ✓ | ✓ | |
| BUSINESS | | ✓ | |
| B/E | | | |
| SPANISH | ✓ | | |
| GERMAN | ✓ | | |

6 6 3

I've come to a conclusion that there are less boring lessons than there is of average and fun lessons. 😊

That's good.

Hakim's science work in primary school



Appendix 10: Data record display

| Name | High School | Class/Form HS | Ability set HS | Conversations PS | Photos of work PS | Observations HS | | Conversations | Photos of work HS | Journal | Comments |
|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--|-------------------|---|---|---|-------------------|---------|---|
| | | | | | | English | Science | | | | |
| Omid | Aster Academy | Transition 7 L | L | 25.06.2012 16.07.2012 | Y | 15.11.2012 P1 | 29.11.2012 P2 Miss Al-Adhiri | 24.10.2012 9.11.2012 10.12.2012 10.01.2013 | Y | N | Initially a supporting case |
| Naadiyo | Aster Academy | Transition 7 L | L | 29.05.2012 19.06.2012 20.06.2012 | Y | 15.10.2012 P1 Miss Al-Adhiri 8.11.2012 P1 Miss Al-Adhiri 16.11.2012 P1 Miss Al-Adhiri | 29.11.2012 P2 Miss Al-Adhiri | 15.11.2012 7.12.2012 17.01.2013 | Y | N | |
| Taban | Aster Academy | Transition 7 L | L | 19.06.2012 | Y | 15.10.2012 P1 Miss Al-Adhiri 8.11.2012 P1 Miss Al-Adhiri | 29.11.2012 P2 Miss Al-Adhiri | 15.11.2012 10.12.2012 10.01.2013 | Y | N | |
| Decca | Aster Academy | Transition 7 L | L | 29.05.2012 20.06.2012 26.06.2012 | Y | 15.10.2012 P1 Miss Al-Adhiri 8.11.2012 P1 Miss Al-Adhiri 16.11.2012 P1 Miss Al-Adhiri | 29.11.2012 P2 Miss Al-Adhiri | 23.10.2012 15.11.2012 7.12.2012 17.01.2013 | Y | N | |
| Hani | Aster Academy | Transition 7 A | L | 29.05.2012 26.06.2012 | Y | 15.10.2012 P1 Miss Higgins 18.10.2012 P1 Miss Higgins 7.11.2012 P1 Miss Higgins 17.12.2012 P1 Miss Higgins | 15.10.2012 P2 Miss Higgins 29.11.2012 Miss Higgins | 23.10.2012 15.11.2012 7.12.2012 10.01.2013 17.01.2013 | Y | N | Main case for analysis |
| Jamilla | Aster Academy | 7 S M | M | 29.05.2012 20.06.2012 26.06.2012 | Y | 24.10.2012 P1 Miss Williams 17.12.2012 P2 Miss Crawford 06.02.2013 P1 Miss Williams | 7.11.2012 P4 Miss Raj 20.11.2012 P1 Miss Raj 12.12.2012 P5 Mr Smith 06.02.2013 P5 Mr Smith | 24.10.2012 16.11.2012 10.01.2013 17.01.2013 | Y | Y | |
| Aisha | Aster Academy | 7 E U | H | 19.06.2012 | N | 10.12.2012 P4 Miss Martin 07.02.2013 P3 Miss Martin | 18.10.2012 P2 Mr Potter 24.10.2012 P3 Mr Potter 20.11.2012 P2 Cover 06.02.2013 P2 Mr Potter (absent) | 23.10.2012 10.01.2013 | N | N | |
| Sabira | Aster Academy | 7 W2 U | H | 19.06.2012 04.07.2012 | Y | 10.12.2012 P4 Miss Martin 07.02.2013 P3 Miss Martin | 18.10.2012 P2 Mr Potter 24.10.2012 P3 Mr Potter 20.11.2012 P2 Cover 06.02.2013 P2 Mr Potter (absent) | 8.11.2012 16.11.2012 17.01.2013 | N | Y | Additional case analysis |
| Nafisa | Aster Academy | 7 W T | MH | 20.06.2012 26.06.2012 04.07.2012 | Y | 16.11.2012 P2 Miss Williams 9.11.2012 P1 Miss Williams (absent) 7.12.2012 P1 Miss Williams | 8.11.2012 P2 Miss Grant 10.12.2012 P5 Miss Grant | 8.11.2012 16.11.2012 17.01.2013 | N | Y | Initially a supporting case |
| Eyaz | Aster Academy | 7 E T | MH | 04.07.2012 | N | 23.10.2012 P5 Miss Williams 9.11.2012 P1 Miss Williams 7.12.2012 P1 Miss Williams | 23.10.2012 P1 Miss Grant 8.11.2012 P2 Miss Grant 10.12.2012 P5 Miss Grant | 23.10.2012 | N | N | Main case for analysis |
| Taj | Aster Academy | 7 C | M | 25.06.2013 16.07.2012 | Y | 12.11.2012 P4 Miss Long 20.11.2012 P3 Mrs Raymond 22.11.2012 P4 Mrs Raymond 17.01.2013 P4 Miss Someh | 12.11.2012 P5 Mr Green 13.11.2012 P2 Mr Green (absent) 17.12.2012 P4 Mr Green | 09.11.2012 06.02.2013 | N | N | Additional case analysis |
| Ayanna | Cluster High | n/a | M | 29.05.2012 20.06.2012 26.06.2012 | Y | 15.02.2013 03.05.2013 | 14.02.2013 (double) 02.05.2013 (double) | 15.02.2013 03.05.2013 | N | Y | Additional case analysis |
| Hakim | Bloom High Sch | n/a | H | 04.07.2012 | N | 22.10.2012 | 22.10.2012 | 22.10.2012 | N | N | Additional case analysis |
| Seyhan | Cluster High | n/a | n/a | 29.05.2012 20.06.2012 04.07.2012 26.06.2012 | Y | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | Y - PS | Left country before secondary school access was granted |

Appendix 11: Sample coding

The screenshot displays a software interface for document analysis, showing two documents side-by-side. The left document, 'P 3: Observation log', contains text about a science experiment. The right document, 'P 1: transcript 15022013.docx', contains a transcript of a conversation. Both documents have a list of codes on the right side, with some codes highlighted in yellow.

Document 1: P 3: Observation log

go back to their desks and put the results in their tables. [redacted] is engaged – observant and quiet. Her prediction was that mass will change.

027 The teacher explains that the experiment will take a while, [redacted]'s peer laugh and there is a brief verbal exchange between the two. Teacher: "Yes, let's see inside. No, it hasn't reacted yet" she says using science vocabulary. Some of the children ask to do the experiment themselves, the teacher says no but turns it into a joke. She is telling them about being patient "Wait and observe. Sometimes scientists have to do that for hours". All the girls seem interested.

028 The atmosphere in the lesson is relaxed and friendly.

029 The teacher announces that the experiment has failed so she would do it again – there is enough time as the lesson is a double. A few children want to do it themselves but the teacher is strict to say no. For the time being they are given the results from the same experiment completed by another class to work with and put in their result tables. The teacher explains the demonstrations with a diagram she draws on the table as she speaks.

030 Worksheets: AFI LAT: Info sheets (levels 4-6 and 6-8) Models of burning

031 The children are given these to answer the questions on the purple sheet (see research diary for copy). The instructions are straightforward, given only verbally and there is no additional scaffolding needed. [redacted] is following all the instructions as given – writing a title, neat work, answering the questions. She needs clarifications what to do so she calls the teacher to her desk. After that she just gets on with the work without being distracted or chatty. In the meantime the teacher walks around to support children if they have any questions.

033 When the teacher checks [redacted]'s work upon passing by, [redacted] readily shows her and the teacher gives her instructions how to make the work better: "Say this at the start, then after...". she points out sentence structure and argument structure with appropriate science language as a success criteria [redacted] asks for another clarification about combustion and what it means. Once explained, she gets on with the work.

034 There is a very quiet chatter going on in the room as children work but Suhur's corner is all quiet.

035 The teacher then goes through questions 3b, 4b, 5b and explains to look for clarifications in the info sheets for these – she's noticed that number of students have asked about these so provides direction for the whole class. She then puts extra instructions on the board – what to do to achieve levels and there is that information on the sheets they were given – signposting. [redacted] is observing that while consulting the student next to her – how to draw and explain the brick model of combustion. Then they work through the rest of the questions. Later Suhur puts her hand up again to ask what question 4c requires. She knows the answer but does not seem to recognise how to write it in relation to the questions so the teacher encourages her to give a verbal answer first. She then says: "Exactly, this is your answer". [redacted] looks like she'd expected it to be more complicated. Then she gets on with writing.

036 Occasionally children consult their friends in answering the questions. There is some maturity about their behaviour – very calm.

037 The teacher goes through the level 4 questions – for the whole class – [redacted] is not acknowledging this as she is already ahead with the work. She asked about this same question earlier and has been working through it since. The teacher then moves to 5b – reads the instruction and tells them to look in the info sheets and read the relevant bits to help them with the written answer. Later in the lesson she shows them how to

Document 2: P 1: transcript 15022013.docx

083 R: How is it different?

084 [redacted] Because in primary school we just learn about the system about the solar system but here you learn more about like every year you know more, you learn more about say... before in primary school we did about alkalines but we never mixed them, you don't know what colours the alkalines can be at all, what colour this.. the erm... erm... what do you call it... the.. erm acid is gonna be

085 R: Ok, so you were just talking about these things without really seeing them and here you can see them in experiments?

086 [redacted] Yeah

087 R: Do you do experiments often?

088 [redacted] It depends, like what lesson we are having. Like if we are learning about acids and alkalines we do like we add experiments to whatever you are doing but in primary school we never did that.

089 R: Ok, so that's quite exciting, quite different. That's good. What else? What about...

090 [redacted] English can be difficult sometimes because you just have to listen and like you have to say you have a listening test so you have to listen and then you are not allowed to say or write something down, you have to keep listening until the thing finishes or if you write it down it means you are cheating.

091 R: Ok, so is it listening that is most difficult in English?

092 [redacted] No, it's like we write stories a lot

093 R: so it's a mixture of listening and writing. Ok. Do you think that any of these subjects are useful maybe?

094 [redacted] I think English is most useful than science because like you have to learn the language to help you get a good job. if you don't know the language, then it's gonna be harder for you to do it.

095 R: Ok, well done. Is science useful for anything though?

096 [redacted] Yeah.

097 R: yes, for what?

098 [redacted] For learning like some English things have got to do with some science

099 R: How?

100 [redacted] Say like erm in a question say you write something and you have to know the structure like in science when we do a test, when we do a writing test about what you've learned you have to know the paragraph like the structure's going

Codes:

- science experiments
- experiment fails
- teacher engagement
- implicit rules
- knowing children's understanding
- individual attention
- improving work
- expectations
- explicit rules
- seeking clarifications
- lesson context
- pedagogic discourse
- explicit instructions
- knowing children
- consulting a peer
- seeking clarifications
- response to support
- consulting a peer
- flexibility
- working at pace
- demonstrating answers
- HS differences
- HS learning
- science experiments
- understanding of classroom discourse
- EAL implications
- active listening
- English descriptors
- writing
- English descriptors
- EAL implications
- science and literacy
- science vocab
- EAL implications
- importance of literacy

Appendix 12: Sample analysis (three column table)
Ayanna (Cluster High)*

| Descriptive account | Questions and Commentary | Theoretical interrogation of questions and commentary |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Ayanna is of Somali background, born in Sweden where she attended nursery before the family moved to England in 2005. While living in Sweden she had learned some of the language. However, at the time the family moved, she did not know any English so joining a school in the UK posed new challenges to her. Initially they settled in the Midlands where Ayanna attended primary school from Year 1 to Year 4. They then relocated to the North West and Ayanna joined Poppins Primary in Year 4. Ayanna was the oldest child among her siblings and she talked willingly about them and her relationship with them – ‘they are boring and I don’t get their games’ (LJ group). She was somewhat distancing herself from them in terms of expertise but also experience of having remembered the transitions the family had made in the part.</p> | <p>What did she make of the language challenge? How evident and important was this at the time I met her? Check interview/journal for discussion</p> <p>Multiple transitions significance in this case in relation to habitus and dispositions development and the virtual schoolbag metaphor.</p> | <p>Ayanna has extensive experience of different contexts and transitions between countries, schools and languages. These had posed various barriers in terms of adaptation, language and capital. Ayanna talked about her difficulties with the language coming to England as a potential barrier. Some of these elements are evident to date in the way Ayanna speaks about the importance of learning not only English but other languages to ensure success. This could also be a marker of social capital and habitus that valued transferability across contexts and skills to manage wherever she goes. I would say this is an ambitious project for Ayanna and despite her young age she seems keen to develop as many aspects as possible of the contents of her virtual school bag.</p> |
| <p>At Poppins Primary School Ayanna made friends with a group of girls from a similar background, who all shared a language and a number of relocations before they ended up in Poppins. The most significant link thought seemed to be based on language and backgrounds and also some relationships that were</p> | <p>Importance of background to create social and friendship groups – different from other cases</p> | <p>Shared cultural and linguistic capital, could also explain some of the difficulties she experiences in the transition between different contexts as she relies on the support of a closely knit community. This community spirit is more prevalent in particular national</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>sustained outside the school. The group of girls also joined the school in the same year, some of them mid-term (Not sure about Ayanna, should check if there's data what time of the year she joined the school) and it seemed a natural thing to stick together as they all found themselves in a very similar position, with no friends and sharing the same language and culture. Ayanna seemed comfortable within her friendship group and had an established role. At most times she was quieter in comparison to the rest of the girls and seemed quite mature in her expressions. Part of this may be the fact that only she was an older sibling so she could have projected this type of disposition into her school experience.</p> | <p>Is there anything in the literature of theoretical framework to support this statement that it was a natural response to stick together? My interpretation is that this could be highlighted as a strategy that helped them cope with the new school and expectations they had to face. By recreating and remaining in a somewhat familiar environment, Ayanna did not have to put in the extra effort to make friends with people who were already part of established friendship groups and mostly because the majority of the children in this class had been together since Year 1. In that sense the group of outsiders to the class in Year 4 created their own inner circle to grant themselves insider membership and acceptance.</p> | <p>and cultural backgrounds, but what does that mean for individuals?</p> <p>Virtual schoolbag – shared ways of being and Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital as ways of doing in particular contexts. Does the school value these other ways of communicating that the girls employ? My sense is that this behaviour is part of the implicit disadvantage Ayanna has faced in the primary school – associated as part of the Somali group of girls, her teacher failed to recognise her individuality and learning strengths. Having said that, am I making an assumption that certain types of cultural capital are not valued in the school?</p> <p>On the other hand exactly this cultural capital environment provided Ayanna with a thriving place to be and develop her identity as part of her Somali heritage and the close community – as opposed to values in the dominant culture. This caused the teacher's resistance? Or perhaps lack of understanding on the importance and value of these relationships for Ayanna's adaptation to the school.</p> |
|---|--|---|

*This account is a selected sample for illustration purposes

Appendix 13: Subject descriptors (Chapter 7)

Ayanna

| ENGLISH | SCIENCE |
|---|--|
| Enjoyable ‘we do projects every half term and sometimes it can be confusing but if you have a confusion, you can go to the teacher and ask her what you feel, what makes it confusing’ | Fun ‘Science is quite fun because we do investigations and she gets us challenges and we do.. say she gives us homework and you have to.. it’s like flipped learning, you do the lesson at home or you do your homework in the lesson’ |
| Difficult ‘English is fun as well but it’s more challenging, it’s more harder than science’ | Interesting ‘in science you do investigations’ |
| Useful ‘Say in a question you write something and you have to know the structure in science when we do a test, when we do a writing test about what you’ve learned you have to know the paragraph like [how] the structure’s going’ ‘you’ve learned a word today and then you can whenever you got science you can write it down and get a higher mark for doing that’ | Challenging |

Taj

| SCIENCE | ENGLISH |
|--|--|
| Fun ‘interesting and fun because we get to do practicals like exploding’ | Enjoyable ‘because you get to do plays and everything, act it out as well so it’s fun’ |
| Interesting | Challenging ‘the levels are more higher, you have to get more higher levels..’ |
| | Useful ‘like now I’m speaking to you it’s helping may be with English if you speaking in a mannered way then English really helps you and I think the writing as well... I think everyone finds it useful because if there wasn’t English then how.. there won’t be no books, how could we read and everything so I think everyone would find it useful. Some people probably think that we know English already.. but it is useful’ |

Hakim

| ENGLISH | SCIENCE |
|---|--|
| Enjoyable | Enjoyable 'we do diagrams and graphs and it will make it easier because we can just read it any time.' |
| Challenging 'because most of the people there they are like we do higher level work at level 6 and 7' | Fun 'the experiments' |
| Confusing 'because in the work that we do it's weird and we have to find out what different words mean and it's harder [than other subjects]' | Useful 'you have to know what's good for your body and what's not to keep you healthy' |
| | Interesting |