

A case study examining the achievements in English of Year 9 Filipino and Polish pupils

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Abstract

This study researches Filipino and Polish pupils' attainment in English and examines why some English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils performed better than others at the end of Key Stage 3 (KS3). This stratified class comprised 43% of Filipino and Polish pupils with a range of needs. The study explores the teacher's pedagogy to enable pupils to make progress and the strategies employed to challenge More Able and Talented (MAT) EAL pupils.

A mixed methodology approach, including interviews with a focus group and the teacher, a class questionnaire and end of KS data, allowed the use of triangulation to draw conclusions about pupils' success.

Findings show the positive impact of a growth mindset, supported by differentiation, challenge, a range of learning styles, collaboration and trust within the classroom. A major difference between the two nationalities was home culture, and the support therein, which influenced pupils' attitudes to learning, raising questions about the influence of nature v nurture. Although there was a range of attainment within the class, all pupils achieved or surpassed their KS3 targets, having made at least two National Curriculum (NC) levels of progress and, in some cases, three.

Key Words

EAL, attitudes to learning, pedagogy, bilingual, culture, MAT, mindset, skills

Declarations and Statements

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed: GR Walpers (candidate)

Date: 19-03-19

STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MA (Ed).

Signed: GR Walpers (candidate)

Date: 19-03-19

STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work / investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A reference list is appended.

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Date: 19-03-19

STATEMENT 3

I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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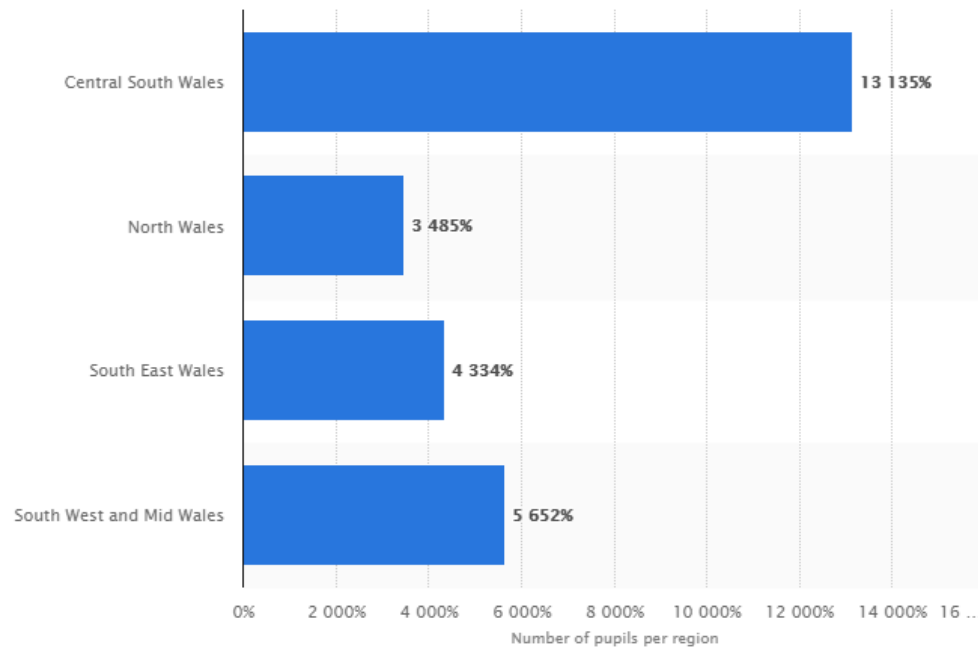
My thanks go the Headteacher and colleagues in my school, in particular the Subject Leader for English, and the pupils who were active participants in my research. This would undoubtedly have been a much more difficult task without the support of family, friends and my UWTSD tutor, to whom I am grateful.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The new *Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership* (PTS) (2017) in Wales challenge every school to place pupils at the core of each Standard, with teachers and student teachers committed to ensuring that all pupils are given the opportunity to achieve their best. The Statistics Portal (2017) published figures of English as an additional language [EAL] pupils in Wales by local authority, region and stage of development. The total EAL figure was 33,323, ranging from pupils who were new to English to fluent speakers. Nationally this was 7.21% of school-aged pupils. Figure 1 (ibid, 2017) illustrates that in 2017 the region with the most EAL pupils was Central South Wales, “the most linguistically diverse region ... with over thirteen thousand pupils having English as an additional language” (The Statistics Portal, 2017, online).

Figure 1: Number of all Pupils with English as an Additional Language in Wales in 2017, by Region (The Statistics Portal, 2017)



The *Equality Act 2010: advice for schools* (2014, p.6) requires children from multi-ethnic backgrounds to have “equality of opportunity” in schools. Furthermore, schools are required to do all they can to “boost the English language skills of bilingual children from certain minority ethnic groups” (ibid, 2014, p.34).

This research was based in a secondary school in the South Wales Valleys, in Central South Wales. Considering the data available (The Statistics Portal, 2017), it is noteworthy that the school percentage of EAL pupils of various nationalities i.e. 26.1%, was almost double that of the Central South Wales region which was 13.13% and significantly above the national figure of 7.21%.

In choosing a group of EAL pupils to use for the case study it was important that the pupils came from a diverse but statistically significant group within the school, there being a great emphasis on the attainment of EAL learners at the end of each Key Stage (KS). The intention was to research the effectiveness of the English teacher’s strategies and pedagogy when teaching Filipino and Polish pupils, hereafter referred to as EAL pupils, including the Filipino and Polish More Able and Talented (MAT) pupils within that group, allowing them to gain success in English at the end of Year 9. This research could then “[inform] practice ... and [improve] things in some way” in school (Sikes, 2004, p.21) as findings regarding effective EAL strategies and pedagogy could be shared with colleagues. In turn this could “merit further investigation” (Bell with Waters, 2014, p.12) amongst EAL pupils of different abilities.

Pupils at the school come from a range of European, Asian and African countries. Given the emphasis nationally on raising standards of pupil outcomes in schools in Wales, the attainment of EAL pupils is important for all schools. This school has seen a sharp increase in the number of EAL pupils over the past fifteen years, from approximately 10% of the school population in 2008 to 26.1% in 2017, mainly due to “labour migration” (Jones and Lever, 2014, p.7) from both European Union (EU) and non-EU countries. This has meant

essential, significant changes in resources deployed in staff training and pedagogy targeted at teaching EAL pupils. It might be assumed that such a high number of EAL pupils within a secondary school could impact adversely upon the school's overall performance. Furthermore, non-EAL pupils and parents might exhibit racist attitudes.

Welsh Government (WG)'s (2014b) *Minority ethnic achievement in education in Wales* recognised that some EAL pupils may need extra support to achieve their full potential, particularly when learning English. WG (2014b, p.5) emphasised that collaboration is important between local authority Ethnic Minority Achievement Services and schools, to "[share] good practice, professional expertise and teaching support", allowing each child the opportunity to enhance his/her cognitive development, thereby achieving excellence of outcomes. The school is supported by the local consortium, Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES) and the Local Authority (LA). In accordance with WG (2014a, p.31) the LA "[collects] and [disseminates] good practice ... through documents, a shared website or an advisory service". All pupils, regardless of creed, race or gender, have access to the whole curriculum. To comply with this the school states that staff are committed to:

promoting racial equality ... enabling all pupils ... to reach their potential, working in partnership with parents and the wider community to establish... good practice and tackle racial discrimination.

[REDACTED] School Equal Opportunities Policy,
2016, p. 2)

The focus of this study was the Year 9 Set 1 English class; 43.33% of the class, thirteen pupils, were EAL pupils, three of whom were in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM). Twelve of the thirteen pupils had lived in Wales for 5+ years. Estyn (2013, p.4) acknowledged that "in lessons, pupils from all backgrounds co-operate well together and support each other in their learning".

Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, regardless of background; EAL pupils have equality of opportunity and are challenged to achieve success. There is whole-school

planning for EAL pupils and monitoring is rigorous; all departments offer support for pupils as required. Staff receive annual training from the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCO) about the expert skills needed to teach EAL pupils. Estyn (2013, p.5) stated that “nearly all pupils feel safe and well supported in school” and acknowledged that:

the school works well with a wide range of external agencies and specialist services to meet the specific needs of individual pupils, especially those with English as an additional language.

(Estyn, 2013, p.8)

In lessons pupils learn about other cultures and are taught to respect others’ views and opinions. Care is taken to ensure that departmental Schemes of Work (SoWs) address all pupils’ cultural identities. In accordance with WG (2014a, p.30) it is recognised to be important that “schools promote an inclusive curriculum [reflecting] the diverse nature of school pupils”. Staff are familiar with the school’s policies for dealing with racial harassment and bullying. The ALNCO is a member of the School’s Leadership Team (SLT) and the drive on equality for all is led from the top. SLT aims to follow WG (2014a) guidelines on teaching ethnic minority pupils by “[ensuring] that the school reflects the school ethos of inclusiveness and mutual respect” (ibid, 2014a, p.30). To enhance this all student teachers and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) attend a training session with the school’s ALNCO to share ideas about how to teach EAL pupils, thus becoming familiar with the School EAL Policy (2018) (Appendix 1).

This study explored pupils’ attitudes to learning and preferred learning styles. As it involved a diverse group of pupils from the Philippines and Poland, the study examined whether there were any differences in attitudes to learning between the Filipino and Polish pupils and, if so, why. In this context there might be an assumption that some EAL pupils would be reluctant to speak English, having moved to Wales with their families against their will.

EAL pupils may receive extra English lessons, one-to-one Learning Support Assistant (LSA) provision, mentoring and pupil buddies. A number of primary schools feed into the school and thus KS2 performance may vary. The school receives information from its feeder schools on each pupil's attainment at the end of KS2 in English, Mathematics, Science and Welsh 2nd Language. Information is also received about each pupil's home language and special educational needs. Baseline tests in Year 7 generate end of KS3 NC targets. Pupils' language development is assessed at regular intervals and support is provided as necessary. The study compared the EAL pupils' attainment between the end of KS2, at the end of their primary school careers, with the end of KS3, before commencement of General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) studies.

Within the class of thirty pupils, eight were MAT, four of whom were EAL pupils, 50% of the class MAT cohort overall. A Year 9 focus group was selected for this study, as pupils achieved excellent end of Year 8 National Curriculum (NC) levels in English, with the four EAL MAT pupils predicted to exceed their end of KS3 target NC levels, a level 7, by the end of Year 9 in June 2017. Three of the six focus group pupils were MAT pupils who, according to Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) (2008c, p.16), should be given "enriched and extended opportunities across the curriculum to develop their abilities". Furthermore, schools should focus on how to "improve the quality of learning and raise standards of achievement" (ibid, 2008c, p. 6) thus challenging "pupils' thinking through probing questioning and [encouraging] a problem-solving approach to learning" (ibid, 2008c, p. 17).

Knowing this class of pupils well and recognising their usual willingness and enthusiasm to engage in discussion, my intention was to ensure that pupils were comfortable with the research method and thereby open and candid in their responses. Pupils in this class were out-performing their peers, not only in English but in several other subjects. Their creativity was apparent. They are bilingual or in some cases trilingual, although several would say that they speak mainly one language now, i.e. English. Muñoz (2014, online) states that "more than half the world's population uses two or more languages every day". When

discussing the importance of bilingualism Hopwood (2009, p.3) states that: “language defines, sets a boundary to thinking, and that boundary in its turn acts as a springboard for imagination and creativity” and that “the relationship between language and the creative mind [forms] a knot which cannot be untied” (ibid, 2009, p.4). Furthermore, Washbourne’s (2011, p.17) viewpoint is that there are “various cognitive advantages to being bilingual”, reiterating that bilinguals have enhanced “creativity and divergent thinking”.

Chapter 2

Relevant Literature

English in the National Curriculum

WG (2015b, p.17) states that “learners should experience a language-rich environment across [each] key stage where oracy, reading and writing experiences are connected”. This builds upon WAG’s (2008a, p.8) guidance where all learners are required to “develop language skills for life”. The teacher’s role therefore in planning to deliver the programme of study is paramount, given that Wales today is a multicultural and multilingual society. Historically migrants have come to Wales for social, political and economic reasons. With the influx of migrants to Wales it may be assumed therefore that within Welsh schools today there will be a considerable percentage of EAL pupils whose families view speaking English as an important factor in integrating into Welsh society, both socially and culturally, and a necessary asset for the future and the world of work.

Despite the growth of Chinese and Spanish as major world languages, Pennycook (2017, p.viii) states that “English remains a massively dominant language of global relations”. In addressing the increase in the number of EAL pupils in schools WG (2015a) conducted research into how to develop capacity within schools to provide support, acknowledging that pupils will need different support according to “their educational, socio-economic, cultural and situational background” (ibid, 2015a, p.15).

Schools in Wales are challenged to promote linguistic and cultural diversity across the curriculum and to ensure that all pupils are given maximum learning opportunities. It is maintained that “100% of pupils [should] have access to teaching strategies designed to promote higher level thinking” (Tunnicliffe, 2010, p.11). As the term ‘EAL’ may encompass several or more nationalities, a *National Literacy and Numeracy Programme* (WG, 2016a) was developed, focussing on “identifying and providing the right kind of support tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the individual learner” (ibid, 2016a, p.18),

emphasising the role the family plays in the development of literacy skills. It should be acknowledged that “building competence in the home language [has] a beneficial impact on ... English language skills” (WG, 2015a, p.16). It is therefore vital to maintain one’s first language and home culture when learning a second, and schools should to enter into a partnership with EAL pupils, their parents and teachers.

Assessment

Initial school baseline tests are conducted in spelling and reading to compare previous and current progress. These are followed by use of diagnostic tests, allowing an insight into each EAL pupil’s language acquisition. Specialist staff monitor pupils’ development across a KS by use of a staged model of language acquisition used throughout Wales and England (WG, 2015a) , from Stage A where pupils are new to English, monitoring through early acquisition, developing competency, achieving competency, through to Stage E and fluency, Scott (2016) (Illustration 1). Following this, language barriers to learning may be identified, which might include lack of understanding of written English, reluctance to speak English and a lack of support from home.

Illustration 1: The five new codes to assess EAL pupils (Scott, 2016)



Summative, formative and diagnostic assessments are used to monitor and support pupils’ development. EAL pupils develop a range of literacy skills: they can speak, listen to, read and write the target language. They are assessed in terms of their competence when speaking grammatically correct English with peers and teachers. However, conversely their

reading and writing skills may be underdeveloped. Teacher formative assessment is “an essential component of classroom work... [in raising] standards of achievement ... [producing] significant and often substantial learning gains” (Black and Wiliam, 1998b, pp.1 &3). Strand, Malmberg and Hall (2015, p.12) state that “it is proficiency in the English language that is the major factor influencing the degree of support an individual student will require”. Furthermore, “schools should use the needs of the learner as a starting point and adapt the programmes of study accordingly” (WAG, 2008b, p. 5).

To concur with this, Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are formulated and implemented. In accordance with WG (2014)a, since 2015 LAs are allocated money for EAL learners from the Education Improvement Grant (EIG) which is reviewed annually. Some money goes to schools to employ a specialist LSA and some is earmarked for EAL enrichment activities outside the classroom.

Schools test if a pupil is MAT, having higher cognitive skills than others. LAs must ensure that the needs of “more able pupils from different socio-economic groups and minority groups are met” WAG’s (2008c, p.8). Being MAT or gifted and talented (GT) means that they are can achieve more in lessons, may attain higher NC levels and go on to achieve better GCSE grades. MAT pupils may demonstrate heightened self-esteem and cognitive skills, be better independent thinkers and better problem solvers, able to synthesise information, elaborate on ideas, be innovative and apply reasoning at a higher level than expected for their age. WAG (2008c, p.15) *Standard 1* clearly states that there should be a “whole school strategy, including an action plan, to support MAT pupils” which should be highlighted in School Improvement Plans (SIPs). Furthermore *Standard 6* (ibid, 2008c, p.17), states that teachers should “have a wide repertoire of approaches”, thus challenging pupils to perform to the best of their abilities. In the same way it is essential that EAL MAT pupils can access enrichment tasks “inside and outside the classroom” (ibid, 2008c, p.10). Moreover, it is acknowledged that “good enrichment is about style and underpinning

philosophy more than it is about content” (Stephen and Warwick, 2015, p.67), allowing pupils’ skills to be enhanced.

Pupils’ needs vary according to their cultural background. Being an EAL MAT pupil may bring additional pressures and cause friction at home, where loyalty to one’s parents, background and home culture may be considered as more important than achievement in school (Stopper, 2000). The National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC) (2012) emphasises that home support may vary from pupil to pupil and that home expectation will influence a child’s learning. It is essential that EAL MAT pupils can appreciate their own diversity as this may affect their attitudes to learning. Both cultures are influential; schools should aim to engage with and understand pupils’ home cultures as this is an important part of their make-up (Stopper, 2000).

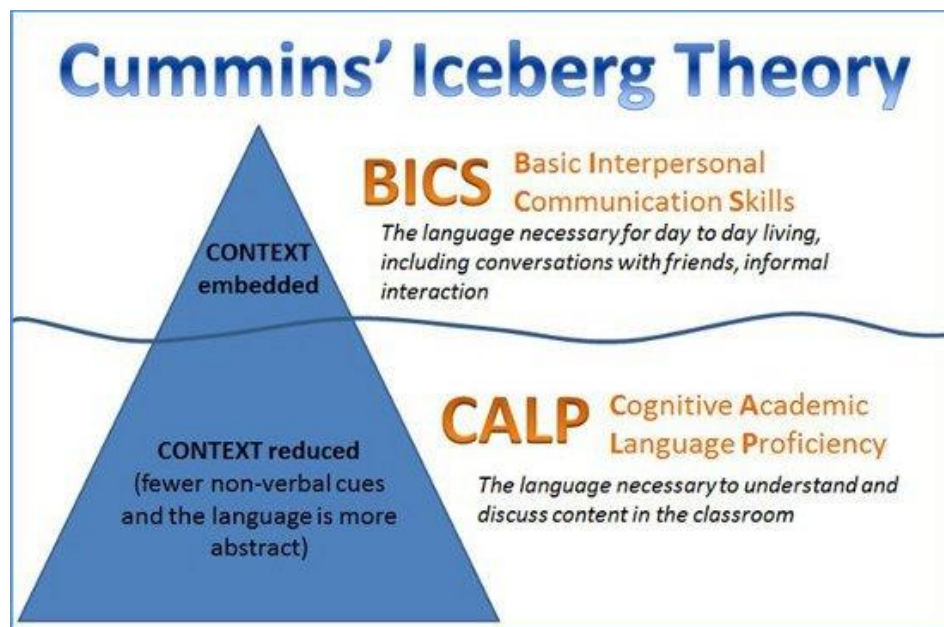
It is vital that the term ‘Special Educational Needs’ (SEN) is not automatically applied to an EAL pupil. Just because a pupil may struggle with acquiring a second language it does not mean that he/she has SEN. Some EAL pupils are more able than others and as such they should be challenged to achieve their potential. It is important that EAL SEN pupils are identified at an early stage and appropriate strategies adopted and embedded by teachers who should aim to establish good relationships with all EAL pupils, thus building up a picture of individual needs. Washbourne (2011) suggested that EAL pupils should be set by ability in a bid to improve their opportunities to flourish. Indeed, EAL learners may well be MAT. Some EAL pupils may feel that historically their nationality does not achieve well in UK schools (Demie, McDonald and Hau, 2016) and this may impact upon their self-esteem. Stephen and Warwick (2015, p.135) emphasise that it is “vital that schools break the cycle of cultural stereotyping of pupils and their communities”, as this can have a negative impact on pupils’ expectations of themselves, possibly leading to under attainment. Teachers’ misconceptions of EAL pupils’ background, prior schooling and heritage may cause friction, resulting in some refusing to work in class. It is important to avoid

presuppositions of how certain nationalities perform in school which can create barriers and isolation.

Language acquisition

Lexical and grammatical knowledge are important when learning a second language. Speaking the local dialect alone does not necessarily mean that one is fluent in a second language. Although one may speak a language well, so that a native speaker can understand what is being said, reading and writing skills may be inferior to oracy skills. Cummins (1981) conducted extensive research into how EAL learners develop skills, stating that initially they learn how to converse in the second language, then later on become more confident when writing, enhancing their confidence throughout their education. Grammatical growth in the second language comes later and may be a slower process. He drew a distinction between basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Cummins referred to this as the 'Iceberg Theory', (Illustration 2), (Aukerman, 2007), emphasising that "BICS refers to conversational fluency in the target language while CALP refers to students' ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts and ideas" (Cummins, 2008, p.3) which will help them in their education. Therefore, lexical development in English grows first. "EAL learners pick up language from their classmates through social interaction" (Washbourne, 2011, p.18) which will help them to interact in English. They need to hear "good models of English from native speakers and ... be involved in active learning" (ibid, 2011, p.18). The common language they use to converse may be referred to as 'English as an International Language' (EIL) which is "an umbrella term" (McKay and Bokhorst-Heng, 2008, p. xvi) for two or more speakers for whom English is a second language, regardless of whether both speak the same first language. However, it is recognised that EAL pupils "have different challenges in relation to language and literacy acquisition" (WG, 2013, p. 11) and that what helps one pupil will not necessarily help another.

Illustration 2 - Cummins' Iceberg Theory (Aukerman, 2007)

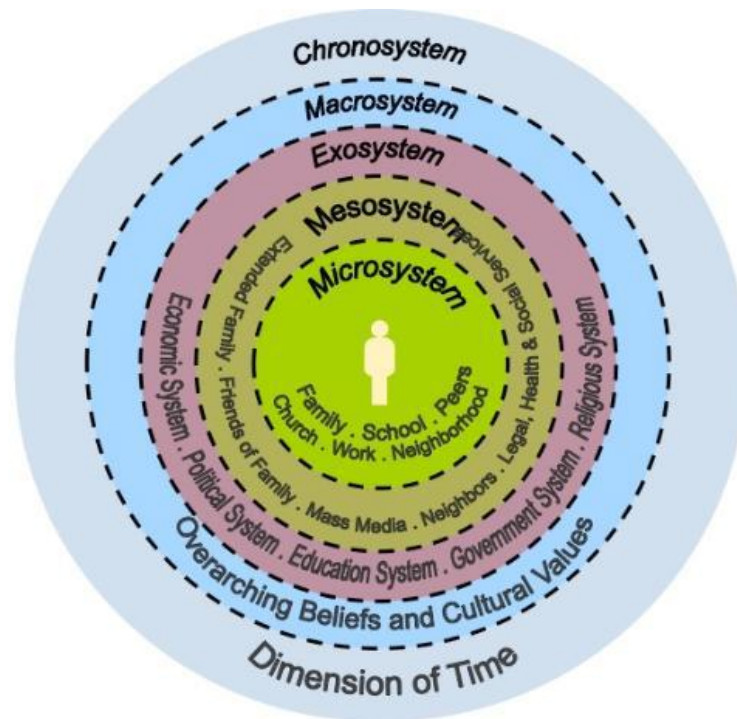


Attitudes to learning a second language

Bronfenbrenner's (Denner, 2014) *Ecological Systems Theory* (Illustration 3) states that there is a set system of relationships which affect the child's "environment". Latterly this theory has been re-named the *Bioecological Systems Theory*. When referring to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory, Ryan (2000, p.1) states that "a child's own biology is a primary environment fuelling [his/her] development". Bronfenbrenner (1979) says that the family, home life, friends, school, the community in which the child lives will all influence and impact upon his/her development. A child's Microsystem affects his/her relationships within the family and school, while the Mesosystem may be influenced by relationships between the teachers and school and parents. Therefore, if there are any changes or conflict within the child's life these will have a knock-on effect, meaning that children's attitudes to learning may be affected (Darling, 2007). It is crucial to note that a child's Chronosystem is influenced as he/she matures, reacting to changes in life and changes in personal cognitive development. Although parents continue to be influential in a young person's life, the

teacher's role will be crucial. It follows therefore that a teenager arriving in the UK from another country will react differently from a young child when learning a second language.

Illustration 3 – Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Denner, 2014)



Many EAL pupils struggle with learning English; they may have literacy difficulties in their mother tongue and imposing a second language may cause personal angst, whilst others may be exceptionally bright but reluctant to speak a second language due to family loyalties.

Pupils come from a range of backgrounds including:

- having arrived in Wales as asylum seekers, suffering emotional distress;
- staying in Wales temporarily on route to another country;
- coming to Wales as children of migrant workers;
- arriving here with their parents as part of the National Health Service's (NHS) 'Government Job Recruitment' scheme.

Understanding the needs of each EAL child is concomitant with understanding his/her background and culture (Washbourne, 2011). Schools are urged to engage with parents “in a meaningful way [as] their children tend to perform better in school” (WG, 2014b, p. 6). This is a sensible approach as parents or carers can provide useful information about their children’s progress and well-being at home and play a critical role in supporting their children’s studies. Some families may have experienced trauma which has profoundly affected them. Furthermore “the most destructive force to a child’s development [is the] instability and unpredictability of family life”, (Addison, 1992, p.16), in reference to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) theory. Thus, parents play a pivotal role in their children’s development and “work with the families of EAL learners is ... a key tool in promoting educational achievement” (WG, 2015a, p.22). Some pupils may not have had the opportunity previously to attend school every day and this may affect their attitude to learning. Family ties are affected, positively or negatively, when a child learns English as a second language. EAL pupils may experience home pressure to maintain their home language. Some feel pressurised to speak English only at school and their mother tongue at home. The school culture may be viewed as an English culture, contrary to the family’s desire. Indeed, school may be the only place where some pupils have opportunities to speak English. EAL pupils’ parents play a critical role in supporting their child’s studies (Washbourne, 2011). Furthermore WG (2015a) supports the viewpoint that pupils who have skilled parents are at an “advantage” (Cross, 2011).

People EAL children meet outside their family are also a factor influencing their development (Ryan, 2000) (Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1994) and attitudes to learning English. Children living in a community where the only language they speak together is their mother tongue may find it harder to learn a second language. Baker (1996, p.35) refers to “people who speak two or more languages [living in] a language community” which may influence a child’s openness to learning English and mixing with friends outside their community. It is important to recognise that language is an essential part of who we are and our identity. There may be many pressures upon the EAL child, both positive and

negative. Furthermore, it is a common misconception that “speaking another language interferes with learning English” (Washbourne, 2011, p. 17). Some pupils may be plurilingual, with the advantage of conversing in more than one language. In some cases English may be the third or even fourth language spoken at home. Speaking English with new friends or siblings may accelerate the rate of learning English as a second language. Furthermore, religion is an important factor to consider. If a migrant family attends a church where worship is conducted in English, this can impact positively upon their attitude and willingness towards conversing in English.

Dweck (2017) argues that some pupils develop a growth mindset which enables them to achieve well in and beyond the classroom. Rather than having a *fixed mindset* which may be inherent, having a *growth mindset* is where pupils come to believe that anything is possible. The growth mindset is “based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts” (Dweck, 2008, p. 7). Therefore, pupils with a growth mindset demonstrate an aspirational mindset and attitude to learning whereby, with hard work and persistence, they can become successful in their studies. Learning English can provide emotional security and empower pupils to work hard in school. Their attitudes towards learning English may change and speaking English be seen as a positive move.

Sharpe and Driscoll (2000, p.80-81) discuss how it is beneficial for young children to study a second language as it “cultivates children’s communication skills and their understanding of human cultures” as they come to understand that their mother tongue is not the only “human language”. Washbourne (2011) emphasises that learning English as an additional language does not replace one’s first language, stating that being bilingual today has many benefits and “learning additional languages is something positive ... [and] to communicate in more than one language should be valued as a great skill” (ibid, 2011, p.18). The benefits of this should be obvious to European pupils who live in a multicultural and multilingual environment.

Children may have a second language enforced upon them when they move to the UK which may cause additional pressures and affect attitudes to learning English. Children who have lived in Wales for most or all their education may consider themselves as fluent English speakers, often at the expense of speaking the language they learned when they were very young, or the language their parents still speak. However, one should consider if someone is 'bilingual' "if they rarely or never use one of their languages" (Baker, 1996, p.4). Some pupils may feel that they have lost their first language and can no longer speak it. They may understand most or some of what their parents say to them but reply in English, regarding this as their main language and even their first language. It is necessary however to reiterate the importance of building upon one's mother tongue to support the new second language (WG, 2015 a).

As a support network some pupils may resort to 'codeswitching' where they think and speak a mixture of two languages, alternating between the languages according to situation, by substituting some words from their first language into their second language. They may hear and be able to speak a first language to a degree, but rarely get the opportunity to read or write that language as they never visit their 'home' country. Hoffmann (2014, p.26) supports this argument and states that being bilingual and not losing one's first language requires "a fair amount of access to the country and its culture" which is consistent with WG's (2015a) report on building capacity in schools. When observing Filipino children learning a second language, Bernardo (2005) researched whether code-switching is a positive help or a hindrance and thus an obstacle to be avoided. He summarised by stating that code-switching is not "a compromise or fall-back option" but rather it is "an important part of the Filipino bilingual's language competencies ... [which can]... help attain ... goals more effectively" (ibid, 2005, p.161). Taking this idea further, Bernardo states that code-switching is "*a language* that students and teachers can share that can be their resource in their mutual pursuit of knowledge and understanding" (ibid, 2005, p.162).

Research shows that learning a second language and becoming bilingual brings with it challenges (Slevc, Davey and Linck, 2016). However, Baker (1996) states that EAL pupils are at an advantage in many cases as their cognitive skills are highly developed by meeting the demands of learning English as a second language. It is important to recognise that not all EAL pupils are the same, but rather they have their own needs, strengths and challenges. Some may be more forthcoming when answering in class, whilst others are shy or reluctant to participate. However, this does not mean that they cannot answer the questions posed. Some speak English more competently and cope better than others when studying a second language. Both EAL language acquisition and language learning are important within the curriculum and classroom contexts, as they “[generate] a need/desire to understand and apply new skills, process and content” and “[generate] a need/desire to understand and interact with both the environment and other pupils” (Pim, 2010, p. 13). Both are interlinked and help EAL learners to become fluent in another language.

Pedagogy, skills development and the classroom environment

Differentiation is a “key tool for meeting EAL needs in the classroom” (WG, 2015a, p. 20) and teacher scaffolding is necessary to support pupils’ learning. Differentiated support and additional learning needs (ALN) support are implemented to nurture EAL learners’ confidence in English. One-to-one help will benefit EAL pupils greatly, as will independent learning. However, collaborative work with other learners is of the upmost importance. Although the role of the buddy is central to the development of the EAL learner, the teacher is likely to be the most important influence on a pupil’s ability to learn another language and the key to effective learning and ultimate success in school. It is the teacher’s role to ensure that in accordance with WG (2015b) pupils can be given a range of learning experiences. To teach effectively and build capacity within schools, teachers are encouraged to “develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultures their pupils come from ...[and demonstrate] ... reflective practice” (WG, 2015a, p.17). EAL pupils, regardless of ability, may demonstrate resilience, but at times be vulnerable and need

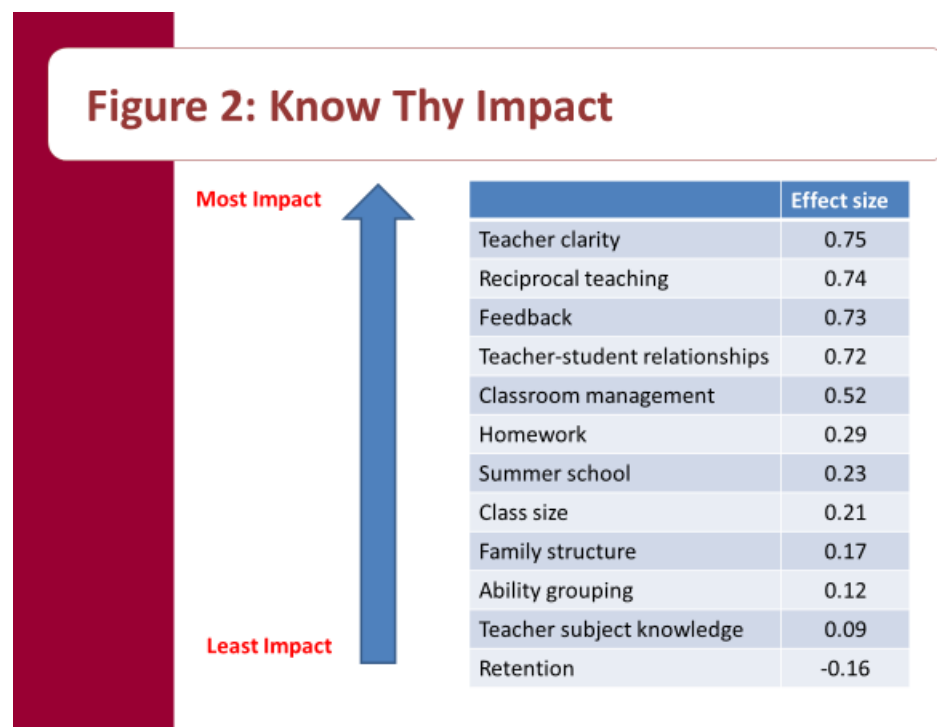
support. Here the pedagogy employed by the teacher is important allowing pupils to become good and excellent learners.

Pupils may be deemed to have achieved English language proficiency when they have developed the four skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing. However, Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) suggests that the fifth skill of metacognition is also a very important tool when undertaking enquiry-based learning. Hopwood's (2009) suggestion that language and creativity are intertwined reinforces the importance of metacognition. By working with their peers, pupils are involved in "active learning" (Washbourne, 2011, p.18). Therefore, metacognition may well be regarded as the most important of the skills mentioned. Thinking is at the heart of each pupil's learning, consistent with WAG's (2008b, p.6) aim that "learners develop their thinking across the curriculum [by] planning, developing and reflecting". When carrying out research into "assessment of language proficiency in a sample of bilingual jurisdictions" (Hopwood et al, 2018, p.58), the importance of "comparing languages ... using the knowledge of one language to support [another]" is noted, as is the significance of "respect for cultural differences", both of which help to develop confident speakers of multiple languages. This aligns with WG's (2015a) report that linguistic and cultural diversity should be respected and nurtured. Supporting Baker (1996), Hopwood et al (2018) identify the many benefits of being bilingual or multilingual.

Building a culture of respect and trust in the classroom is critical (Washbourne, 2011), supporting a community in which EAL learners feel comfortable studying and where they are given opportunities to achieve success in all aspects of their education. The teacher's pedagogy will facilitate this for them. The teacher will ensure that EAL pupils have opportunities to participate in "collaborative learning" (Washbourne, 2011, p.26) in all skills and that they are given a different range of groups in which to work. Hattie (2012b) states that a culture of trust should be nurtured and maintained within schools, led by SLT (Tomlin, 2018). His meta-analysis of over 50,000 studies conducted by many researchers involves over 250 million students over several years. His focus has been on the strategy *Know Thy*

Impact (Hattie, 2012a). Hattie, Masters and Birch's research (2016), (Figure 2), demonstrates that the teacher's role is pivotal. Furthermore, reciprocal teaching, teacher feedback and teacher-student relationships are also important to pupils. It is therefore imperative that all teachers understand and adopt strategies which allow pupils to thrive.

Figure 2: 'Know Thy Impact' (Hattie, Masters and Birch, 2016)



Hattie (2012b) talks of the power of peer learners in the classroom. By teaching respect for each other and using collaborative strategies EAL pupils are provided with the best opportunity to master English and become more confident. EAL pupils need the correct learning environment, with the teacher scaffolding their learning and with support from school and home. Thus pupil-pupil and teacher-pupil relationships are built within the classroom, acknowledging that interaction and collaboration will affect pupils' progress in learning English. EAL pupils may have a mentor or buddy in school with whom they form a

close bond who will encourage and support them, as well as illustrating what they are expected to do, and reporting back to the teacher on their progress.

In response to *Successful Futures* (Donaldson, 2015), and the introduction of a new Wales curriculum in 2022, schools are encouraged to “inspire, engage and motivate the next generation of learners” (WG, 2017, p.41) with pupils’ wellbeing at the heart of their education. Ultimately, teachers should ensure that all pupils are given opportunities to thrive and become “resilient, imaginative, compassionate and ambitious” (ibid, 2017, p.3).

Chapter 3

Methodology

This case study traces a group of Set 1 Year 9 Filipino and Polish pupils' achievements in English as they approached the end of KS3. A case study design frame was adopted as the most appropriate method to "[capture] information about human behaviour" (Salkind, 2000, p.194), allowing an insight into the pupils' studies, not available from other methods considered. An interpretivist paradigm was chosen because gaining information from dialogue with the pupils would allow an interpretation of their attitudes and behaviour (Thomas, 2013). This would align with Salkind's (2000, p.195) proposition that within such discussions a "diversity and richness of human behaviour" could be analysed and conclusions drawn. However, linking with Salkind's (2000) reference to bias, it should be acknowledged that conclusions drawn would be based on personal opinion.

A timetable was drawn up to map out the progression of the study, in accordance with Bell with Waters's (2014, p.35) guidelines. Timing was an important factor as throughout the spring and summer terms pupils were approaching the end of KS3 and thus specific targets were set accordingly. Resources to be used included the Year 9 Set 1 English pupils, who were active subjects of the research, the class teacher, a selection of pupils' books and a research diary in which all planning notes and records of the study would be kept in accordance with BERA (2011) guidelines.

It was important therefore that the methods chosen to gather data were appropriate. Working within an inductive paradigm, mixed methods were adopted to deduce certain patterns in pupils' behaviour and draw conclusions. Mixed methods allowed for an ontological study of the EAL pupils, the subjects of this research. Working with the pupils and having no pre-conceptions of how they would perform at the end of KS3, conclusions could be drawn about attitudes to learning, preferred learning styles, the teacher's interventions and the factors which helped them and influenced their success. Use of

triangulation would validate this research and its findings. Aligning with Laws's (2013) and Altrichter et al's (1996) theories about triangulation, it was important to collect data in more than one way, which in turn would "confirm and challenge the findings of one method with ... another" (Laws, 2013, p.143) and validate and add detail to the data. Using a mixed methods approach, both qualitative and quantitative data could be compared to identify consistency and inconsistency and thus avoid bias.

Qualitative methods would add depth and detail to the study. To elicit candid responses, questions would be asked about pupils' attitudes to learning, allowing for Filipino and Polish pupils' viewpoints to be compared and contrasted and thus gain an ontological perspective. Drawing on Opie's (2004) ideas, the qualitative methods adopted included interviews with a focus group and the class teacher and also an analysis of the vocabulary pupils used when discussing their studies.

This was a unique Year 9 English class, "remarkably different from the norm" (Thomas, 2013, p.151) because of its high number of EAL pupils which included Filipino and Polish nationalities. To ensure validity in methods chosen, it was necessary for the focus group to be "appropriate ... representative ... not too large or too small" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2005, p.115). Interviewing the group would be the best way to glean pupils' personal views. Enquiring about their classroom environment and the teacher's pedagogy would provide up to date information. It was important to form a purposive focus group, "a judgmental or expert sample" (Lavrakas, 2008), because selecting a random sample would leave too much to chance. It was imperative that both EAL nationalities were represented, even though this provided a certain influence over the group's composition, creating a selection bias. It was important to understand pupils' backgrounds. Adopting Salkind's (2000) concept of stratification, this group was chosen because of the mixture of FSM pupils, boys and girls, pupils from one parent families and children of tradesmen, professional and unemployed parents. It was necessary for both genders to be included. There were twenty girls and ten boys in the class, giving an obvious bias towards the girls.

A benefit of a focus group is that pupils may be more willing to participate and provide information on how they view feel about their studies. One limitation however of a focus group, as acknowledged by Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2009), is the gathering of group rather than individual viewpoints. To minimise the risk of some pupils being intimidated by others within the group or by the researcher, questions were prepared to start the discussion (Appendix 2). Thus the interview was “semi-structured” (Opie, 2004, p.118), with flexibility to direct certain questions at specific pupils or the group as a whole. Notes were taken throughout. By choosing a small group, pupil interaction together with behaviour and body language could be observed and conclusions drawn as to whether there was consistency with verbal responses. Following Thomas’s (2013) suggestions on conducting semi-structured interviews, it was important to establish rapport and put the group at ease. Being face-to-face with the pupils and working within an interpretive paradigm allowed one to gain depth of understanding and develop an overall picture from their responses (Opie, 2004).

A “semi-structured” interview (Opie, 2004, p.118) was conducted with the class teacher. A positive factor when conducting interviews is the opportunities provided to gain first-hand knowledge about what happens inside the classroom and how the teacher perceives pupils’ attitudes to learning. The class teacher was asked about the pedagogy employed when teaching the whole class, differentiated tasks for the MAT pupils and any additional support and scaffolding provided for EAL pupils. Conclusions about the pupils’ studies could be drawn from the teacher’s responses.

Vocabulary used by the pupils during the focus group discussion would be recorded which would allow for pupils’ choice of words to be compared and contrasted; the quality of their language and the inference from their words could be analysed and deductions made about how they view their English studies. The qualitative evidence was informative and revealed the story behind the quantitative evidence. Interviews allowed interrogation of the

perspectives of both pupils and teacher. Pupils' and teacher's comments could be challenged and specific examples or further detail requested.

Quantitative methods employed allowed for accuracy of data, these being the use of a class questionnaire and the pupils' end of KS3 NC levels in English. Specific rather than generalised data could be reported as there were only thirteen EAL pupils in the class. A class questionnaire (Appendix 3) was devised to gauge attitudes towards topics such as the teacher's pedagogy, pupils' preferred learning styles and skills utilised. In accordance with Thomas's (2013) guidelines on how to compile a questionnaire, it was decided to use a Likert scale as pupils were to be asked about their attitudes to learning. This was an ideal tool for gauging pupils' attitudes to learning with short and unambiguous questions. Using Likert style questions for the first part of the questionnaire, where attitudes to learning were explored, pupils were required to give answers and opinions in an order ranging from 'never' to 'always'. These questions were devised with four options for answers rather than five, thus removing the "tendency to over-choose the middle option" (Thomas, 2013, p. 213). One advantage of Likert style questionnaires is that the responses may shed light on why pupils do certain things and the rationale behind their actions. Following Opie's (2004) direction on Likert scales, the pupils' responses could be summarised and the results analysed by calculating a percentage of the cohort in the form of "data reduction" (ibid, 2004, p.207). Questions were worded to allow opportunities for further dialogue. The use of "precision in wording" (Bell with Waters, 2014, p.160) was important to avoid ambiguity. The rest of the questionnaire involved selection of a personal answer from a given list by ticking a box and by giving examples of their own experiences and additional comments.

The questionnaire was distributed in a lesson, demonstrating Bell with Waters' (2014) viewpoint of the advantage of distributing a questionnaire, allowing questions to be read through and clarification given. In accordance with ethical considerations, all responses were anonymous. The questionnaire allowed pupils to express their own opinions so that individual voices could be heard without being influenced by others in the class. The use of

a Likert style rather than multiple choice questionnaire required pupils to give assertive answers to specific questions. Pupils were encouraged to answer all the questions to avoid gaps in responses. One disadvantage of questionnaires, however, is that they “are not good for answering the question ‘Why?’” (Opie, 2004, p.110). Thus further qualitative data was used to find out the answer to ‘Why?’ questions, namely interviews with a focus group and the teacher. Such interviews avoided superficial questions, as pupils were asked specific things.

A second quantitative strategy adopted was the comparison of EAL pupils’ end of KS2 and KS3 data, allowing insight into which pupils had made the greatest gains throughout KS3. An advantage of using quantitative data, based on statistics, is that the data are reliable, objective and easy to measure and interpret. This method also avoids bias.

By the adoption of an epistemological approach, asking questions and then interpreting pupils’ responses, conclusions could be drawn about pupils’ experiences when studying English. Adopting an interpretivist paradigm, data gathered provided a foundation for understanding how the pupils viewed the teacher’s pedagogy in the classroom and how this and other factors influenced their attitudes to learning. The intention therefore was to use triangulation by analysing the results of the class questionnaire, comments made in interviews with the focus group and class teacher, a grid of pupils’ specific vocabulary and the end of KS3 data. The responses to the questionnaire, the interviews and the pupils’ own words would corroborate their attitudes to learning, providing examples of pedagogy used in class and highlighting pupils’ motivation, or lack of it, to achieve success. The use of a range of methodology would allow the findings to be analysed and their reliability assessed.

Chapter 4

Ethics

Ethical and moral issues were considered when selecting methodology to be used throughout the duration of this study. The study adheres to both British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2011) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* and BERA (2018) guidelines, the latter coming into force after this research commenced, and to the *Data Protection Act* (2018) as referred to in University of Wales Trinity St. David (UWTSD) (2016) *Research Data Management Policy* and UWTSD's (2018) *Data Protection Statement*.

In March 2017 the Headteacher's permission was sought to conduct this research. The Headteacher is familiar with teachers undertaking action research and views such research as being of benefit to the school. The Year 9 Set 1 English teacher was approached and the scope and reasons for the research were explained. The teacher was asked to share Schemes of Work (SoWs) and strategies used when teaching Set 1 and EAL pupils. Assurance was given that the research would be conducted in a professional manner, that she could withdraw from the research at any time without any consequence (BERA, 2011, p. 6) and that the research would be anonymised. Consent was given both orally and more formally in writing, by the filling in and signing of a form, with assurance of the importance of trust and confidentiality in this research (BERA, 2011, p.7).

The Set 1 class was gathered together and informed that the research was for a Master of Arts Education (MA Ed). Qualitative and quantitative evidence would be gathered through researching their NC attainment in English. Pupils were informed of the research activities to be undertaken and how they would be involved. They were invited to ask questions, and several did. Pupils were told that they were free to withdraw from the case study whenever they wished, with no fear of recrimination (BERA, 2011, p. 6). They were reassured that trust was very important throughout the research and that all information gathered would be treated privately and confidentially (BERA, 2011. p. 7). Assurance was given that the

findings would only be discussed with a university tutor and only during the lifetime of the study.

It was explained that any notes would be recorded in a research diary and kept secure in a locked cupboard in a locked office. All notes would be anonymised; no pupil would be referred to by name, either in the diary or in the final dissertation. At the end of the period of research the diary would be destroyed and not used for any other purpose. The research would be kept on a USB pen and backed up on an external hard drive, both of which would be password protected and kept securely.

Pupils were informed about the type of interviews to be conducted, with a focus group of pupils and the class teacher, and that before the whole class questionnaire all questions would be read through, so there were no uncertainties. Only questions appropriate to their age group were selected. Pupils were informed that they could leave out any questions if they wished, intended to make them feel comfortable with the research. They were told that interviews and questionnaires would be conducted either in their English classroom, without their teacher being present, or in an office, with the door slightly ajar, ensuring them that they were free and safe to voice their opinions without any coercion. There is a window in both classroom doors in accordance with the School (2018) *Safeguarding Policy*. Pupils were informed that data gathered would be treated confidentially and not shared with any unauthorised persons.

Pupils and their parents were written to prior to the start of the case study. Their consent to participate in the research was requested by the completion and signing of a consent form attached to the letter. It was explained that participation was voluntary and that they would not, under any circumstances, be coerced into taking part. Pupils were offered letters for their parents in another language. However, all said that they would like letters in English and would sit with their parents and talk about the proposed research. All parents

and pupils returned the consent forms, giving 100% participation from the class. The consent forms were locked away in a secure cupboard.

Participants were informed that they would receive a summary sheet of the findings at the end of the research and that they could ask further questions at that stage if they wished. They were reassured that all data would be anonymised, so that no pupil could be identified. They were reminded also that the research would be published and archived at UWTSD and that the coded data would protect the anonymity of all participants in the research.

Chapter 5

Findings and Analysis of Findings

Qualitative evidence

1. Discussion with a focus group

The focus group (Figure 3) comprised three Filipinos, all MAT pupils, and three Poles. All six were first-generation migrants and had volunteered to form the focus group. All had received LSA support at primary school which had helped them in lessons and when talking to their peers, supporting Pim's argument (2010) that both language acquisition and language learning are necessary to acquire a language. The odd number within each sub-group allowed for lack of consensus. The bias was towards the females but, as girls outnumbered the boys two to one in this class, it was representative to have such a stratified group, aligning with Salkind's (2000) guidelines.

<u>Figure 3: - Breakdown of the Focus Group</u>						
Pupil number	Gender	Referred to as	Nationality	End of KS3 target NC level	Current NC level - (April 2017)	End of KS3 NC level (June 2017)
Pupil 1	Male	P1M	Filipino	8	7	8
Pupil 2	Female	P2F	Filipino	8	8	8
Pupil 3	Female	P3F	Filipino	8	8	8
Pupil 4	Male	P4M	Polish	6	6	6
Pupil 5	Female	P5F	Polish	6	6	6
Pupil 6	Female	P6F	Polish	6	6	6

It was essential that everyone expressed their opinions; it soon became apparent that all were willing to speak openly and candidly, as anticipated from my knowledge of the pupils. Given the potential to influence their responses, measures were taken to employ reflection

and triangulation (Bell with Waters, 2014). Listening to pupils' responses, I took the role of a moderator, "a marginal rather than pivotal role" (Thomas, 2013, p. 203) within the group, acknowledging that the pupils' responses would require empathy and understanding to identify individual learning pathways.

Shortly into the discussion differences of opinion arose between the Filipinos and Poles. The Filipinos' responses were open; they initiated discussion, were significantly more articulate and appeared to give the exercise more thought which, from my knowledge of the pupils, did not surprise me. Pupils were questioned about their backgrounds, how they viewed studying English, school learning experiences and whether they felt supported in their work and challenged to attain or exceed their target NC levels.

Initially pupils were asked about their 'home' country. Two of the three Filipinos moved to the UK after starting school. All three maintain contact with family in the Philippines; their parents send money regularly to support family there. Pupils were proud of being Filipino and of their culture. P1M stated "*I consider myself as British-Filipino now ... my parents are Filipino ... proud of our heritage*". All three consider UK educational standards to be superior. Some of their opinions were based on their parents' viewpoints, as corroborated by a subsequent conversation I had with P2F's parents. As infants in the Philippines they spoke at least two languages, i.e. Tagalog and dialect. No-one spoke English at home. English is taught in Filipino secondary schools and P2F believed that literacy levels there are now higher than when their parents attended school. P1M's parents had spoken basic English before emigrating, giving them "*an advantage*". P1M could understand only basic English phrases before emigrating. In response to P1M's comments, P4M, from Poland, said he felt this put him at a disadvantage, as neither he nor his parents had spoken English prior to emigrating, stating "*it is not fair ... you will do better than me in English as you already spoke some English before you moved here*". P1M reiterated that he had not spoken much English before moving to the UK. P2F and P3F said their parents had found learning English difficult. P3F recalled her mother "*struggled and needed support*", a comment

corroborated in a later conversation I had with her mother who was pleased that her daughter was *“supported 100% in school ... [and] ... didn’t have to face the problems I experienced in the Philippines”*.

Examining the Global Finance (2018) list of the world’s richest countries in 2016 helps to understand the social stratification of the class; the UK was ranked 27th, Poland 48th and the Philippines 121st. Parents had emigrated for employment, better living standards and brighter futures for their children. Poverty levels are high in the Philippines. Choosing to leave one’s country and emigrate is a major decision, as it may mean never returning due to high travel costs. Filipinos had emigrated as part of the NHS recruitment scheme. They would have been required to pass examinations and speak English. In contrast, Poland is overall a wealthier country than the Philippines and nearer in distance to the UK, allowing easier access to return ‘home’.

The three Poles were of primary school age when they left Poland. P6F said that education standards in Poland and the UK are similar. In Poland they had studied a little French which P4M considered *“much easier”* than English. He said he mixed up languages which caused problems. This reflects Washbourne’s idea (2011) that it might simply be that P4M was less open to learning English than he was to another language, i.e. French. P4M and P5F said that they maintained the Polish language by studying GCSE Polish. P5F said speaking Polish was important to her family. She emphasised that her ‘home’ culture is significant, highlighting her pride in her heritage. She spoke only Polish at home, although at times this was difficult as English was easier for her to speak, a fact reiterated by P6F whose parents insist that she speaks Polish to them, thus preserving their ‘home’ language. Both pupils are therefore under pressure from home to maintain their mother tongue and home culture, reflecting Stopper’s (2000) reference to some parents’ negativity towards learning a second language at the expense of the mother tongue, as corroborated by P5F and P6F.

Questioned further about British culture, P4M said he was respectful of British culture and had British friends, but racism was of concern. The Poles' parents had some British colleagues and friends who helped them to speak English. Significantly, Polish parents believed their children spoke better English than they did, an observation also made by the Filipinos. P4M demonstrated some negativity towards speaking English and spoke only Polish to his parents and sister, whereas P5F and P6F said they spoke mainly English to their parents and siblings. It was important to note that all three spoke mostly English to each other, illustrating that they now speak more English with Polish peers at the expense of their former first language, which remains their parents' first language. Despite the challenges of learning a second language (Slevc, Davey and Linck, 2016), all three consider themselves bilingual, viewing that to be an asset.

P1M and P2F emphasised that family ties and respect were important. P2F's parents tell her to *"work hard ... get the best grades you can"*, reminding her of poverty in the Philippines. Filipinos said their parents have embraced British culture and are very happy in the UK, although they work long hours. P2F related how her mother struggled to learn English:

"On her first day nursing here my mother struggled to understand what the other nurses were saying ... everyone spoke quickly ... Even now she asks some colleagues to speak slower".

All three said their parents now speak English well and view it as an advantage, aligning with Cross's (2011) theory. Filipino parents demonstrate positive attitudes when nurturing relationships with school and supporting their children's education, in line with WG's (2015a) guidelines on building relationships with EAL families. The influence of parents on children at this age and the development of children's microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) may account for Filipino pupils' overall confidence and attitude to learning.

Dialogue with the Filipinos allowed me to probe how well they speak Tagalog. Two speak a little Tagalog but usually speak English to parents. P1M speaks no Tagalog and his parents accept that his first language is now English. However, he understands when they speak to him in either language but answers them only in English. P2F and P3F said they were trilingual, as their families also speak a Filipino dialect with friends. P2F felt that she had the benefit of two complementary languages and cultures, substantiating Hopwood et al's (2018) and WG's (2015a) comments about nurturing competence in one's first language to support the second, in this case English. It is noteworthy that all three Filipinos consider themselves bilingual, although two said they are not fluent in Tagalog and P1M does not speak it. This contrasted with the Poles who are fluent Polish speakers and maintain their language at home and by studying GCSE Polish. Mastering a second language, in this case English, may be referred to as "sequential childhood bilingualism" (Baker, 1996, p. 76) . Filipino pupils spoke Tagalog in the Philippines and are now fluent in English, learned only at school, and therefore speak or understand more than one language. Acknowledging Cummins's (2001) theory, as a linguist I would argue that literacy skills acquired in the mother tongue are transferable to another language.

P3F said that being bilingual helped her view the world in a different light and solve problems by drawing on her linguistic abilities. P3F's remarks confirm Sharpe and Driscoll's (2000, p.81) statement that speaking a second language enhances one's "understanding of human cultures" and Washbourne's (2011) emphasis on the importance of social interaction when learning a language. My experience as a language teacher confirms that bilingualism enhances the skillset of EAL pupils when taught to speak, read, write and develop metacognition in two languages. All three Filipinos said that speaking English was much easier than writing it, reflecting Cummins' s BICS and CALP theories (1981) (a).

P2F and P3F used code-switching on occasions, supporting Bernardo's (2005) observations that code-switching plays a positive part in language education. The Filipinos could understand some Tagalog but answered mainly in English. It was noteworthy that P3F said

she spoke only English with younger siblings who spoke no Tagalog at all. Her comments differed from those of the Poles who speak only Polish at home.

Overall, the Filipinos' attitudes towards learning English were more positive than those of the Poles who referred to obstacles rather than opportunities. P4M's family speak only Polish at home and preserve their language by forging close links with other Polish families. This is what Baker (1996, p. 35) refers to as a "language community". P6F's parents did not speak English when they moved to the UK and struggled to learn the language. Two Poles said their parents needed some English for work but because their employers were Polish mastering English was a slow process. Conversely, the Filipino parents, who worked in the NHS, spoke fluent English. The Poles' comments contrasted with those of the Filipinos who were far more positive about the UK, speaking English and were thus better integrated into UK life.

P4M said his family had encountered racial abuse, a reason for maintaining close links with other Polish families. P6F said her parents felt "*safer*" with other Poles. There was disparity between the Filipino parents who socialised with various nationalities and the Poles who preferred to socialise with other Poles, i.e. within a "language community" (Baker, 1996, p. 35), as a way of maintaining their home culture.

P4M and P6F said they are often required to translate for their family at meetings and medical appointments. This was not the case for the Filipinos. Teaching experience confirms that in some cases Polish pupils miss school as they are interpreters for parents and extended family and may thus be viewed as having a certain 'power' over their parents. Whilst not wishing to miss school, they keep their parents 'on-side' so that they will support them when learning English.

Whilst P4M was happy in the UK, he said "*I'd like to go home to Poland ... my family is there*". P5F and P6F expressed uncertainties about their futures. P5F stated that Brexit made

returning to Poland a possibility. In contrast, the Filipinos unhesitatingly expressed their desire to remain in the UK, stating that they were happy here and that Brexit would not affect them. All three said it was unlikely that they would return to live in the Philippines.

P3F said

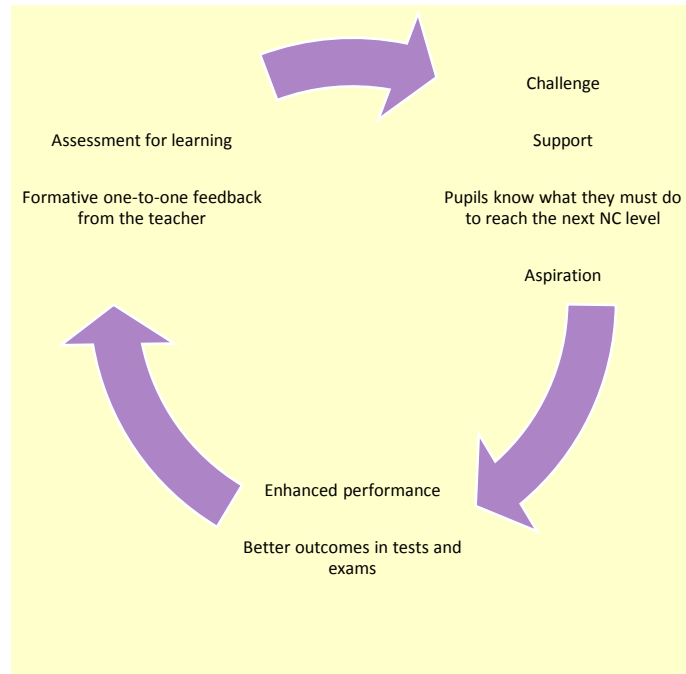
“although my best friends are Filipinos, I have friends from other countries I learn from them and their different cultures, and they are keen to learn about Filipino culture”.

Integration for the Filipinos is for life, whereas for the Poles it may only be temporary, it being cheaper to return home. Pupils’ discussions overall revealed a major cultural divide between the two nationalities which affected attitudes to learning. Filipinos displayed a more positive attitude towards studying English and they had friends of all nationalities with whom they spoke English, i.e. ‘EIL’ (McKay and Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). None of the Filipinos had encountered any racial hatred but P4M, a Pole, had concerns about racism.

Filipinos and Poles agreed unanimously that they were challenged in lessons, aligning with Washbourne’s (2011) comments about excellent teaching strategies. As the three Filipinos were MAT, their comments made me consider if they were biased towards their teacher’s MAT enrichment activities. P2F emphasised her teacher’s professionalism, engagement in lessons and high standards and referred to the school’s learning cycle (Illustration 4) which illustrates the importance of challenge.

MAT pupils always received extension tasks and were encouraged and supported to produce NC level 8 work, their aspirational target. Filipino MAT pupils had enjoyed studying Welsh folk tales recently, drawing comparisons with Filipino tales; P2F referred to the emotive language used in the tales in both languages. P1M commented upon MAT opportunities given to be creative and evaluative, broadening his knowledge. Reflecting upon her work and using Question Ladders in her book (Appendix 4) adapted from Bloom’s

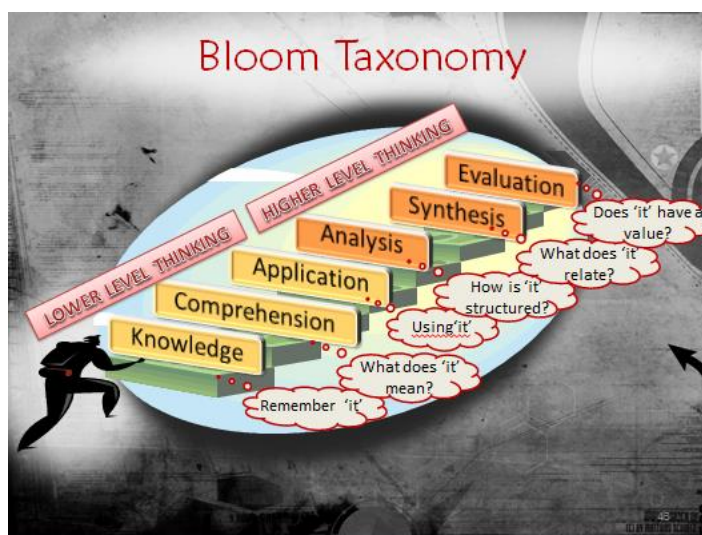
Illustration 4: [REDACTED] **School's Cycle of Learning (2014)**



Taxonomy (1956) (Illustration 5) (Karim, 2011), P2F could identify how to improve her work, corresponding with Hattie's (2012b) research. All three Filipinos enjoyed problem-solving activities based on *Animal Farm* (Orwell, 1945) and were currently producing and understanding NC level 7 and 8 work.

When discussing skills employed, all said they enjoyed debating topical issues and could add insightful contributions to the debate whilst being sensitive to others' opinions. P3F emphasised the importance of collaboration in group work, highlighting that to reach a NC level 8 she had to "*show confident use of standard English in a range of situations*" (WG, 2015b, p. 27). P3F said their teacher built upon their strengths and that pupils had opportunities to develop their creativity. P1M said he was not as confident orally but was encouraged to develop his leadership skills through group work.

Illustration 5: Bloom's Taxonomy Learning Ladder
(Karim, 2011)



P4M and P6F said they found writing English difficult and often used a Polish-English dictionary. The three Poles said it was easier to speak English than write it. P6F said she knew what she wanted to write but struggled to write “*good English*” and received one-to-one support from her teacher. All three were more confident speaking English than writing it, aligning with Cummins’s (2008) BICS theory. Filipinos agreed that whilst writing was the most challenging skill, they enjoyed being creative and were required to write English to a higher standard than their spoken English. All six acknowledged the importance of mastering reading and writing skills for GCSE studies.

Pupils commented that language skills were promoted through studying literature. Metacognition was employed to analyse texts and draw conclusions about the content. GCSE terminology was introduced in Year 9 and, if necessary, the teacher issued writing frames to scaffold pupils’ learning, in accordance with Goodhew (2009), and pressed pupils to elaborate their answers further. However, Filipinos’ command of a more sophisticated vocabulary and terminology in speaking and writing enabled them to attain higher NC levels than the Poles.

P3F enjoyed extra-curricular MAT enrichment activities. Membership of the school's debating club boosted her confidence, substantiating Stephen and Warwick's (2015) theory that enrichment is a good philosophy. She enjoyed researching topics including 'fox hunting', 'equality' and, in particular, 'racism', as many people had pre-suppositions regarding other cultures without direct knowledge. Although she had never experienced racism, she could draw on and be "*infuriated*" by her friends' real life experiences (The Bell Foundation, 2017).

All used iPads, allowing research and development of ideas and enhancing understanding of topical issues such as 'communism' and 'equality' studied whilst reading Orwell's (1945) *Animal Farm*. P2F could understand the text and draw conclusions about its influence on culture at that time by analysing the text, evaluating its themes and drawing comparisons with communist states today. PF6 said she enjoyed researching topical issues and could share her experiences of racism with others, illustrating characteristics of a NC level 6 / 7 by "[expressing] opinions and ... [using] evidence to support their views" (WG, 2015b p.27).

The Filipinos gave mature responses, illustrating characteristics of NC level 8. They spoke "coherently ... using apt vocabulary [making] a range of contributions and ... [taking] a lead role and [being] sensitive to the development of discussion" (WG, 2015b, p. 27). There were no significant differences between the three Filipinos' responses; all appeared well settled in the UK and displayed positive attitudes to learning. They were aspirational, reflecting their parents' positivity. Having encountered some English before arriving in the UK, in contrast to the Poles who had not, the Filipinos were therefore at an advantage. Furthermore, Filipino parents spoke English at work, had a good work ethic and adhered to family values, aligning with Lynch's (2016) axiology theory, whereas Polish parents struggled to learn English. In the Philippines the older generation is revered. Many Filipinos in the UK work long hours, sending money to their families who live in poverty; rarely can they afford to return 'home'. Conversely, Polish pupils did not speak of these values. Due to the proximity of Poland to the UK they can visit 'home' regularly. There was an antithesis

between the Filipino pupils' positivity and the Poles' comparative negativity. Mindful of the fact that parents have a strong influence over their children, it may be that the Filipino pupils were more open to learning English, as all three spoke highly of the value of education.

All six pupils said they employed thinking skills in lessons. P3F said studying topical or controversial topics in English made her acknowledge both sides of an argument. P5F said thinking skills were important when studying English literature as they had to analyse a novel's characters and plot. Higher order questions were posed to develop thinking skills, allowing pupils to be more evaluative and creative, aligning with Skutnabb-Kangas's (1981) emphasis of the importance of metacognition.

Pupils were then asked whether they considered themselves to be good learners and why, and what a good learner looks like. The dialogue generated from this 'Why?' question was informative, supporting Opie's (2004) comments. Consistently pupils referred to the importance of collaboration, interaction and feedback. Pupils are familiar with teachers undertaking classroom research; all staff are currently collecting qualitative data to determine the extent pupils display characteristics of a 'Visible Learner' (Hattie, 2012b), and quantitative data to enable teachers to 'Know Thy Impact' (Hattie, 2012a). When asked to list the top five qualities of a good learner, all pupils mentioned the importance of teacher feedback and teacher-pupil relationships, substantiating Hattie's (2012b) research where these qualities are referenced in the top five characteristics (Figure 2).

Scrutiny of three pupils' books demonstrated sophisticated writing. Pupils used a wide range of sentence structures and arguments were structured and illustrated coherence. Written work was engaging, demonstrating comprehension and use of analytical and cognitive skills to good effect when interpreting literature texts (WG, 2015b). MAT pupils' command of written English was of a high standard. When writing about a novel studied, one pupil analysed the author's ideas and discussed characters confidently, using textual quotations to support her ideas. There were however contrasts between one MAT NC level

8 pupil and another pupil who was working at level 6/7. It was apparent that within this class there was a range of ability, and that differentiated tasks were set accordingly.

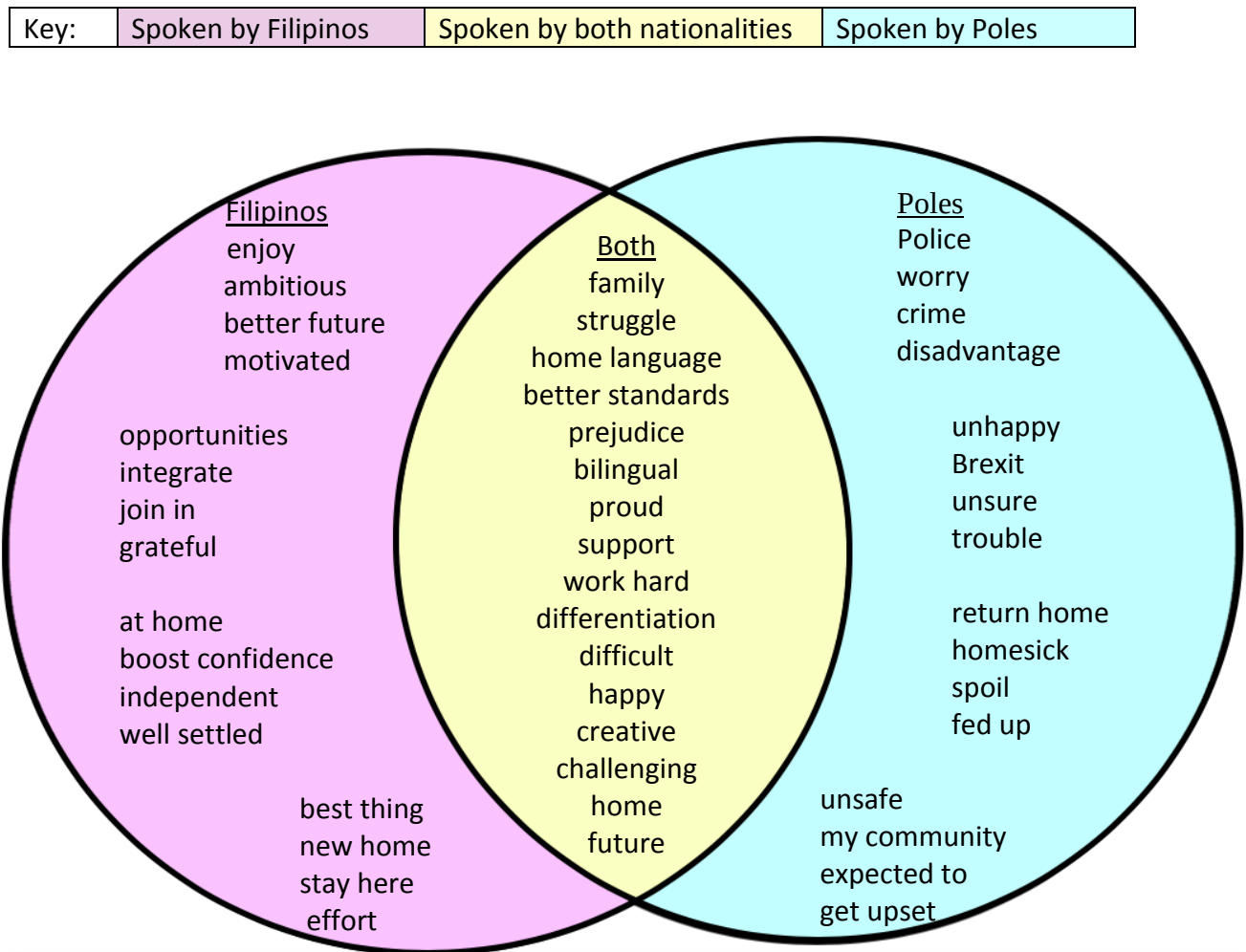
The focus group interview was revealing as it provided an insight into attitudes to the value of studying English. Significantly, the Filipinos viewed themselves as bilingual and were proud of their heritage. Speaking a language, in their case Tagalog, brought with it a strong element of national pride. Indeed, the Welsh proverb '*Heb iaith, heb genedl*', which translated means '*no nation without a language*', refers to the importance of Wales having its own language as a symbol of the nation's status. However, Baker's (1996) comments upon what constitutes being bilingual should be revisited, as all three Filipinos said English is now their main language. This prompts the question whether the pupils' success overall could be attributed to nature or nurture. Conversely, the Poles relied on speaking both Polish and English. They viewed it as a duty to preserve the Polish language and were under pressure from home to do so. Arguably, this had a negative effect upon their openness to study English which in turn caused them language problems. P4M and P6F had referred to barriers to learning, i.e. writing English, mixing up words and not speaking English at home. The interview highlighted the differences between both nationalities and pupils' mindsets about education and home culture.

Different emotional responses were apparent from observation of pupils' body language. Filipinos were happy and enthusiastic about expressing their viewpoints. Two Poles were shy but willing to speak up and support or disagree with others' viewpoints. All three MAT pupils appeared more confident overall. Pupils' behaviour within the group illustrated that they were most proud to be Filipino or Polish. In my journal I recorded a number of key words and phrases used by both nationalities (Figure 4). At times I recorded an adjective, e.g. 'happy', 'uncertain'; pupils may have also used 'happiness' and 'uncertainty'.

A number of issues were identified. Whilst both nationalities used emotive language, the Filipinos' words were far more positive, outweighing any negatives, implying that they were more pro-active in their studies. Their vocabulary demonstrated that they were secure in

their environment, e.g. “*confidence ... better future ... integrate*”, suggesting that they have a greater capacity than the Poles to take advantage of opportunities.

Figure 4: Vocabulary used by Pupils in the Focus Group Discussion



Comparatively the Poles used more negative vocabulary, e.g. “*worry ...homesick ... disadvantage*”, indicating that they are less confident in British society. Their negative adjectives, e.g. “*unsure ... unsafe ...unhappy*”, were in contrast to those of the Filipinos, e.g. “*ambitious ... grateful ... independent*”. There was a strong contrast between the Filipinos who spoke of their “*new home ... [being] well settled ... stay here*” and the Poles who referred to ‘home’ as being Poland, with repeated references to “*my community ... return*

home ... homesick". At times the Poles' words were alarming as they appeared vulnerable, "*unhappy*" and "*unsure*" about their future in the UK, in the case of P5F due to Brexit. The pupils' words about living in the UK were revelatory, feelings which undoubtedly influenced attitudes to learning. Being supportive of Stephen and Warwick's (2015, p.135) emphasis on "[breaking] the cycle of cultural stereotyping of pupils and their communities", it is however important not to generalise that all Poles within the school would necessarily feel the same as those in the focus group.

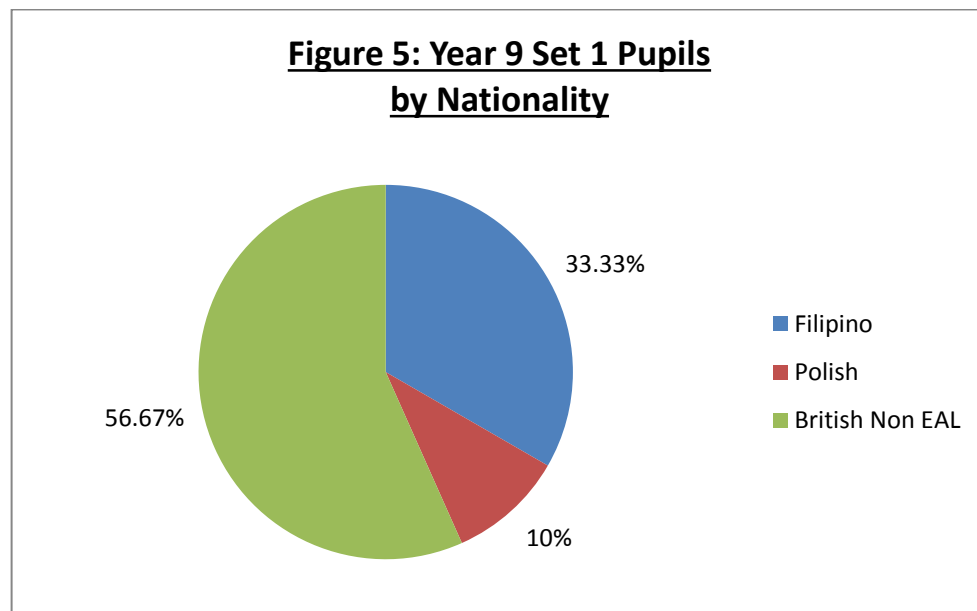
All six pupils felt supported at home. Family ties are affected, positively or negatively, when a child learns English as a second language (Stopper, 2000). Together with the pupils' comments, teaching experience informs me that there may be pressure from home on some EAL pupils to maintain their first language, as for the Poles, which may impact on attitudes to learning. This caused me to consider whether nature is more important than nurture, or vice versa.

Adopting an inferential approach enabled investigation of what lay below the surface and identification of major differences between the two nationalities. Filipinos had increased confidence in speaking English. They appeared better motivated and challenged themselves to exceed their target NC levels. Pupils' growth mindset, parental support and work ethic influenced their progress, corroborating Dweck's theory (2017). It may be argued however that the Filipinos are not 'EAL' pupils as their first language is now English and they speak it fluently. This made me consider Baker's question (1996) whether a person should be considered to be bilingual where the second language is rarely used.

In contrast, the Poles were less confident. They relied on code-switching (Bernardo, 2005) when talking to parents and other Poles which helped them to communicate, socialise and achieve cognitive goals. However, a limitation of code-switching is that its over-use becomes a problem, reflecting poor linguistic knowledge and language skills. Regrettably they were not as open to embracing a new language and culture as the Filipinos, and the uncertainties caused by Brexit were clear.

2. An interview with Year 9 Set 1 English teacher

Having an excellent success rate teaching EAL pupils, it was worth considering whether the teacher was one reason why this class was achieving so well. Discussions prior to the April 2017 interview revealed that she was enthused by pupils' motivation, positive mindsets and overall progress. Acknowledging the range of ability within this class, she referred to the number of EAL pupils therein (Figure 5), especially Filipinos, emphasising that some are "*exceptional*". Emphasis was placed upon the importance of adopting a range of pedagogy and differentiated tasks, employing various skills to meet pupils' needs, in accordance with WG (2015a).



Discussing her pedagogical strategies, the teacher adopts a cognitive approach to enable maximum progress. Pupils are taught to think carefully in lessons, remember, make connections and use appropriate language to convey their understanding of concepts. This cognitive approach helps with problem-solving activities, aligning with The Bell Foundation (2017) guidelines. Topics studied are relevant to teenagers, and pupils are encouraged to draw on real life experiences (ibid, 2017).

The teacher's interview revealed the background to the pupils' studies. She referenced the importance of pupil engagement, emphasising her role to nurture a classroom environment where pupils felt safe and could express themselves in a range of ways, aligning with Washbourne's (2011) concepts. Thus pupils are taught to respect other viewpoints. It was important to co-ordinate teaching strategies for EAL pupils throughout the school; consistency of approach could benefit an EAL pupil who has an EAL friend in another class. Key target language is an integral part of lessons. There is high expectation of all, regardless of race, language, gender and culture. Concern was expressed that EAL pupils should not be expected to underachieve merely because they are EAL pupils. When asked whether she might sometimes have lower expectations of EAL pupils in her class (Stephen and Warwick, 2015), the teacher replied "no". Race equality is promoted within the Department and themes in SoWs celebrate diversity:

"We are reading 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas', 'The Color Purple' and 'To Kill a Mockingbird'. All deal with racism and prejudice. These themes spark lively debate ... Pupils never tire of expressing their opinions".

Differentiated materials are prepared and specific tasks created for the eight MAT pupils within this class, four of whom are Filipinos. In accordance with WG (2015a), materials include past GCSE and GCSE-style questions. A "range of opportunities and sufficient challenge and stimulation" (WAG, 2008c, p.22) are provided in lessons. Pupils can access higher NC levels by employing higher level thinking strategies, adopting "probing questioning and a problem-solving approach to learning" (ibid, 2008c, p.17), thus reflecting Tunnicliffe's (2010) concepts. The teacher commented on MAT pupils' aspirational attitudes, their inquisitive nature and resilience, stating that MAT pupils have a passion for English, exhibiting mindsets which allow them to thrive when set challenging tasks. They have a flair for English and their written arguments are structured (WG, 2015b). MAT pupils play a leading role within group work and can justify their opinions confidently (ibid, 2015b).

Extra-curricular MAT activities include debating club, KS2-KS3 transition activities and participation in the local Rotary public speaking competition.

Flexibility within teaching pedagogy is important as some pupils are working two NC levels above others. The teacher acknowledges the importance of nurturing weaker pupils, including some Poles, who need additional support. Her pedagogical approach includes using visual stimuli, drama, research tasks and collaboration. The teacher models good answers and then scaffolds pupils throughout their activities, supporting The Bell Foundation (2017) strategies.

In accordance with school policy, a rigorous assessment protocol is adopted and strategies are implemented to provide support and improve outcomes. Quality homework tasks support classwork and are not merely 'add-ons'. Self-reflection time is crucial, in accordance with WG (2015a), encouraging pupils to adopt a positive mindset and set their own targets.

Mixed groupings work well, particularly when studying topics of 'equality' and 'racism'. EAL MAT pupils work in groupings with non-EAL MAT pupils who benefit from the experience of peers who have experienced racism. Teaching strategies to generate discussions include concept maps, media clips, drama and ICT, creating a stimulating, safe environment with one-to-one support. Teaching styles are adapted to encourage MAT pupils to think in different ways and make sense of extension tasks, reflecting Stephen and Warwick's (2015) philosophy. The teacher emphasised the importance of clarity in her instruction, as in Hattie's (2012a) 'Know Thy Impact' strategy.

As all pupils study English language and English literature at KS3, planning and preparation are thorough so that the subjects complement each other. When teaching important reading skills such as skimming, scanning and sequencing, pupils are taught to consider what they are reading in order to understand what is written, reflect and express their opinions. Aligning with Hewitt and Hopkins's (2009, p.81) comments that literature and

language are “certainly not mutually exclusive, either in theory or practice”, pupils have opportunities to use thinking skills to adapt what they have read and be creative by expressing themselves using literature terminology. In books there was evidence to suggest that EAL MAT pupils demonstrate excellent creativity and enjoy literature lessons. MAT pupils are competent readers; they use their cognitive skills to read for pleasure, gain information and reflect upon what they have read, analysing a range of different non-fiction resources, aligning with Cummins’s (1981a) CALP theory (Illustration 2).

The school has adopted Costa and Kallick’s (2008) *Habits of Mind* (HOMs). ‘Persisting’, a characteristic of their learning, is an important HOM, as are ‘remaining open to continuous learning’ and ‘striving for accuracy’. All pupils can express their opinions on a range of topics and give class presentations. They can look for evidence and inference in set texts, focussing on the language used and techniques and effects created. One-to-one support is given to the less confident pupils, including the Poles. Pupils summarise, synthesise, sequence and compare extracts from set texts, all GCSE skills. The teacher’s practice fully supports Hewitt’s and Hopkins’s (2009) ideas about learning language through literature and vice versa.

Referring to NC level 7 and 8 MAT pupils’ confidence in speaking, pupils are articulate, illustrating maturity of understanding and insight into the underlying themes in literature studied. Pupils draw conclusions from their work and compare their own experiences with those in set texts (The Bell Foundation, 2017), e.g. communism in the Philippines and Russia. Several pupils become emotionally connected to their work. The teacher said MAT pupils’ written work is engaging and clear, appropriate to NC level 8. Speaking of one Filipino’s “*originality of thought and depth of understanding[use] of persuasive techniques*” the teacher added that several Filipinos demonstrated a secure NC level 8 as they “analyse and evaluate ... synthesise information and ideas” (WG, 2015b, p. 28).

When planning, the teacher felt that in accordance with Hattie's (2012a) teaching on 'Know Thy Impact', she and the pupils all need to set themselves SMART+ER targets which are:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Ambitious**
- **Relevant**
- **Timebound**

Teacher one-to-one feedback is employed. NC level descriptors appear in pupils' books. Whilst rigorous summative assessment has its place, the teacher felt that good formative feedback is more effective in accordance with Black and Wiliam (1998a); pupils recognise how to improve and access higher NC levels, thus providing more ownership of their work. The Department is developing quality DIRT (Illustration 6) time in lessons, i.e.

- D Designated
- I Improvement
- R Reflection
- T Time

After one-to-one feedback pupils reflect on improving current performance, supporting Assessment for Learning (AfL) and differentiation strategies. Pupils peer assess each other's work, noting specific areas for improvement. Sample answers are shared, helping the weaker pupils to develop their own work.

The school has adopted Dweck's (2017) theory of 'growth mindset' by which pupils may achieve success in and beyond the classroom. It is acknowledged that inherent nature may affect attitudes to learning (Armor, 2003). Filipinos' positivity and motivation, as corroborated by the teacher, enabled them to achieve higher NC levels than other EAL

Illustration 6: English Department DIRT Reflection Sheet

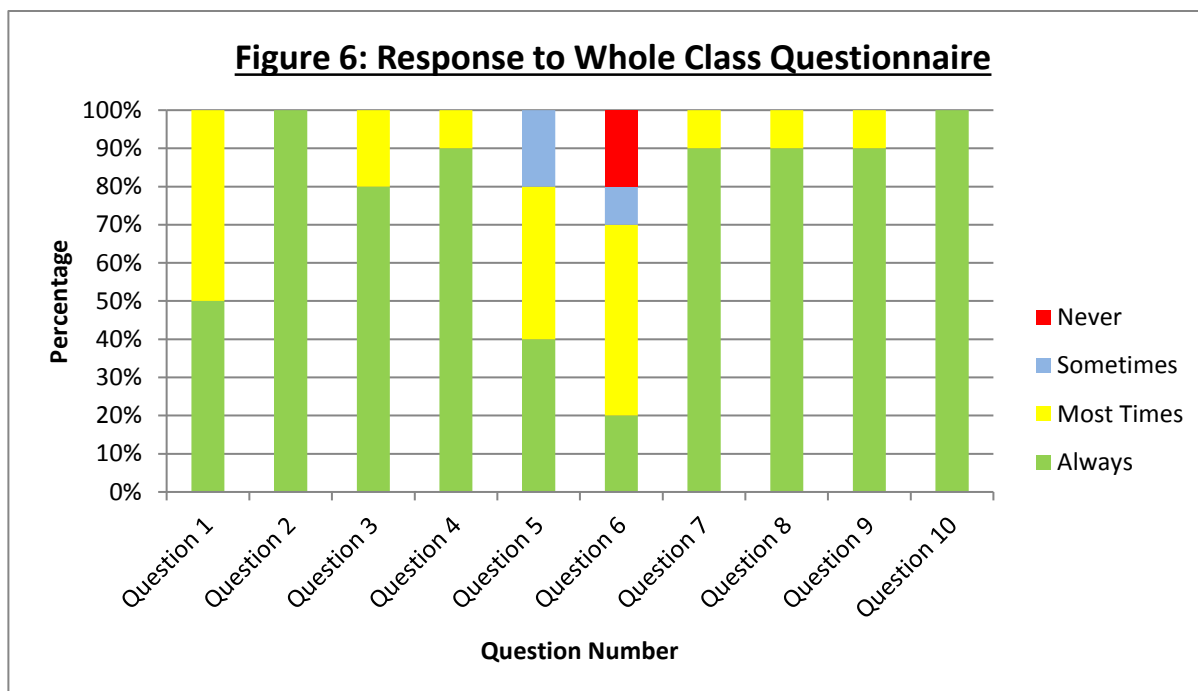


nationalities. Considering the nature v nurture argument, one should examine whether Filipinos' achievements are a result of inherited attitudes whereby to be hard-working, successful and fluent in English in school is a priority.

Quantitative evidence

1. A class questionnaire

A whole class questionnaire (Appendix 3) was issued to thirty pupils with a request for considered and candid responses (Figure 6). Acknowledging the difficulties of interpreting emotions, Question 1, regarding confidence in lessons, yielded a balanced response. All pupils felt supported by their teacher, corroborated by responses to Question 8 where 90% said they were comfortable with the classroom environment. Under Question 4 90% acknowledged they are reflective learners, aligning with comments made in the teacher and focus group interviews.

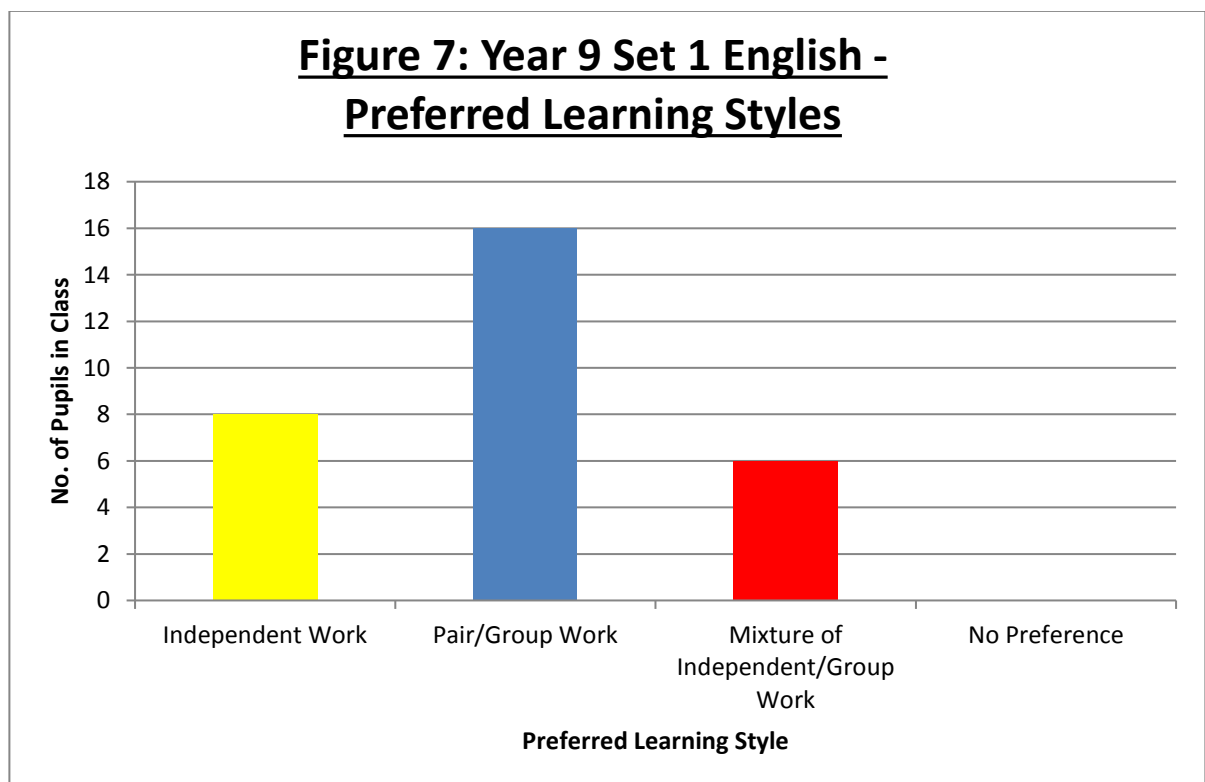


The most striking observation is that the only question where pupils responded ‘never’ was Question 6, when asked if they find reading tasks easy: 20% of the class, i.e. 6 pupils said ‘never’, correlating with P6F’s comments in the focus group interview. In response to Question 9, 90%, i.e. twenty-seven pupils, said they ‘always’ felt challenged to achieve their best, whereas 10% responded ‘most times’. Recognising the teacher’s different approaches, pupils unanimously said their teacher used a range of pedagogy in lessons, Question 10. These responses illustrate that excellent teacher-pupil relationships exist, conducive to hard work, challenge and attainment, supporting P2F’s comments about the trust within the class.

Pupils were questioned about the skills employed in lessons and their preferences. In Question 3, 80% of pupils enjoyed group discussions. The skill of listening is most significant (Rivers, 1981); 90% said that they either ‘always’ or ‘most times’ learned by listening to others, Question 7. Responding to Question 5, 40% said that they ‘always’ enjoyed writing in a variety of styles, 40% ‘most times’ and 20% ‘sometimes’. Some commented that this

was because they could be more creative in some styles, developing their written English for a range of purposes.

Selecting their preferred learning styles, pupils chose from four options (Figure 7); the responses corroborated the teacher's varied pedagogy. Eight pupils, 26.66% of the class, said they preferred independent work. Additional comments given included pushing themselves to gain the correct answers and personal creativity, correlating with Skutnabb-Kangas's work (1981) which states that metacognition and thinking skills are important to EAL pupils. Sixteen pupils, 53.33%, said they preferred pair/group work as they felt supported therein. Pupils commented that they listened to others' viewpoints and that group work was conducive to generating new ideas. The remaining 20%, six pupils, said they liked a mixture of independent and group learning. These data highlight how the teacher's pedagogy should cater for different needs, corroborated by focus group discussions.



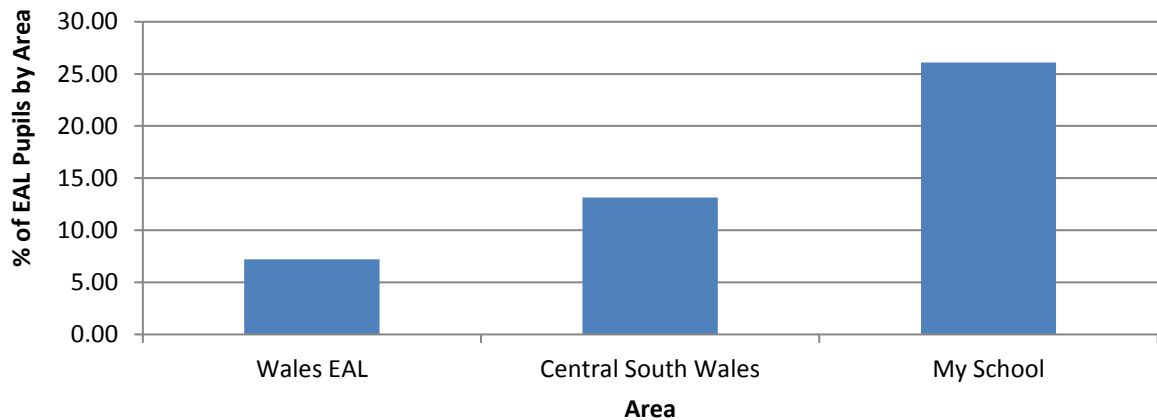
When questioned about which skill(s) were the most challenging, 50% said that speaking and listening were the most challenging, one reason being lack of confidence when speaking in front of others. Surprisingly, this was not consistent with my experience as a language teacher, as pupils generally consider reading to be the hardest skill in a second language. However, only 10% said that reading was the most challenging skill. 40% said writing was the most challenging; some stated that they were unsure how to express themselves in good English. This correlates with the focus group pupils' responses, two of whom had commented that they knew what they wanted to write but had difficulties with grammar.

Under 'additional comments', four pupils stated that they are familiar with creating their own success criteria, setting personal goals, demonstrating a growth mindset (Dweck, 2017). This correlates further with Black and Wiliam's (1998a) theory of raising standards through formative assessment. Eight pupils said they loved English lessons, six respected their teacher and eleven were happy with their progress. One pupil commented that contribution to discussions developed thinking skills. Two wrote that they used Question Ladders (Appendix 4) to "*move the conversation to a higher level*". Four pupils made comments about being '*shy*' and not wanting to ask for help too often. One pupil said that the teacher's resources were stimulating. Three commented upon lack of confidence when undertaking reading tasks but acknowledged teacher support.

2. NC levels achieved by the focus group in English at the end of KS2 and KS3

The school's population of EAL pupils, 26.1%, is over three times greater than the Welsh average of 7.21%, and almost twice that of the local area, Central South Wales, 13.135%, (Figure 8).

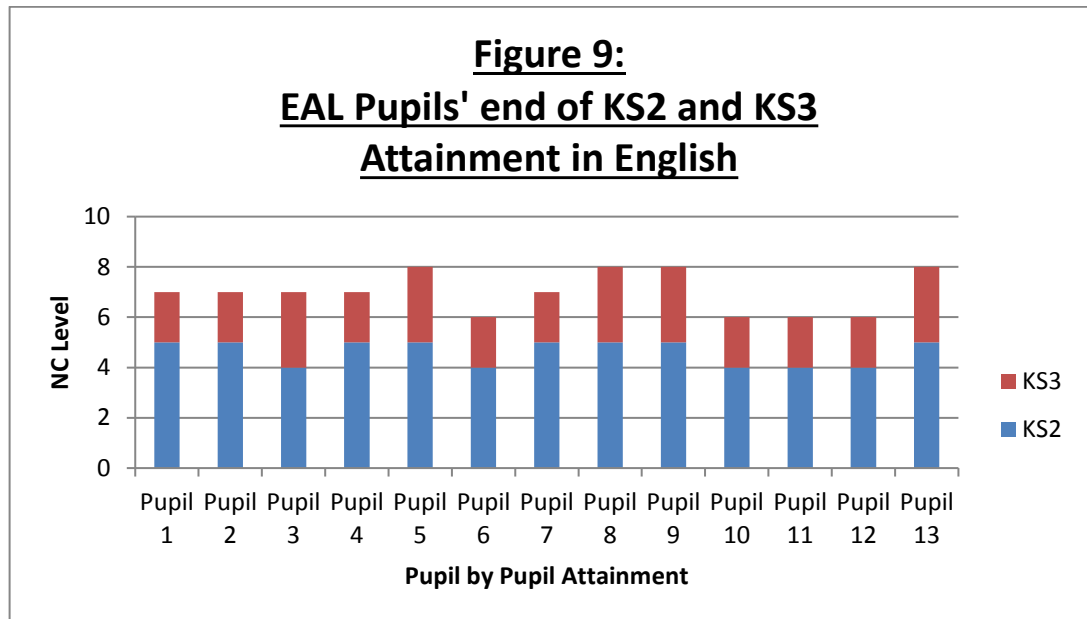
Figure 8: A Comparison of EAL Pupils in Wales - 2017



Data were gathered from the school's *Capita School Information Management System* (SIMS) (1994) which reported pupils' Teacher Assessed levels (TAs) at the end of KS2 and KS3 (Figure 9); progress was analysed in terms of NC levels. At the end of KS2, 61.53% of the EAL pupils, eight pupils, achieved NC level 5 in English, whilst the other five pupils, 38.46% of the cohort, gained NC level 4.

However, at the end of KS3 the data showed that 30.76% of Set 1 EAL pupils, i.e. four pupils, one Filipino and three Poles, achieved NC level 6, 38.46%, i.e. five pupils gained level 7 and 30.76% gained level 8, i.e. four pupils. All had made at least two NC levels of progress between the end of KS2 and KS3. Pupil 12, a Filipino who attained a NC level 6, had only lived in the UK for three years. The most remarkable result is that four EAL pupils had made three levels of progress; these were amongst the brightest in this class and categorised as MAT in English. The three Poles in the focus group achieved NC level 6, whereas the three Filipinos achieved NC level 8. It may be questioned why this is the case and whether it was true when focus group P4M had said that P1M, a Filipino, had an unfair advantage, as he had spoken some basic English phrases before moving to the UK. However, the motivation

to achieve good grades and be in the top Year 10 set for GCSE exhibited by some of the focus group was far greater than that demonstrated by others.



It should be noted that the other four MAT pupils within the class, non-EAL pupils, also achieved NC level 8, demonstrating that the EAL MAT pupils are on a par with other MAT pupils.

The data offered indisputable evidence that the Filipinos attained higher NC levels than the Poles. There were ten Filipinos and three Poles. The three Poles, Pupils 6, 10 and 11, attained a NC level 6, whereas all but one Filipino, Pupil 12, achieved a higher level. Overall there was a clear distinction between the attainment of the Filipinos and Poles, consistent with the teacher's comments that Filipinos worked harder, displayed a growth mindset and were better motivated to be successful.

Triangulation of data enabled effective conclusions to be drawn about attitudes to learning and the value of the teacher's pedagogy. Significantly, the Filipinos had a more positive mindset (Dweck, 2017), corroborating the evidence that pupils' home culture is crucial

(Stopper, 2000). Filipino parents encouraged their children's success, corresponding with focus group discussions. MAT pupils' metacognition was enhanced in lessons. NALDIC (2012) stated that parental expectations and home culture are major influences upon pupils' attitudes to learning, corroborated by the focus group interview. Focus group vocabulary (Figure 4) highlighted the Filipinos' positivity and the Poles' comparative negativity towards learning. The Filipinos' words offered compelling evidence that they were more positive about living here and mastering English than the Poles. Consequently, their growth mindsets helped them to achieve greater success than the Poles.

Chapter 6

Recommendations

Salkind (2000) states that while “case studies do not necessarily result in hypotheses being tested, they suggest directions for further study” (ibid, 2000, p.194). As little research has been conducted into pupils’ migration from the Philippines and Poland to the UK and the influence of migration upon language development, a key recommendation arising from this study would be to conduct further research into the achievements of migrant Filipino and Polish pupils living in the UK. For the Filipinos, emigrating to the UK is a move for life in most cases, whereas the Poles may be here only temporarily with the onset of Brexit. Further research would give scope for comparing differences in attitudes between Filipino and Polish and pupils and parents. A parents’ group could be established, taking account of their availability. Discussions with parents would be informative and could shed light on their children’s home language, background, culture and heritage. The engagement of EAL parents and nurturing of good relationships would be beneficial to the school and their children, in accordance with McKeown-Jones, Williams and Orchard (2018, online), who state that to promote “better community relations a whole school effort is needed if we are to truly build a cohesive society”.

Acknowledging that cultural issues have a strong impact upon pupils’ attitudes to learning (Stopper, 2000), further research could be conducted to ascertain why certain cultures perform better than others. In this case study Filipinos exhibited positive attitudes towards learning, appreciating collaboration and extension activities. However, negative attitudes were displayed by Poles in the focus group when they spoke of difficulties with mastering written English, racism and lack of confidence in some lessons. Further study could investigate whether pupils’ nurturing has greater impact on attitudes to learning than the school’s influence. The Filipinos have opportunities to speak English at home and at school. In contrast the Poles speak only Polish or a mixture of Polish and English at home. However, they speak only English in school, which can be challenging, and they are defensive of their

mother tongue. A comparison may be drawn here with the “challenge” (Lewis, 2005) faced within Welsh language medium education in Wales where pupils from English speaking homes attend Welsh medium schools and have no access to the Welsh language other than at school.

Within this study there appears to be a strong correlation between the academic success of the Filipinos and their immersion in UK culture and the English language. Therefore, the nature v nurture debate (Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1994) provides an impetus for further research, analysing the pressures upon children to conform to either their ‘home’ culture or the ‘new’ culture in the UK.

A similar ethnographic case study could be conducted within a lower ability class, the findings of which might raise different issues. Such a study could focus specifically on language acquisition and whether more accelerated interventions introduced earlier on, following a child’s move to Wales, together with better skilled EAL LSA support (Morrison, 2014), more robust ways of assessing language acquisition and class withdrawal support would enhance communication skills. Such interventions might include additional LSA support, further development of oracy skills and support with reading; the *Read Write Inc.* (Miskin, 2007) programme is aimed at raising literacy standards in primary schools. All focus group pupils had received LSA support for their English language development. However, it could be considered whether some EAL pupils might not need as much language intervention, as their standard of spoken English on entry to the UK might be sufficient to enable them to progress well in school. Comparisons could be drawn and questions asked about the attainment or under-attainment of some pupils which in turn could lead to an analysis of whether KS1 and KS2 EAL language support received was beneficial and the identification of areas for improvement.

This case study traces progression throughout KS3, culminating in all pupils being awarded an end of KS3 NC level. The quantitative data produced demonstrates that this cohort has

achieved success in English (Figure 9). Given the prominence of home culture on pupils' attitudes to learning, it would be informative to trace progression throughout this group's English Language and Literature GCSE courses and analyse their attainment. GCSE targets will be based on end of KS3 data but expected progression may be thwarted by other factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) as pupils will be two years older than in this study. Tracing their progression would conform with the analysis and reporting of specific school data in secondary schools, in accordance with WG requirements whereby data are analysed on the achievements of boys and girls, FSM pupils, School Action (SA) and EAL pupils. Consequently, schools are compared and graded nationally in a hierarchical order within their 'family of schools', i.e. a group of schools which face similar educational challenges.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This study addressed key questions regarding EAL pupils' attitudes to learning, preferred learning styles, attainment at the end of KS3, MAT activities and the teacher's pedagogy in creating a classroom environment to "maximize the language and literacy development of socially marginalized students" (Cummins, 2008, p.11). This inductive research concentrated on the achievement and successes of EAL pupils. A mixed methodology approach was adopted to determine what benefitted this class and conclusions were drawn through triangulation. The focus group interview was revealing, as pupils spoke openly and demonstrated empathy in their discussions. Furthermore, the questionnaire and interview with the class teacher enhanced understanding of how this class was taught. The end of KS3 data (Figure 9) illustrated pupils' achievements and their relative successes, with all achieving or surpassing their end of KS3 NC targets.

Adopting axiology (Lynch, 2016), my findings suggest that there were major cultural differences and values between the two nationalities influencing attitudes towards learning. The most striking correlation was that pupils' home culture has a major influence over attitudes to learning, aligning with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory. Pupils were influenced by their parents and community both positively and negatively, some more than others. Positive examples of this include Filipino pupils following their parents' lead and working hard, whilst negative influences include Polish parents' attitudes towards speaking the 'mother tongue' at home at the expense of English. As evidenced in the focus group interview, Filipinos held a significant advantage as their parents spoke the better English, whilst the Poles preferred to stay within their own "language community" (Baker, 1996, p.35).

Filipino parents lead by example, being more open to learning and speaking a new language. Travel to the UK meant greater effort on their families' part financially. Unlike Filipinos

generally, some Poles do not view living in the UK as a long-term option. Unemployment is high in Poland; in the UK Poles can work, earn money and then return to Poland. Furthermore, Brexit may force some Poles to return 'home', a term defined as "return migration" (King, 2015, p.4). Since the EU referendum, racism towards migrants has increased and Poles "more than other European migrant groups" have been "targeted as scapegoats" (Myślińska, 2016, p.1) and suffered racism.

There was a contrast between the Filipinos' growth mindset (Dweck, 2017), and the uncertainties, fears and lack of confidence expressed by the focus group Poles. All pupils were involved in active learning activities which developed CALP (Cummins, 2008) and skills proficiency in English; they were scaffolded and supported in accordance with WG (2015a) guidelines. Pupils were challenged through a wide range of pedagogy. Preferences for a particular skill varied, although 53.33% of the class preferred pair/group activities, citing support in numbers for this. Although Poles needed more support in all skills, especially writing, they attained their NC targets through hard work, reflection after one-to-one teacher formative feedback (Hattie, 2012b) and trust in their teacher (Washbourne, 2011). The teacher taught important life skills and HOMs (Costa and Kallick, 2008), arming pupils with the qualifications they need to pursue lifelong learning. Indeed, skills development aligns with the four purposes of the new curriculum in Wales (WG, 2016b), for implementation in 2022.

It became apparent that Filipino MAT pupils thrive and derive greater benefit from being bilingual or plurilingual, with enhanced understanding and breadth of knowledge. They think and reason in different ways from monoglot speakers, corresponding with Hopwood's (2009) and Hopwood et al's (2018) discussions on the values of bilingualism. Filipinos' cognitive skills were enhanced in extension activities. Problem solving activities and the teacher's pedagogy enabled some Filipinos to exceed their NC targets as they thrived by collaborating with other MAT pupils and taking the lead in tasks. The Filipinos could analyse, synthesise and draw conclusions in their work (WG, 2015b), confirming Spitzer's (2016,

p.67) theory that the “extra brain training that comes with mastering two languages [enables] higher level cognitive functions”. Ultimately, using or being in contact with two or more languages boosts Filipino MAT pupils’ confidence. This is not true however for every EAL pupil as some experience major language problems.

The outcomes of this study justify the school’s celebration of these pupils. Sharing its findings within school would help all EAL pupils to access opportunities to achieve their best, reflecting school policy (2018) (Appendix 1). Findings would also assist the current research being undertaken by all teachers on ‘Know Thy Impact’ (Hattie,2012a) and being a ‘Visible Learner’ (Hattie, 2012b). For my own part as a language teacher, findings will assist with differentiating a range of pedagogy according to pupils’ individual needs. Change within school could be implemented which would benefit all teachers, regardless of subject areas, by reflecting on strategies adopted, so that “success can beget more success” (Fullan, 2007, p.116).

Direct knowledge of these EAL pupils’ abilities confirmed my opinion that this cohort was aspirational and unique. All pupils were supported, stretched and challenged throughout Year 9 to achieve their targets (Figure 9). As acknowledged by the teacher, her impact (Hattie, 2012a) was pivotal in facilitating high quality lessons using a range of pedagogy and differentiation. The most compelling revelation was the extent of the influence of home culture on pupils’ attitudes to learning, affecting differences in attainment between Filipinos and Poles. It therefore follows that the Filipino mindset was more conducive to educational success.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1



**ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL
LANGUAGE
(EAL)
POLICY

(2018)**

STATEMENT OF AIMS

██████████ School is committed to making appropriate provision of teaching and resources for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils. The school will identify individual pupil's needs, recognize the skills they bring to school and ensure equality of access to the curriculum.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

- Language develops best when used in purposeful contexts across the curriculum.
- Effective use of language is crucial to the teaching and learning of every subject.
- Teachers have a crucial role in modelling uses of language.
- All pupils have entitlement to the National Curriculum.
- A distinction is made between EAL and Special Educational Needs.
- Language is central to our identity. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of the importance of pupils' home languages and to build on their existing knowledge and skills.
- Many concepts and skills depend on and benefit from well-developed home language and literacy in home language enhances subsequent acquisition of EAL.
- All languages, dialects, accents and cultures are equally valued.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Key language features of language, which are necessary for effective participation, are identified. These might be key words, certain patterns of grammar, uses of language or forms of text.

Classroom activities have clear learning objectives and appropriate support and resources are deployed to ensure that pupils are able to participate in lessons. Staff review groupings and setting arrangements to ensure that EAL learners have access to strong English language peer models.

Where possible and appropriate, the school will provide opportunities for EAL pupils to take a GCSE examination in the home/first language.

WE ENSURE MINORITY ETHNIC PUPILS FEEL VALUED AND ACHIEVE WELL IN OUR SCHOOL

- Teachers and other staff demonstrate a positive attitude towards all pupils, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background.
- A ‘zero tolerance’ attitude towards racism is observed at all times.
- Our ethos makes all pupils feel valued and gives them a sense of ownership and pride in the school.
- We continuously strive to raise the self-esteem of all pupils.
- We try to re-educate naïve attitudes on race, ethnicity and culture among staff, pupils and parents.
- We have created a stimulating, multicultural learning environment.
- We have an open and welcoming attitude towards all parents.
- We celebrate a wide range of cultures through assemblies, visiting speakers, workshops and entertainers, celebration of festivals from several religions, and the choice of texts through which we deliver the curriculum.

STRATEGIES

Staff use support strategies to ensure curriculum access:

- Collaborative group work
- Enhanced opportunities for speaking and listening
- Effective role models of speaking, reading and writing
- Additional verbal support-repetition, alternative phrasing, peer support
- Additional visual support, e.g. posters, objects, non-verbal clues, pictures, demonstration, use of gesture, etc.
- Bilingual resources, e.g. dictionaries, on-line support, bilingual staff/pupils, texts, key word lists.
- Writing frames, directed activities related to texts (DARTs)
- Opportunities for role play
- Pupils receive regular feedback from staff
- Discussion is provided before and during reading and writing activities, using preferred language where appropriate.
- Further support for pupils’ language development is provided outside the formal curriculum, e.g. in assemblies, school clubs, homework clubs, etc.

PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Information is gathered about:

- the pupils' linguistic background and competence in other languages
- the pupils' previous educational and schooling experience
- the pupils' family and biographical background

Assessment is carried out according to the five Stages (A-E) defined by the EAL service to classify pupils according to competence in English. These identify need and contribute to defining the level of support provided for pupils.

Staff regularly observe, assess and record information about pupils' developing use of language.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS

The school recognises that most EAL pupils needing additional support do not have SEN needs. However, should SEN needs be identified during assessment; EAL pupils will have equal access to school SEN provision.

Similarly, the school recognises that there may be EAL pupils who are gifted or talented even though they may not be fully fluent in English.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING

Staff have regular liaison to discuss pupil progress, needs and targets.

The school will ensure that all EAL pupils have access to statutory assessments, making full use of special arrangements including first language assessment/support where appropriate.

Assessment methods are checked for cultural bias and action is taken to remove any bias that is identified.

The school analyses EAL/Minority Ethnic pupil achievement and regularly evaluates the effectiveness of additional support provided in terms of pupil progress.

RESOURCES

Resources on which reading and writing activities may be based are monitored for grammatical, lexical and cultural accessibility.

Displays and resources reflect linguistic and cultural diversity

A range of resources are used to support pupils' linguistic development, e.g. games, visual materials, differentiated worksheets, key word lists, bilingual dictionaries, taped materials, computer software, etc. Assessment materials use images and texts which are appropriate for all pupils.

PARENTS/CARERS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

We provide a welcoming admission process for the induction, assessment and support of new arrival pupils and their families/carers.

We take account of parents/carers linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds when planning the curriculum and developing home-school links.

We aim to ensure that our written and spoken communication with families and with the community is effective through the use of plain English, translators and interpreters.

We aim to work closely with members of the wider community to support our EAL pupils.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF POLICY

School data will include relevant information on minority ethnic/EAL pupils. This will include needs, level of English, support, achievement and progress. This will enable the school to monitor targets.

The evaluation process will serve the basis for planning programmes of action and targeting time, support and resources.

REVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 2019

APPENDIX 2

Sample questions to be used as a starting point in the focus group discussion

1. When did you and your family come to live in the UK or were you born here?
2. Which language(s) do you speak at home?
3. Did you speak any English before moving to Wales?
4. Did you have LSA support when you started school in Wales?
5. What do you regard now as your first language?
6. Do your parents support you in your studies? Give examples.
7. Which part of your English course do you find the easiest / hardest and why?
8. Do you feel challenged by your teacher to attain and exceed your targets? Give examples.
9. Would you consider yourself to be a 'good learner'?
10. Are there any barriers you face in your English studies / everyday life? What are they?
11. What are your plans for the future?

Filipinos

1. How well do your parents speak English?
2. Do they use English in their work and social lives?
3. Do you have friends of all nationalities?
4. Would you like to return to the Philippines to live?

Poles

1. How well do your parents speak English?
2. Do they use English in their work and social lives?
3. Do you have friends of all nationalities?
4. Would you like to return to Poland to live?
5. Has Brexit affected your family?

APPENDIX 3- Year 9 Set 1 English Questionnaire

This questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete, but there is no time constraint. Please place a ✓ to show which statement applies to you.

Statements	Never	Sometimes	Most times	Always
1. I feel confident in my English lessons				
2. I feel supported by my teacher in all aspects of my work				
3. I enjoy pair/group discussions and am willing to make contributions				
4. I am given time to reflect upon my learning and set myself targets				
5. I enjoy writing tasks in a variety of styles				
6. I find reading tasks easy				
7. I learn by listening to others				
8. I feel comfortable in the classroom environment				
9. I feel challenged by my teacher to improve my work				
10. My teacher uses a range of pedagogy / different approaches in lessons				

Tick which of the following is your preferred learning style overall:

Independent work	
Pair/Group work	
Mix of Independent and Group work	
No preference	

Which skill do you find the most challenging? Please give reason(s) for your choice.

Speaking and Listening	
Reading	
Writing	

Please make any additional comments below:

YEAR 9 QUESTION LADDER

