Young Bilingual Children Learning at Home and at School

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Goldsmiths College

University of London

2003 2004

Abstract

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This thesis examines the experiences of three four year-old bilingual children as they begin school in three English nursery classes from a language socialisation and socio-cultural perspective.

A review of the literature includes both official documentation on Early Years education and studies of young bilingual children. The former suggests that the experience of children who are learning English as an additional language is not well understood. The latter show that while attention has been given to aspects of second language acquisition, socialisation and the home-school continuum, there is little evidence of the way in which children take control of their own learning in informal settings, or of the way in which children syncretise home and school learning in a socio-cultural context.

Against this background, I present a year long ethnographic study of three Pakistani girls at home and in nursery which provides insights into the way bilingual children learning English as an additional language respond to their learning experiences. Data was gathered through participant observation, audio-recordings in the home and nursery contexts and interviews with parents and nursery teacher. The ethnographic methodology adopted for the study highlights the different perspectives of the nursery staff and the children's parents. The analysis identifies the strategies each child uses in response to her learning situation.

The results reveal some of the ways in which young bilingual children find their way through nursery as they begin to learn the language required for formal schooling. Firstly, the data shows how they respond to the ebb and flow of their ongoing experience at home and at school. It is evident that the key player in the learning process is the child herself. Secondly, much of the learning experienced by the children and analysed in this study is not visible to the nursery teacher. The detailed picture that emerges may help to fill in the over-generalised view of bilingual children to be found in official documents and provide an additional perspective to a growing body of literature on young bilingual children.

The concluding chapters discuss the implications of the study for teachers in multilingual nurseries and for early years policy makers.

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Chapter 1

Introduction:

The Origins of the Inquiry

1.0 Introduction

As a Section 11 teacher working in multi-ethnic primary schools in Watford during the 1980s and early 1990s, my central concern was to raise the achievement of bilingual children, particularly in the early years of schooling. Since 1998, I have been involved in training teachers to work in the early years and running a degree course specifically designed for early years practitioners (BA/BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies) at the University of Hertfordshire. This has provided further insights into mainstream curriculum policy and practice in the early years of schooling and highlighted training issues for educators working with young bilingual children.

For most of my professional life I have worked with children whose families originated from Azad Kashmir and my association with the community in Watford, Hertfordshire, has inspired my research and teaching. Watford has a population of some 60,000 people and approximately 20% of the children in Watford Primary schools come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The largest minority community is Pakistani (accounting for 65% of bilingual children). Most families originate from the Khotli area of Azad Kashmir, which borders North-East Pakistan and their mother tongue is Pahari (a Punjabi dialect spoken in this area). Many of the children from Azad Kashmiri backgrounds were born in Watford and enter the school system with little or no English. Their parents and extended family mainly speak Pahari with them at home and Urdu (the official language of literacy in Pakistan) is also used by a small minority of families. The Section 11 Project provides a limited amount of specialist support for these children through Bilingual Classroom Assistants and qualified teachers to provide language support in schools.

1.1   The achievement of Pakistani pupils

According to statistics published by the DfEE in 1999, Pakistani pupils in maintained schools represented 2.5% of the school population, the largest minority ethnic group in England. Recently published figures (DfES 2003) show 40% of Pakistani pupils and 51% of White UK pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs in 2002. Pakistani children were the lowest achieving group at KS2, KS3 and GCSE with the exception of Black Caribbean pupils at KS3 and GCSE. A modest upward trend between KS2 and GCSE did little to close the gap between Pakistani pupils and their White UK peers.

In a report which synthesises research evidence Gillborn and Mirza (2000) point out that although there was an improvement in the performance of Pakistani pupils at GCSE between 1988 and 1997, the gap between this group and their White UK peers increased during this period. They present a graph showing relative performance for the main groups of pupils for one LEA in 1998. On a scale from +20 to −50, there is a 54 point difference in Baseline scores between Pakistani and White UK pupils. At KS2 the gap has been reduced to 13 points but it widens again to 21 points at GCSE. The huge disparity in scores at Baseline highlights the very different starting points between the two groups. This points to the importance of the early years of education for Pakistani children and it also questions whether there is sufficient differentiation of provision for Pakistani children.

National statistics shown in the Gillborn and Miza report are broadly mirrored in Hertfordshire data. However, more recent data suggest that the gap between Pakistani pupils and their White UK peers may now be closing rather more than was the case in the 1990s. The following table presents data for Hertfordshire which shows the relative improvement made between 1999 and 2002 for Pakistani and White UK pupils.

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Table 1.1

	KS1 writing level 2		KS2 English		GCSE 5 A*-C	
	1999	2002	1999	2002	1999	2002
Pakistani	64%	73%	55%	68%	40%	47%
White UK	84%	86%	78%	82%	53%	62%

The data available for 2002 shows a distinct difference between the performance of Pakistani boys and girls. Whereas 39% of boys achieved GCSE 5 A*-C grades 47% of girls achieved this level.

It appears that the achievement of Pakistani pupils in Hertfordshire is improving over time and that the gap between them and their White UK peers is narrowing. Indeed recent statistics from individual schools suggests that in some cases Pakistani children have 'caught up'.

Data from the schools attended by the three children in my case study for 2002 is as follows:

Table 1.2

Key Stage 1

		Writing 2+	Writing 3+
School A	Pakistani	83.3	16.7
	White UK	77.3	13.6
School B	Pakistani	33.3	0.0
	White UK	68.8	6.3
School C	Pakistani	81.8	0.0
	White UK	84.6	7.7

Table 1.3

Key Stage 2

		English level 4+	English level 5+
School A	Pakistani	66.7	22.2
	White UK	84.2	31.6
School B	Pakistani	75.0	16.7
	White UK	65.2	26.1
School C	Pakistani	50.0	25.0
	White UK	66.7	19.0

These are striking figures which would seem to indicate that the gap between the performance of Pakistani and White UK pupils in these three schools has virtually been closed. In schools A and C, Pakistani pupils are doing well at KS1 although this is not sustained at KS2. While there is a significant disparity between the two group in school B at KS1, unusually the Pakistani group outperform the White UK group at KS2 level 4+ in English. However, data for a single year can be misleading and the picture presented is complex. Nevertheless there appears to be an upward trend. It appears that it is no longer possible to assume that Pakistani children are likely to do less well than other groups. For example, the percentage of Pakistani children gaining level 5 in English at KS2 in all three schools indicates that some of these children have broken through to higher levels of achievement. At the same time the figures for school B at KS1 are an indication that some Pakistani children may experience much greater difficulties than their White UK peers.

It has not been possible to obtain data for earlier years from these schools. However, in 1988 the percentage of Pakistani pupils who gained level 4+ in English at KS2 was 33% compared with 60% for White UK pupils. In the case of this particular school, therefore, the improvement over a four year period for Pakistani pupils was greater than for White UK pupils. Nevertheless there was in 2002 a considerable gap.

The data presented for the three schools suggests that children from Pakistani backgrounds do well while others may fare very poorly compared with their white counterparts. This situation is reflected my case studies of three children. I compare the experience in the nursery of one of the children (Nazma) with her elder sister who, despite her articulate and perceptive comments on her own experience and that of her younger sister, failed to gain any GCSEs.

Gillborn and Mirza (2000) report on the research evidence relating social class and educational attainment. 'There is a strong direct association between social class background and success in education: put simply, the higher the child's social class, the greater their attainments on average' (2000: 18). Gillborn and Mirza present a graph which shows attainment at GCSE by social class (manual and non-manual categories) and ethnic origin between 1988 and 1997. This shows that during the research period 'there were points of relative decline in the attainment of African-Caribbean and Pakistani/Bangladeshi pupils from both manual and non-manual backgrounds.

A 'Childcare Audit Report' (1988) for Watford states that '8.3% of Watford's population live in wards classed among the 10% most deprived in England.' The report provides a ranking figure for an Index of deprivation Score. School A is in a ward ranked 19 in Hertfordshire and 3 in the district. School B is in a ward ranked 20 in Hertfordshire and 4 in the district. School C is in a ward ranked 1 in Hertfordshire and 1 in the district.

A report entitled 'Profiling the Minority Community in Watford' (Ahmed: 1997) points out that the full-time or part-time employment figure for the Pakistani Muslim community was 21.8%. 'The community which has the largest households also has very low levels of employment. Thus explaining the high levels of poverty among this group' (1997: 1). The report points to a number of disadvantages faced by the Pakistani community. For example the Social Security System treated people from minority ethnic communities in the same way as all other individuals. Thus 'the state pension was based on the assumption that retired people should have built up occupational or other provisions or have paid the maximum N.I. contributions over their working lives. But this was clearly impossible for people who migrated to Britain well into their adult lives, or had low earnings or intermittent employment...' (1997:2) The report also points out that 'more than 4 out of 5 Pakistani households have an equivalent income below half the national average – 4 times as many as white non-pensioners' (1997: 6).

Children from the Pakistani community in Watford may therefore experience social disadvantage as a contributory factor in their achievement within the school system.

1.2   Underachievement of Pakistani children in Watford

During the latter part of the 1980s, the Section 11 project became increasingly aware of the extent of underachievement of a substantial number of bilingual children in Watford

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schools. The underachievement seemed to relate particularly to children from Azad Kashmiri backgrounds and there appeared to be a recognisable pattern. Children entering nursery or Reception classes, whose early socialisation had taken place in their mother tongue, experienced an abrupt change of both language and cultural expectations. In an English language environment, they were effectively dispossessed of their ability to communicate. By the end of their first year in formal schooling, we observed children slowly acquiring some English but beginning to lose their mother tongue. As they moved through Key Stage One, children developed a degree of fluency in the use of English for social purposes on a superficial level ('playground English'), but it became apparent at Key Stage 2 that they had difficulties in responding to the increasing literacy and cognitive demands of the curriculum, and so had little chance of success in the secondary school context (Cummins, 1981). It was felt that a significant factor might arise from the mismatch between home and school expectations, as well as a discontinuity of learning because of their inability to use mother tongue for academic purposes in the early years of schooling.

As Primary Phase Co-ordinator within the Section 11 Project in the early 1990s, I had a particular interest in the factors which might influence the achievement of bilingual children from the Azad Kashmiri community. When I was invited by the Headteacher of a multi-ethnic school in which I worked in 1994 to conduct a survey of the achievement and underachievement of bilingual pupils in the school, it fell naturally into place alongside the interest of the Section 11 Project in the differential achievements of children from this community in Watford. I was asked to focus on the learning of bilingual pupils in the school and to explore factors affecting their achievement and underachievement from four different viewpoints: the pupil; the classteacher; classroom observer and the parents. The main aims of the study were as follows:

- to investigate the learning context both at home and at school for bilingual pupils who were considered to be achieving well and those who were underachieving;

- to examine the relationship between the achievements of the pupils in the school context and in the home/community context;

- to investigate the different views on pupils' achievements from pupils, classteachers, classroom observer and parents;

- to consider common factors which may indicate ways of raising the achievement of bilingual pupils.

The primary school where I was working had 266 pupils (including a 60 place nursery) and approximately 40% were from an ethnic minority background. 30% were bilingual and mainly Pahari speakers. The target pupils in the study were identified by the classteacher of Years 3, 4, 5 and 6; one high achiever and one underachiever in each class.

Analysis of the data provided interesting insights into the learning of the 4 underachieving Pahari speaking girls. Data included classroom observations, interviews with target pupils, classteachers and parents (conducted in the first language of the parents in the home context). The following section draws on the data from the study and contrasts different views on the pupils' learning.

One of the most striking findings was the apparent mismatch between the expectations and views of the children's achievements at home and at school. The parents' views were very similar for high achievers and under-achievers; they all stated that they do not know what is going on in school or that they had no knowledge of the school system. One mother said,' *If I were educated and knew what was going on in the school, I would go and discuss it. As this is not the case, I am relying on the school to let me know*'. In addition, all the parents interviewed were positive about the importance of education. There was also a high level of consciousness about the fact that they did not know the system and there was clear evidence that they wished they did.

A summary of the views on parental contact expressed by parents and classteachers in the interviews is presented in table 1.4 below.

Table 1.4

Under-achievers:

Pupil	Teacher's view on parental contact with school	Parents' view on contacts with school
Salma	parents' support is ill-informed.	for parents consultation evenings she takes her children, but she does not know what is going on at school. Because she cannot read English, she is unable to assess the work; she relies on teachers and what they say.
Safina	there is no support from parents; they don't come into school, they don't attend consultation evenings.	they make sure an older brother or sister attends parents consultation evenings. They have no knowledge of what is going on in school.
Amana	education is important to the mother and there is seen to be some support from home.	parent is able to go into school to talk to the headteacher and classteacher. She attends parent consultation evenings, but she has no knowledge of what goes on in school.
Naseem	there is no support from parents; no attendance at parents' meetings; no contact at all.	Mother has no contact with the school; 'If I were educated and knew what was going on in the school I would go and discuss it. As this is not the case, I am relying on the school to let me know'.

1.3   Naseem: a case study

One of the underachievers, Naseem, was of particular interest to me during the period of the study. She appeared to be very conscious of her difficulties at school and she was clearly underachieving, but when I visited her at home and talked to her mother, different views of her as a learner began to emerge. The following points are drawn from interviews with Naseem and her mother.

> Her mother thinks that Naseem is doing very well at school. She shares responsibilities with her older sister, Zakkia, helping their mother with the younger children and the housework. She reads letters and explains the school newsletter to her, writes shopping lists, takes her shopping, and helps at the doctors. Naseem brings books home from school to read. Her mother thinks she reads and writes well and she asks wide range of questions. After school, she attends Qur'anic classes and she also reads the Arabic verses with her mother at home. Her mother has no contact with the school but the reports say she is 'fine'. She is very keen to support her children with their school work, but she says,'I am sorry I cannot help them because I am unable to communicate with the teachers in English. If I am worried, I just think about it, but I feel I can't do anything about it. I trust the school and if there is a problem, the school will let us know. So I don't want to make a fuss.'

This view of Naseem as 'doing well' contrasts with her actual school experience. The following description is taken from observations notes made over a period of time in her classroom. Naseem is nine years old and in a Year 4 class in the school.

The session starts with a whole class discussion about geography work on the British Isles. Naseem sits with a group of friends, passive and disengaged. The class then return to their desks and continue the on-going classwork which was introduced earlier in the week. The task is to complete a worksheet on the countries in the British Isles, to calculate the area of each using squared paper and to answer a set of questions about the map. Most of the children in the class are working in pairs or small groups, but Naseem is sitting on her own. She has been working on this worksheet or several days, but is still counting the small squares on the map surface of each country and finding the task difficult. During the session, she is easily distracted and off task for much of the time. She sits for long periods of time not engaged in the work and not asking for help from the classteacher or her peers. Later in the afternoon session when tackling the worksheet, it is evident that the question

'How many times bigger than Northern Ireland is the Republic of Ireland?' is difficult for her to understand. She sits at her desk with her hand held up, asking for help. After several minutes the classteacher asks the class to tidy up. The children assemble on the carpet at the end of the afternoon and go home.

(Drury, 1997a)

Naseem has attended the school from nursery to Year 4. It is evident from her response to the Geography lesson described above that she is struggling with the demands of the curriculum. The task requires an understanding of both the content (a knowledge of the countries in the British Isles), as well as the linguistic (how many times bigger than Northern Ireland is the Republic of Ireland?) and mathematical (calculating the area of the map surface) demands of the task. The way that conceptualising problems may be closely related to English language development is illustrated through her difficulty in understanding the question about the relative size of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Naseem is aware of the difficulties she has with her school work. She does not understand the classwork and says, 'I get shy sometimes (in the whole class context) and I don't know what to say because I might be wrong.' She has developed strategies to disengage from the classroom tasks and, as exemplified in the description above, she does not interact with the classteacher or her peers. At this stage, she knows that she is having little success, she is able to acknowledge that she needs help, and she lacks the confidence to be proactive about helping herself. The attempt to engage in the task, the limited understanding, the partial disengagement, the inability to ask for help, and the resulting failure to complete the task are all part of a familiar cycle to Naseem. Her perception of herself as a learner is poor.

Naseem's class teacher sees her as under-achieving in all areas of the curriculum. He says that she has no self-belief, lacks confidence and is convinced that she cannot do the classwork. She does not ask for help and needs a great deal of support in class. Her classteacher sees that she can achieve some success with her work if she has sufficient repetition and visual clues, as well as additional support from second language support staff, though he feels she will sink in a secondary school. He has no contact at all with her parents and he has no evidence of their support for her learning at school.

The findings of the study led me to consider what factors might have contibuted to Naseem's difficulties at school.

First, there is clearly a mismatch between the experiences, expectations and views of achievement at home and at school. These are summarised in table 1.5 below:

Table 1.5

The School	Parents
Sees the parents as unable to communicate.	Trust the school to educate the chidren.
Has not managed to make clear to the parents the children's difficulties, what help is being offered, or how the parents might help.	Expect the school to inform if there are problems.
Thinks that Naseem is poised for future failure.	Think that the children are doing well.
Has little knowledge of the children's home experience to build on in school.	Have little understanding of how the children learn in school.

Second, Naseem has been learning English as an additional language in the school context for 4½ years. However, she is still struggling with the demands of the curriculum as she is still acquiring English for academic purposes.

Third, Naseem's difficulties may partially result from a lack of continuity in learning through mother tongue at the point of entry to the schooling system (as a 4 year-old) as mother tongue development is considered to be of critical importance for conceptual development and future learning at this age.

With Naseem in mind, I began to consider how her early learning experiences might have influenced her subsequent underachievement at school. This led me to look at Naseem's younger sister, Nazma, as she enters the nursery. While Naseem's situation does not necessarily represent a mirror image of where Nazma will be in 5 years time, it is likely that the experience of the two sisters will be similar. Naseem's underachievement is common to other bilingual children from similar backgrounds in this and other schools. It may reasonably be assumed that a particularly critical period for these children is the time when they start formal schooling in the nursery when the immediate adjustment from home to school has to be made. Two aspects of this adjustment are particularly critical: the first is the required change from the mother tongue in the home to the use of English in school;

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the second is the shift from early socialisation in the home to socialisation in the school. To understand this process, I will focus on young bilingual children starting nursery in Watford. The central question I ask is how do bilingual children make their own way through early schooling and what is their experience of early learning in nursery and at home?

In order to clarify this central question, I ask a series of related questions. What is their experience as they start in the nursery and as they progress in this setting? How do they respond to the nursery provision? How does their English language develop in this context and what bearing does their mother tongue have on their learning at this stage? How are they perceived by the adults who work with them in the nursery? How are they perceived as learners in school by their parents? How do they find their own way through nursery and what are the strategies they use? Finally I ask, does Nazma's experience at this early stage of her schooling throw any light on the difficulties which are faced by her elder sister, and might she face similar difficulties herself?

1.4 Summary

This chapter has established the origins of my inquiry. I have discussed the under-achievement of Pakistani children, both nationally and locally. I have also introduced Naseem and the difficulties faced by her in the educational system.

My thesis is centrally concerned with young bilingual children as they enter nursery. I now turn to Nazma, Naseem's younger sister and consider her experiences of early schooling.

Chapter 2

Different Experiences of Early Schooling

2.0   Introduction

In this chapter I shall focus on current early childhood practice for bilingual children of nursery age. I shall draw on the data from my study to describe the learning situation for one bilingual child, Nazma, as she enters nursery to examine the key questions for discussion. In order to highlight the language and learning needs of bilingual children like Nazma, who are at an early stage in their learning of English, I shall contrast her experience of early schooling with that of a native English speaker, Nina. I use these two children as examples of different experiences of early schooling in order to explore the central questions in my study and to focus on an additional question: what are the expectations of children in the nursery and what are the rules for successful learning in this setting?

I begin by setting the context for the two children's learning experiences. I consider national policies and prevailing views about practice in early years education, and describe the particular nursery which is the setting for Nina and Nazma's early experience of schooling. I then present both children using examples of the ways in which they are able to engage in the setting. Nazma is seen in the context of her bilingualism, against the background of national goals for learning, and in relation to the expectations of children in the nursery, contrasting these with her home experience. Finally, I offer a perspective on Nazma's English language development in relation to three related areas of learning: social interaction; the expectations within the nursery culture; and the importance for cognitive development of learning which takes place through engagement in activities, and through interaction with both the peer group and adults. The monolingual child, who conforms to the expectations, is used as reference point and her experience is contrasted with a bilingual child who is at an early stage in her learning of English. The differences in the experience of the two children suggest that early years practitioners need to take into

account the distinctive learning situation of bilingual children if they are to ensure inclusive education on the basis of equality of opportunity.

2.1. Background: The Nursery Context

Before describing the experiences of Nina and Nazma as they enter nursery, I shall examine first the context for their educational provision. I shall consider current practice in early childhood settings as well as the theoretical and statutory frameworks within which the nursery teacher works.

At the time of carrying out the study, there had been a number of reforms initiated by the government, including the introduction of the nursery education scheme, OfSTED inspections of pre-school settings, the introduction (in 1998) of a national baseline assessment system, the SCAA publication of 'Desirable Outcomes for children's learning on entering compulsory education' (SCAA, 1996) and its complementary document, 'Looking at Children's Learning' (SCAA, 1997) had all been very influential in nursery and pre-school education. The SCAA (1996) document had achieved particular significance because it sets out the 'Desirable Outcomes' or goals for children's learning by the time they enter compulsory education. 'Looking at Children's Learning' illustrates these goals through the use of children's responses to a range of different activities, in an attempt to 'help staff in all types of setting to plan in a way that enables individual children to make progress towards achieving them' (SCAA, 1997:3). The 'Desirable Outcomes' are organised into six areas of learning and these provide the framework for curriculum planning. They are;

1. personal and social development
2. language and literacy
3. mathematics
4. knowledge and understanding of the world
5. physical development
6. creative development

In 'Looking at Children's Learning', SCAA makes nine recommendations for planning an appropriate curriculum, including the following;

- build on children's prior experiences and their skills and knowledge

- make provision for individual children's learning, including those with special educational needs, able children and those for whom English is an additional language

- ensure provision for equal opportunities and cultural diversity

(SCAA, 1997:5)

These would be easily recognised by early childhood educators as features of 'good practice'. The nursery curriculum is based on an established tradition which is derived from a 'child-centred' approach to teaching and learning and strongly influenced by the philosophy of education which informed the Plowden report (1967). A 'child-centred' philosophy of education should ensure that every child's experience, interests and abilities are taken as a starting point for their learning. Although this approach is an 'inclusive' one, the difficulty for the nursery teacher is how to apply this to children whose socialisation and language experience is different from the assumed norm. The emphasis in the nursery on independence, choice, learning through play and the value placed on these educational concepts may not be well understood by minority ethnic communities, or in keeping with their expectations. Children may arrive at nursery with no previous experience of the materials and activities provided in this setting. In addition, they may not understand the implicit and explicit expectations of the nursery, for example the requirement to 'choose' from a range of play activities. A report on a pre-school intervention programme in Amsterdam underlines this point:

> 'the experience-orientated approach takes little account of the existing experiences of the individual child (namely the cognitive and cultural baggage with which the child enters primary school) and the differences that exist between children in this respect. In particular, migrant primary schoolers...appear to be missing the connection to the school culture in this way.'
>
> (Averroes Foundation Amsterdam, 1992:9)

More recently, the principles for early years education are set out in the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (QCA, 2000). A central aim is to 'foster personal, social and emotional well-being' through 'promoting an inclusive ethos and providing opportunities for each child to become a valued member of that group and community so that a strong self-image and self-esteem are promoted.' This statement, like the other aims for early learning at the Foundation Stage, may be seen in the light of the government's intention for education to be 'inclusive' and to promote equality of opportunity. The phrase

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'each child' therefore includes children from all social and cultural backgrounds, 'different ethnic groups' and 'diverse linguistic backgrounds.' In the United Kingdom approximately 8.5% of children in primary school have English as an additional language and they present a wide diversity of linguistic, cultural and learning experiences when they enter formal schooling.

The requirements to ensure equality of opportunity and to make provision for children learning English as an additional language are crucial, but early childhood educators need to know what features of good practice, or principles, will provide a framework to help them to meet the needs of bilingual children. These are not explicitly recognised in the official documentation. Some attention has been given to equal opportunities by writers on early years education (Siraj-Blatchford, 1994), but there have been few studies in this country which examine the practical implications of the principles that have been promoted. For example, the ways in which monolingual nursery staff may approach the issue of 'building on children's home experience' (in the case of children from homes in which little English is spoken) have not been addressed. As children begin their formal schooling, the interface between the context of nursery education and the context of home and the wider community is closer than at any other stage of education. Equality of opportunity therefore has particular significance for nursery staff.

The development of English, perhaps the most important aspect of equal opportunities provision, has received little attention in this country. In part, this is because there is an assumption that developing bilingual children, particularly in the early years phase, will 'pick up' English naturally by being in an active learning environment. 'If the language environment is natural, consistent and stimulating, children will pick up whatever languages are around' (Crystal, 1987). Krashen's (1985) emphasis on learners' exposure to 'comprehensible input' and a stress free environment has been influential and has come to be generalised into an assumption that learning English as an additional language can be achieved by osmosis. Browne (1996) suggests that learning a second language is 'more straightforward than some people believe.' (1996: 149) She claims,

> 'Young children who begin to develop a second language at playgroup, nursery or first school ... are old enough and physically mature enough to engage with others in meaningful activities that require the use of a common language.'
> (op. cit.: 148)

The example outlined in this chapter questions how far this type of learning really takes place.

2.2   Nazma and Nina's Nursery

The nursery is situated in a large Victorian building, across the playground from the main school. The room adjoins the Reception class and a spacious hallway divides the two classes; this area comprises the early years unit. The nursery class has the main areas of learning clearly set out as follows;

- an imaginative play area, set up as a 'home corner'
- a book corner
- a painting/drawing/sticking area
- a writing table
- a large carpetted area and tables for construction/imaginative play
- a computer area
- sand and water (in hallway)

There are approximately 30 children in the morning session of nursery which Nina and Nazma attend for two and a half hours a day (9.00-11.30). The nursery teacher works with two nursery nurses and a part-time bilingual classroom assistant and she has extensive experience of working in multi-ethnic early years classrooms. Each adult in the nursery is responsible for their own small group of children. When they first arrive in the morning, the children work with their 'key adult' and participate in their group's activity. They then 'choose' from the range of play activities set out in the nursery. Approximately halfway through the session, they go outside and play, using a range of equipment on the paved area ouside the nursery. It is then drink time, followed by further play activities. The session ends with a story and songs in a whole group on the carpet.

The nursery teacher works within the frameworks outlined above. She carries out the statutory requirements of baseline assessment and plans a curriculum according to SCAA's 'Desirable Outcomes'. On a day-to-day basis, she interacts with children and their parents, delivers the planned curriculum and carries out appropriate assessment and monitoring procedures. But what do we know of the experiences of children as they enter this nursery class and what does successful learning look like in this context?

In order to consider this question, I will draw on observations and tape recordings of the two children's responses to learning experiences in the nursery. These will be related both to the expectations and rules that apply in the nursery (the context for learning), and to speaking and listening (an aspect of the nursery curriculum which has particular importance for language development). Key statements for speaking and listening (from the 'Desirable Outcomes' on Language and Literacy) will be used to provide a framework for the discussion. These are taken from the 'Desirable Outcomes' for Language and Literacy which is set out below with the statements used in bold.

'In small and large groups, **children listen attentively and talk about their experiences. They** use a growing vocabulary with increasing fluency to **express thoughts and convey meaning to the listener. They** listen and respond to stories, songs, nursery rhymes and poems. **They make up their own stories and take part in role play with confidence.'**
(SCAA, 1996:3)

We now need to consider what lies behind this in terms of expected nursery practice.

2.3   Nina enters nursery

First I will present Nina, a native English speaker, in three brief extracts from a two-hour recording session in the nursery. Nina is four years old and the second and youngest child in her family. Her mother is a single parent who works full-time. Nina is looked after by her grandmother before and after school and she attended a local playgroup before nursery.

A. Sand play (making a cake/porridge)

[Nina is playing at the sand tray with 3 boys, including Ben and Joe]
[N = Nina, Ch1. = Child 1]

1 N:	I'm putting in sugar
2	sugar, milk
3 Ch.1:	sugar
4 N:	can I have a bit of the milk?
5	thank you
6	you can have a bit of sugar
7	there we are
8	there's some sugar

9		now, we're putting juice, OK
10		we're putting juice on our cake
11	Ch.1:	I made a pie
12		I made a pie
13	N:	that's good
14		there's juice in our cake
15		scrubeddy dub
16	Ch.1:	dub dub
17	N:	dub dub scrubeddy dub
18		what's that?
19		this is milk?
20		some milk in
21	Ch.1:	margarine
22	N:	now, I need margarine in first
23		putting in margarine my cake
24		a little bit of water
25		shall we put some sand in water?

B. Sticking

[Nina comes up to nursery nurse and asks about the sticking activity]

[N = Nina, N.N. = Nursery Nurser]

1 N:	what's she doing?
	what's the person doing?
N.N:	making a house, a picture of the house to go in the home corner
	we're making the home corner into the 3 bears' cottage
5	we're going to do a nice picture on the wall
N:	can I do one?
N.N:	you can do some sticking
	put an apron on
N:	(humming)
10	Kirstin, this is my job, isn't it?
Ch.5:	yeah
N:	I've got a better job than you (laughs)
Ch.5:	you can't do it on mine
N:	let's pull sleeves up
15	mix and mix

I'm mixing my cake up it's got lots and lots of glue in, it's my cake

C. Home corner (gingerbread man)

[Nina plays in the home corner with 2 Gujerati speakers]

[N = Nina, Ch 1 = Child 1]

1 Ch.1: that's a gingerbread man

N: I need to get one of these and get the mouth out and nose and get 2 eyes out and

      get the hair out and I need to get the legs out

      there we are

5   now I need to get the arms out

      I just put in the oven

      we need to put some meat in my oven

      I need to put something down

[Nina starts 'writing']

      'the gingerbread man is running away and he is not coming back'

10   hello, I writing something about a gingerbread man and he's not going to come

      back from his home, he's running away from the home and he is not coming...

What we have seen is a monolingual, English speaking child in the nursery setting doing things which we, and the nursery staff, might take for granted. This kind of talk during a play activity is what is expected. What is is that Nina is able to do that fits so well with the nursery's expectations?

2.4   Expectations and rules for language and learning: Nina

'children make up their own stories and take part in role play with confidence' (SCAA, 1996:3)

We see that Nina is able to engage in imaginative play with confidence and for sustained periods of time, using the available nursery resources. She knows that it is acceptable for sand to be a cake, pie, porridge and even porridge cake. She has firmly placed herself in the role of 'mum' during an earlier sequence and demonstrates that she can 'pretend play' freely. She also makes up her own stories through her play. Walkerdine (1982) refers to this kind of negotiation in play sequences, none of which is explicit, as 'the opening metaphor', because it has the effect of 'calling up' for the participants the relevant discourse'. (1982: 134) Nina is clearly familiar with the rules of 'social practices which are represented as discursive rules in language.' (op.cit.: 138)

In the home corner example, she is able to draw upon her knowledge of traditional stories ('The Gingerbread Man') and she knows about written language. She talks like a book 'the gingerbread man is running away and he is not coming back'.

'**children listen attentively and talk about their experiences**' (SCAA, 1996:3)

In the sand play example we can see that Nina is able to draw on her home experiences and knowledge of cake making. Firstly, she knows the ingredients for the cake and the appropriate lexis (margarine, milk, sugar, eggs) and knows that you 'stir' cakes. Secondly, she is able to use chunks of language from home (for example, lines 4-10). She is able to engage fully in the imaginative play over a sustained period of time (approximately 25 minutes for the whole sand play sequence) and exploit the learning experience.

'**children use a growing vocabulary with increasing fluency to express thoughts and convey meaning to the listener**' (SCAA, 1996:3)

In all of this learning, language is crucial because the use of language goes hand in hand with Nina's cognitive development. Firstly, there is a considerable amount of repetition, and her language, because it is her mother tongue, is freely available to her as a non-conscious resource to draw on. There are plenty of opportunities for the practice and extension of language itself and for directing and shaping thinking. She uses language as a kind of commentary on what she is doing so that it reinforces the activity, creates order for her and lends purpose to what she is doing, for example, in the sand play, 'now I need margarine first' or in the home corner (lines 2-8). Secondly, it enables her to respond to other children and to adapt her imaginative scenario as she goes along. She picks up on 'margarine' from another child adapting to this new idea. Nina interacts freely with her friends at the sand play, often leading the conversation and asking questions. Thirdly, the language helps to structure the activity, as in the sand play example, enabling her to progress in a sequence (sugar, juice, milk, margarine). She can also play with the sounds of the language (for example, 'scrubeddy dub') while she stirs the cake. Lastly, Nina initiates interactions with adults in the nursery. In the sticking example, she is able to ask the appropriate questions to enable her to begin to participate in the activity. She has learned what is required to take part in such interactions and exploits these learning opportunities successfully.

We have seen how one child participates successfully in the nursery. She knows the expectations and the culture, and she uses language for a range of purposes. But how might it look for a child, who has a different cultural experience in the home, and if the

same child does not speak English, which is the medium used in the nursery? I want to consider more closely now what the experience of such a bilingual child might look like.

2.5   Nazma enters nursery

Nazma is Naseem's youngest sister. She is nearly four years old. There are six children in the family and they all attend the same nursery and primary school. Nazma is the youngest child in the family. She has not attended a playgroup or any other pre-school setting and her early socialisation has taken place at home with her siblings and other members of her extended family who visit frequently. Nazma uses her mother tongue, Pahari, with all members of the family. Although the older school-age children use more English to communicate with each other at home, their mother always speaks Pahari to her children. The older children attend Qur'anic classes after school and is expected that Nazma will begin when she is about five years old.

Nazma has been in the nursery for seven weeks. She stopped crying during the fifth week at nursery and she now comes every afternoon. During her early days in the nursery, none of the monolingual nursery staff attempted to engage Nazma (except for classroom management purposes) and there was very little verbal interaction with other children in the nursery (apart from her sister who was in the same group). She is able to understand and communicate with the Bilingual Classroom Assistant (Mussarat).

The vignette A presented below is a composite picture of events over several weeks when Nazma first joined the nursery. The following two extracts (B and C) are taken from tape recordings of Nazma at nursery during her first term.

A:

Nazma enters nursery holding her sister's hand. Her sister, Yasmin (aged 4½), moves over to the large carpet where the children sit with the nursery teacher at the beginning of every session. Nazma follows her, chewing her dress, staying close to her sister and watching everything. She stopped crying during the fifth week at nursery and she now comes every afternoon. The children listen to the teacher talking about caterpillars and many join in the discussion in English. Nazma is silent. Mussarat, (Bilingual Classroom Assistant), enters the nursery. She gathers a small group of Pahari speaking children together to share a book. This activity had been planned with the nursery teacher and was linked to the current topic. The children switch into Pahari (their mother tongue) for this activity. Nazma listens and points to a picture of a dog (kutha) and cat (billee) in an Urdu alphabet picture book,

but does not speak. They go outside to play. Nazma stands on the outside watching the other children and holds Mussarat's hand. She has learnt the climbing frame routine and repeats the climbing and sliding activity several times. The children go inside and choose from a range of play activities. Nazma watches. She stays at an activity for one minute and moves on. This is repeated several times. She then wanders around the room sucking her fingers. It is story time on the carpet. The children sit and listen to the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Nazma sits close to her sister and watches. Their mother appears at the door and they go home.

[Drury, 1997b]

B:

The following transcript reflects a typical afternoon 'carpet time' nursery session. There are 5 other Pahari speaking children attending nursery (including her sister, Yasmin and her cousin, Hassan) and they are all at an early stage in their learning of English. The nursery has an established routine which is followed every day. The children sit on the large carpet with the nursery teacher at the beginning of the session. Nazma is present but silent.

[The teacher is talking about the caterpillars in the classroom]

1 Teacher:	remember how we started off?
Children:	yes [altogether]
Teacher:	it wasn't a caterpillar to begin with, was he?
Child A:	he started to go out the egg
5 Teacher:	yes, he started out of just a little egg on the leaf and that's how our caterpillars started.
	we didn't see them as eggs, we only had them as little caterpillars, but they started as eggs and then hatched out into caterpillars.
10	this afternoon I want you to do a picture from the story.
	so, what do you think you could draw from the story?
Child B:	I'm drawing a butterfly
Teacher:	yes, you could draw a butterfly, couldn't you?
Child C:	I'm going to do the egg
15 Child D	I'm going to do the food
Teacher:	yes, you could draw the caterpillar eating all the food
	yes, you could draw the little egg on the leaf
Child C:	the caterpillar out the egg
Teacher:	when he?

20 Child C:	he came out the egg
Teacher:	when he hatched out of the egg and out popped the little hungry caterpillar
	'cos caterpillars really...
Child C:	I'm going to draw egg
Teacher:	what do they really eat?
25 Children:	leaves
Teacher:	leaves, don't they
	they don't really eat lollipops and strawberries and cupcakes
	they like to eat leaves
	so you can draw anything you like from the story

C:

This is an example of interaction between Mussarat (bilingual classroom assistant) and Nazma as they discuss a counting book in Pahari (mother tongue).

[Pahari in italics]

1 Mussarat:	*What's this?*
Nazma:	*apples*
Mussarat:	*What's this?*
Nazma:	*pears*
5 Mussarat:	*What's this?*
Nazma:	*lemon, yuk I don't like that*	[making a face]
Mussarat:	*Don't you like it, because it's sour?*
Nazma:	*yes*
Mussarat & Nazma:	1,2,3 *green apples*
	[counting together]
10 Mussarat & Nazma:	1,2,3,4 *pears*
	[counting together]
Nazma:	*We eat them, we like them*
	we get them, we go to a shop and we buy apples and pears...

Nazma:	*We went to the shops with mum and Hasnan*
	and we bought lollies.
	We had Hasnan's birthday.
15	*We went in a big 'mosque' and there were lots of people,*
	[the 'mosque' is in fact a hall]
	friends and everybody there.

There was cake.

I went with Hasnan to the shops.

20 Nazma: *Mum came [to the party], everybody came.*

Nazma: *I saw a cat and I was crying when I saw a cat, it was coming to hurt me.*

Mussarat: *What did mum do?*

Nazma: *She said cat go away.*

              Then we ate, Yasmin and Hasnan were eating, and grandma was crying.

Mussarat: *Why?*

25 Nazma: *Because it was hurting.*

              We went to mosque.

              Lots of people were there.

              Mum was crying and everybody was crying.

[Drury, 1997a]

2.6 Expectations and rules for language and learning: Nazma

'children make up their own stories and take part in role play with confidence' (SCAA, 1996:3)

When Nazma enters nursery, she does not have the necessary English language knowledge and skills to engage with the social and learning experiences, and the cultural norms and behaviour implicitly expected by the nursery are different from Nazma's home experiences and difficult for her to interpret and understand. This point is underlined by the fact that, although she 'takes part in role play with confidence' at home, she is unable to engage in the learning activities, including role play, in the nursery.

A further observation of Nazma in this nursery context is that there is little evidence of sustained social interaction or co-operative support for her from other children or any one-to-one contact with the teacher. In addition, there is no evidence that the cultural assumptions behind many of the activities, for example, choosing from a range of play activities and ways of participating at story time, are being made explicit to Nazma.

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'children listen attentively and talk about their experiences' (SCAA, 1996:3)

In example B, Nazma sits silently, observing and listening to English in use in the context of a general class discussion and of a story about caterpillars. We can see here some of the implicit turn-taking rules and language 'recipes' (Hymes, 1974) which children are expected to understand and follow in the nursery. Firstly, the role of the teacher is to do most of the talking, select the choice of topic, ask questions and repeat 'correct' answers. Secondly, the children sit and listen on the carpet, they make 'appropriate' comments and answer questions briefly. Most of the children in the nursery, who are native speakers of English, are familiar with the story and the routines of such a session, but Nazma (in common with the other bilingual children in the nursery) has not yet learnt the rules, cultural practices and expectations. In addition, at present she does not have the English language skills to understand or engage in the classroom discussion.

'children use a growing vocabulary with increasing fluency to express thoughts and convey meaning to the listener' (SCAA, 1996:3)

Example C illustrates the importance of drawing on Nazma's home experiences and providing opportunities for the use of mother tongue in the nursery. The conversation enables Nazma to talk about her family and to retell significant cultural and religious events from her home life. The opportunity to share a book with Mussarat, the bilingual classroom assistant, provides the appropriate context for Nazma tell her personal story with fluency and at length. She knows that Mussarat will be able to interpret the meaning of her stories and she is able to express her thoughts and extend her mother tongue use. The crucial role of bilingual staff in the nursery is highlighted here as this is the only occasion when Nazma is able to 'listen attentively and talk about her experiences, use a growing vocabulary with increasing fluency to express thoughts and convey meaning to the listener'. However, Nazma, although 'making use of her developing understanding and skills in other languages' (SCAA, 1997: 3), is dependent on the presence of a bilingual classroom assistant for this and there is no other evidence of support for her acquisiton of competence in English during this period.

2.7 Discussion

Parallel to the explicit language and learning curriculum, children are expected to understand and operate within a set of procedural rules. In examining the rules and expectations of Nina and Nazma's early experiences of schooling, it is important first to

remember that the nursery is not 'neutral'. The learning context is 'constructed' and structured by cultural norms and rules. In a case study of one nursery, Cochran-Smith (1984), describes and analyses the nursery school day according to the norms expected in the organisation of time and space. These have also been referred to as 'procedural' rules (Street and Street, 1993). Firstly the nursery session is structured around periods of activity often called 'times', for example, 'story time', 'tidy up time'. Secondly, there is a consistent use of materials and activities in different spacial areas of the nursery, for example, the use of small imaginative play materials on the carpet area. She states that 'children came to expect a particular set of rules for each kind of activity at the nursery school, and became accustomed to using different interactional and interpretive norms for different activities'. (op. cit.:70)

As Nina and Nazma enter nursery, they encounter the rules and expectations of their new social world. Haste (1987) states that 'in acquiring these rules, the child learns the basis for interactions with others, and the shared cultural framework for making sense of the world' (op. cit.: 163). The acquisition of these rules, the ability to interact with others and to engage in activities, and the understanding of the shared cultural framework might represent very different tasks for Nina and Nazma.

In the examples above we can see some of the implicit rules which children are expected to understand and follow in the nursery classroom. One expectation is that children can play independently and with others, learning about the importance of sharing and co-operating and discovering things for themselves, as cognitive development takes place through 'active learning'. They are learning about operating within the culture of the nursery which for many children like Nina will be close to their home culture. Then they are expected to choose an activity. Nina knew immediately what to choose and said, 'I want to play in the sand'. They are also expected to be able to participate in the play activities. In the sticking example, Nina joins in and has the confidence to ask and pick up what is expected. Lastly, children are expected to understand the rules of the nursery. Nina knows that only four children are allowed to play in the sand at one time. She asks, 'shall we put some sand in the water?' and knows that they are not allowed to put water in the dry sand. Her friend replies, 'no, I'll be told off'. Nina is doing what is expected. We can see that she is able to engage and she has self-motivation. She is very much at home in the culture of the nursery. The tasks are consistent with her knowledge of English and with her existing experience.

For Nazma the acquisition of procedural rules, the ability to interact with others, and the understanding of the shared cultural framework, which are essential for successful engagement in the nursery setting, are dependent on her acquisition of English. At the same time her learning of English depends upon being able to interpret the rules and expectations of the nursery, and upon being able to engage in activities and interact with her peers. These learning tasks that Nazma faces are interdependent. Moreover, all are necessary for cognitive development to take place in the context of the nursery. In emphasising the role of interpersonal social processes, Vygotsky (1978) encapsulated the inter-relationship of these aspects of learning. He argued that the 'social' world operates at two levels. 'Firstly at the *interpersonal level* at which the child, through the *medium of language* as well as through *action*, experiences *concepts*-in-practice... and the sociohistorical system within which *cultural meaning* develops over time.' (op.cit.: 173)

For Nazma, who has a different cultural and home experience from the assumed norm and who has difficulty picking up the rules and expectations of the nursery because of her ability to interact and understand, what is the effect on her learning, self-esteem and cognition?

Nazma's early socialisation has taken place in her mother tongue. So, when she enters nursery, there is an abrupt change of both language and cultural expectations. In an English language environment, she is effectively dispossessed of her ability to communicate and the effect of this on a four year old can be profoundly disturbing. Indeed, if Nazma happened to attend a session when the bilingual classroom assistant was not present, she would be left largely to her own devices. Nazma's limited engagement at this point in time may not only be caused by her inability to use English: a further mismatch for her is between her home experience and the nursery. The following information, drawn from interviews, provides some insights into what that discontinuity might mean for Nazma, and shows that the school and the parents have different perspectives.

Nazma's early learning experiences have focussed on playing with her siblings and other members of the extended family who visit frequently. She enjoys dressing up and taking part in role play activities with siblings at home. She also watches, helps and talks to her mother when preparing and cooking food. Both her grandmother and mother tell her stories from their childhood, drawing on an oral tradition which is not recorded in written form. She has heard her older siblings talking in English and seen their school reading books at home. She has watched them preparing for Qur'anic classes, reciting verses in Arabic after school and seen the Arabic primers and Holy Koran read by all older members of the

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family. From the family's perspective, Nazma's mother has high aspirations for her daughter and wants her to achieve well in the education system. She has very little understanding of how children learn by play at nursery and she relies on the school to give Nazma the educational skills she requires.

The school expects parents to understand and respond to its communications, to support what it is trying to achieve with the curriculum and to assist their children's learning at home. From the school's point of view, Nazma's mother is unable to communicate in English and, although Nazma is the sixth child in the family to attend the nursery, she is not seen as supported in her school learning at home. The difficulties she and her siblings experience at school are explained in terms of cultural and language difficulties. However, if the nursery staff wanted to draw on Nazma's prior knowledge, there are some aspects of her home experience which could match very well with aspects of the nursery learning (for example her participation in role play and dressing up activities with siblings at home), if she were able to use it.

2.8   Summary

I have considered the significance of language development in relation to a native speaker of English and a bilingual child. I have related it to three aspects of learning in the nursery which represent significant tasks for Nazma. I have argued that there is a mutual dependency between these three areas in her learning of English. The process is complex. First, social interaction through the medium of English is central to learning in the nursery. Second, there is the acquisition of the specific culture of the nursery. This is embedded in its rules and expectations (Haste, 1987) and these in turn are part of the culture of the wider society (Vygotsky's (1978) sociohistorical system). The norms of the nursery culture are not necessarily made explicit and come to be understood through patterns of behaviour, and the language used to express approval or disapproval, often through subtle and indirect forms which are difficult for a developing bilingual child to interpret. Third, cognitive development is stimulated by the learning that takes place through activities which are supported through language use (as we saw with Nina's monologue in the home corner), in social interactions with peers, and in listening and responding to adults. The use of English is central to these three aspects of learning in the nursery setting. For Nazma, all represent discontinuities for her development. But while she is not able to engage through English, we have seen the contrast when she is able to interact with a bilingual adult. If she is to experience any success at this stage, such interaction is vital for her linguistic, cognitive

and social development. It is equally important that the process of learning English takes place as quickly as possible.

My central question is; how do studies account for and describe Nazma's and other bilingual children's learning in the nursery and at home? Related to this are questions about the use of mother tongue and English. How do young bilingual children learn English as an additional language in this context? What is the role of mother tongue development in young bilingual children's learning? How do bilingual staff help to mediate the learning for children like Nazma? What is the role of the bilingual classroom assistant in the nursery? What are the key features of effective practice for young bilingual children? What is the role of the child herself in this process?

How have these questions been answered in previous studies?

PART ONE

Theoretical perspectives

Introduction to Part One

In Part One I consider the theoretical framework for understanding young bilingual children's experiences of early schooling. In Chapter 3 I consider the studies and official reports which shape educational policy with respect to bilingual children. I trace the response to individual difference, particularly in relation to a 'child-centred' view of early years education. I argue here that the official response to linguistic and cultural difference has accounted for the parameters which are accepted for linguistic minority educational provision.

In Chapter 4 I review the literature relating to language and learning development from a socio-cultural perspective. The framework established in this chapter takes into account a number of theoretical perspectives in order to understand how bilingual children make their ways as they come to terms with the reality of learning a new language in a new social and cultural setting. The multiple perspectives considered in the chapter include the agency of the child, the context of home and school and the process of socialisation and enculturation and the learning of English as an Additional Language in the early years of schooling.

Chapter 3

Difference and Deficit

3.0   Introduction

The learning context which frames children's early experience of schooling is broadly determined by the studies and reports which shape educational policy. In this chapter I consider how individual differences in their progress, and in their response to the educational setting, between children like Nazma and Nina, can be accounted for by early years studies and official reports in the U.K. I take a chronological view starting firstly with an examination of the origins of a 'child-centred' approach to early childhood education during the first half of the twentieth century. I shall then consider how 'difference' was responded to in the literature during the late 1960s and early 1970s, following the arrival of groups of young children of 'immigrant' families who did not share the language and culture of the school. Secondly, I shall consider the period during the late 1970s and early 1980s when I show that aspects of young children's linguistic and cultural 'differences' were recognised through classroom studies and official documentation. Finally, I shall examine how the Swann report (1986), the introduction of the National Curriculum (1989), followed by the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning (1996) and Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000) contributed to the exclusion of 'accounting for individual difference' (particularly in relation to cultural and linguistic difference) from the educational agenda in the 1990s, despite the fact that early childhood educators have maintained their firmly established beliefs in a 'child-centred' approach to the education of young children.

3.1   Roots of early childhood education

Respect for the individuality of each child has been an important principle of early years education. In an influential and current 'Teacher's handbook' for working with children aged 3 to 5 Marion Dowling includes a section entitled 'The Child as Individual'. In it she refers to John Brierley's work (1984):

'The important point is that each child is born unique because of 'nature's gifts' and he or she needs a unique environment to maximise them. It follows from this that in the home and at school it is *just* to treat different children differently as long as each is treated was well as possible. Blanket treatment is no good.'

She then comments as follows:

'If children are individuals, each will possess his own particular route to learning. It is the skill of the teacher to identify that route, to discover exactly how she can help that child to be motivated to learn.'
(Dowling 1988:23)

This articulation of the progressive or 'child-centred' approach to early childhood education is still influential in the late 1990s and early 21st century. Thirty years earlier the idea that education should conform to the nature of the individual child, rather than that the child should conform to the prescriptions of education, found expression in the Plowden report:

'At the heart of the educational process lies the child. No advances in policy, no acquisitions of new equipment have their desired effect unless they are in harmony with the nature of the child, unless they are fundamentally acceptable to him.'
(CACE 1967: 7)

This often quoted declaration, highlighting the central importance of the individual child at the centre of the educational process, has its roots in earlier pioneers of early childhood education including Isaacs, Froebel, the McMillan sisters and Montessori. In the early twentieth century the work of Maria Montessori and Margaret and Rachel McMillan centred on nursery education as a place of 'rescue' from social disadvantage. The early nursery schools provided physical nurture and care for children living in poverty and recognised the important links between health care, child development and education.

In the 1930s there was an expansion of nursery education and the Hadow report (1933) began to define a 'child-centred' approach to education:

'What is important .. is that, while the indispensable foundations are thoroughly mastered, the work of the school should be related to the experience and interest of the children.' (Board of Education 1933: xxii)

At this time the work of Susan Isaacs and her particular focus on the social and intellectual development of young children represented an important move from the earlier traditions of rote learning and social rescue. She was influenced by the work of Froebel, Montessori and Piaget and in her writing, based on detailed observations of young children at the Malting School Cambridge, Isaacs presented her educational aims:

> 'to stimulate the active inquiry of the children themselves ... and to bring within their immediate experience every range of fact to which their interest reached out.' (1930: 17)

Her focus on 'discovery' learning and drawing on children's individual interests provides the basis for the current educational ideologies. She also argues for teaching based on individual differences:

> 'as soon as we realise that it is what *the children* do and say that educates them, and try to provide for activity, we are brought up against the differences between one child and another.' (1932: 172)

3.2   Response to 'difference'

In this section I examine how educational reports and classroom studies responded to 'difference' and how the education of young bilingual children like Nazma may have been influenced by changes in educational thinking.

Against this background of a developing philosophy which emphasised the individuality of children, I now consider the educational context for young children entering nursery who do not share the language and culture of the school and the response to 'individual difference' during the 1960s and early 1970s. During the post-war period there were significant demographic changes in Britain, mainly brought about by the need to employ cheap labour from the 'New Commonwealth' to boost the economy. Although there had been immigration for hundreds of years in Britain, the majority of the immigrants had been of Jewish or European origin. The arrival of large numbers of immigrants from the Caribbean and South Asia took place mainly in the 1960s and early 1970s. Edwards and Redfern state that 'in 1951, 0.25% of the population were non-white; thirty years later, this proportion had risen to 4.7%' (1992: 9). They go on to comment on the educational provision:

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' Schools in the inner city areas where immigrants settled were already poorly resourced and under pressure in the 1950s and 1960s (Plowden, 1967) and were not at all equipped to respond effectively to large numbers of new children arriving throughout the school year.'

(1992: 14)

The Plowden Report contains a chapter devoted to 'the children of immigrants' which stresses the 'disadvantage' of many immigrant children 'because of the poor educational background from which they have come.' (1967: 70) However, the view of 'difference' taken in this chapter is not consistent with the central philosophy of the report which claims to value individual differences. Some differences, it seems, require assimilation. There is an emphasis on overcoming the 'language barrier' and 'culture shock' as immigrant groups are assimilated or 'absorbed into the native population' (1967: 73). Attitudes towards 'immigrant' children can be summarised as essentially negative. The linguistic and cultural experiences of the 'immigrant' children were seen not so much as part of each child's individuality to be built on, but rather as a 'barrier' to be overcome. As the teaching of English was viewed as crucial in overcoming the 'language barrier', there was a concentration on teaching the 'non-English speaking children' mainly through separate provision outside the mainstream and using special techniques. The 'special measures' identified in the report were clearly viewed as short lived. They 'inevitably identify children as 'different' and their duration should be as brief as possible'. (1967: 73). The implication of this is to avoid acknowledging 'difference' so far as possible.

However, in contrast to the 'special' treatment for most 'non-English speaking' children in schools, the Plowden report provides evidence of the prevailing view at the time that a young child entering school should have little difficulty in learning English:

'It is absolutely essential to overcome the language barrier. This is less serious for a child entering the infant school. He rapidly acquires, both in the classroom and outside, a good command of the relatively limited number of words, phrases and sentences in common use among the other children.'

(1967: 71)

3.3 Recognition of 'difference'

Although the need to respond to a new kind of 'difference' as a result of immigration was not addressed as a specific issue in Early Years literature in the 1970s and early 1980s, it

was considered in the wider educational context through significant reports and through initiatives focussed on linguistic diversity. The Bradford Mother Tongue and English Project - MOTET (Fitzpatrick, 1987) provided research data on a more radical model of responding to the mother tongue issue than had previously been considered. Indeed it has not been replicated since, although its findings might have offered a potentially helpful way forward. The Linguistic Minorities Project (1985) attempted to address the issue of linguistic diversity as a whole. There is a small body of literature that addresses the issue of English language learning. 'Teaching English to Immigrants' (Derrick, 1966), 'Mother tongue to English' (Brown, 1979) and the Scope teaching materials are in different ways representative of thinking at this time about teaching English as a second language. Finally the Bullock report (1975) on English expressed a view about appropriate responses to 'difference' and the Swann report (1986), following the Rampton report (1981) was a substantial document concerned with policy and provision for ethnic minority pupils in the school system. While this body of literature was not wholly concerned with early years education, it reflects current thinking about responses to differences in a multi-ethnic context which had implications for early years educators as much as teachers of older children.

3.4   Responses to bilingualism and linguistic diversity

The question of how to respond to the first languages of bilingual children became a matter of increasing interest in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In her influential study of language in early schooling, Willes (1983) presents the argument for the first stages of the educational process to be in the mother tongue. Drawing on the case made by a UNESCO working party in 1953 she states:

> 'The case was made on social, psychological and linguistic grounds. Early education in the mother tongue exploits the oral fluency already gained in the interests of literacy, recognises the value of the child's individuality, helps to establish an expectation of success. None of this is easily contested.'
> (1983: 51)

The publication of the Bullock report (1975) represented a turning point in recognising the individual needs of linguistic minority children. From the 'children of immigrants' in the Plowden report, the terminology changed to 'children of families of overseas origin' in the Bullock report and 'minority group children' or 'children of minority groups' in much of the literature during this period. There was now official recognition of the more long-term issues involved in working with children who were born in Britain and whose families were settled:

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'It is a process that consists primarily of learning to live in or between two cultures. and of learning to handle two languages or dialects.' (1975: 285)

The Bullock report also represented a shift of focus from English language to the importance of a child's cultural identity, cultural knowledge and mother tongue:

'no child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold, nor to live and act as though school and home represent two totally and separate and different cultures which have to be kept firmly apart.' (1975: 286)

The central importance of bilingualism in children's lives was emphasised and schools were advised to ' adopt a positive attitude to pupils' bilingualism and wherever possible ... maintain and deepen their knowledge of their mother tongues.' (1975: 294) Later, in 1977, the EEC directive on the education of the children of migrant workers recommended that: 'Member states, shall ... promote, in co-ordination with normal education, teaching of the mother-tongue and culture.' (Article 3)

This was subsequently amended and the clause giving a right to mother tongue teaching was deleted. The revised directive affirmed the intention that mother tongue teaching should be available for all immigrant groups and from 1977 the debate widened considerably. Several small scale research projects arose from the national interest in mother tongue teaching. The Linguistic Minorities Project (1979-83), based at the University of London, set out to 'discover the extent of bilingualism among the school population and the scale of the mother tongue teaching provision available.' (1985: 8) This large scale language survey revealed the diversity of languages used by children and adults in the UK. Other initiatives followed, including the Bilingual Education Project initiated at CUES in 1977 and the Schools Council sponsored Mother Tongue Project (1981-5) which focussed on developing materials for teaching Bengali and Greek. The shift towards accepting multilingualism and supporting bilingualism in schools had an impact on educational practice and thinking (see Houlton and Willey, 1983).

In the late 1970s a significant contribution to the understanding of bilingual children in the early years was made by the Inner London Education Authority curriculum development project at the Centre for Urban Educational Studies entitled Bilingual Under-Fives (B.U.F.). This project was based on mainstream nursery practice and developed approaches and materials to support young bilingual children learning to use English. A central belief of the

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project was that 'the mainstream nursery classroom with its emphasis on learning through doing and talking provides an appropriate learning context for bilingual children.' (1984: 2) The videos produced by the BUF team for inservice training purposes illustrated aspects of good practice using materials concerned with story telling, cookery and turntaking activities. The approach developed through the Bilingual Under Fives project has had a considerable impact on the practice of teaching bilingual children in the early years. This project represented the only real attempt to consider teaching strategies appropriate for young children learning English as an additional language in the context of the normal mainstream nursery classroom. However, there was no explicit theoretical underpinning to this approach, except the current view of good nursery practice.

The Linguistic Minorities Project surveyed Bradford in 1981. At that time 18% of the school population spoke two or more languages. The Mother Tongue and English Teaching Project (MOTET) 1978-80, arose out of the interest of Bradford LEA 'in meeting the educational needs of young children of Asian origin, many of whom enter school with little or no knowledge of English.' (Taylor & Hegarty, 1985) A bilingual education programme for Mirpuri speaking children in their first year of schooling was set up (1978-9) to investigate:

- 'the level of young children's linguistic and communicative performance in their mother tongue;
- the influence of mother tongue and English medium teaching on a young child's cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development.' (1987: 2)

The results of this project showed that the children in the experimental group, following the general bilingual programme, performed better than the control group (who were taught through the medium of English) in English and Punjabi tests of communication, significantly better in tests of Punjabi performance, and at a similar level in tests of English performance. The children in the bilingual group also derived personal, emotional and social benefits from the programme. They appeared very confident and well adjusted to school.

3.5   English language development

Although viewed as a relatively short-lived problem which young children naturally overcame through their social interaction as well as their engagement in classroom activities, concern about 'the language barrier' led to recognition of a need to develop a pedagogy that assisted the language learning process. The fact that the body of literature on English language development was so small may reflect a marginal interest in second language learning. The Scope materials (Schools Council, 1969, 1971, 1972, 1978) represent the only

comprehensive attempt to provide relevant published ESL teaching materials. Following the publication of 'Teaching English to Immigrants' (Derrick, 1966), Derrick was commissioned to undertake the Schools Council Project in English for Immigrant Children (1966-71). This project produced the SCOPE series of publications which emphasised a structural analysis of English and the sequential learning of language patterns through repeated practice. The Scope handbook for Immigrant children in the infant school presents a language checklist for teachers to help them to 'isolate structures that children need to learn or need further practice in.' (1978: 26)

The assumption in this approach was that 'the language barrier' should be addressed through a separate ESL-focused pedagogy in withdrawal situations. By contrast in 'Mother tongue to English: the young child in the multicultural school' (1979) Brown described how isolated learners could be supported in their learning of English in the context of mainstream school. This study included detailed case studies of two young Bengali speaking brothers who she described as 'unable to speak English and placed in normal infant school classes.' (1979: 4) She challenged the view that a child could 'pick up' the English language from his peers and argued that infant teachers in multicultural schools should be 'aware of the techniques and skills required to teach a second language.' (1979: 48)

The Bullock report (1975) paid attention to the need for ESL provision. In contrast to Plowden's suggestion that young children should learn English easily in nursery and infant classes, Bullock highlights the 'special difficulties for very young children from non-English speaking families, children born in Britain but brought up in homes where neither the language in use nor the culture is English' (1975: 292) The report goes on to outline the difficulties. Firstly, teachers are reluctant to include 'formal' language work, mainly because 'in the good infant or nursery class they would learn to speak English anyway, without any intervention on the teacher's part' (1975: 292). Secondly, there was evidence that after two years in infant classes, these children entered junior school 'seriously lacking in fluency in English.' (1975: 293)

3.6   The demise of 'difference'

The publication of the Swann report (1986) represented a turning point in the educational response to diversity. There was an increasing tension between official reports and the movement which promoted multilingualism during the early 1980s. It became clear from the mid 1980s that the main goal for educators was to develop English proficiency as quickly as possible and to view the use of children's home language as a 'bridge' to English language

acquisition. The crucial role of pre-school provision in easing the transition from home to school for children learning English as a Second language (referred to as 'E2L' here) is emphasised in the Swann Report:

> 'For the child from a home where English is not the first language, it is clear that nursery provision can be a particularly valuable stage of the overall educational experience and can we believe serve to ease the sometimes traumatic transition between the home and school.' (1986: 393)

There is recognition here of the difficulties facing many children as they enter formal schooling. However, the issue of mother tongue provision, which is viewed as crucial for young children during their early days at school, is believed by Swann to 'delay rather than overcome the trauma for these pupils entering an English speaking environment.' (1986: 407) A 'bilingual resource', however, is recommended to 'help with the transitional needs of a non-English speaking child starting school.' ... such a resource would offer 'psychological and social support for the child, as well as being able to explain simple educational concepts in a child's mother tongue, if the need arises.' (1986: 407) The Swann report also recommended most significantly that mother tongue teaching was 'best achieved within the ethnic minority communities' rather than in mainstream schools.

The introduction of the National Curriculum in the late 1980s following the Education Reform Act in 1988 underlined the official view of ensuring access to the curriculum and entitlement to English. The Cox report (1989) states:

> 'Our initial reaction to our brief in respect of bilingual pupils was that all pupils must have access to the same attainment targets and programmes of study.' (1989, 10.6)

The transitional role of mother tongue support was emphasised in Cox:

> 'where bilingual pupils need extra help, this should be given in the classroom as part of normal lessons and that there may be a need for bilingual teaching support ... until such time as they are competent in English.' (1989, 10.10)

In response to the publication of the National Curriculum, the Early Years Curriculum Group led the debate about an appropriate curriculum for the early years. This influential group expounded the ten principles underlying a curriculum for education in the early years and

set out the implications of the National Curriculum in the early years. These are based on the well-established traditions of the British early childhood curriculum and include: 'whichever approach is chosen, teachers must necessarily take account of children's previous experiences, current interests and developmental needs.' (1989: 4) There is no explicit mention of bilingual children, but, as in the National Curriculum documentation, their needs are viewed as implicitly accounted for in an 'inclusive' curriculum for all children.

The Rumbold report (1990) considered the quality of the educational experience for 3 and 4 year olds 'with particular reference to ... having regard to the requirements of the National Curriculum.' (1990:1) This report made reference to minority ethnic children as a recent development of 'significance across the various forms of provision for the under fives. Increasing recognition has been given, and value attached, to difference in children's cultural backgrounds.' (1990: 6) It goes on to describe the characteristics of young children and recognises that 'there will be considerable variations between individuals. Any attempt by educators to bring a common structure to their experience should take account of these variations, and should be designed to fulfil children's individual needs.' (1990:7) The report also recommends that 'educators should respond to the diversity of society' (1990:7) but this is not followed through by stating implications for practice and there is no reference to bilingual children's specific needs.

Generalised references to promoting equality of opportunity in the early years can be found in the Startright report (1994) where a requirement for good practice is identified as a 'commitment to equal opportunities and social justice for all' (1994:55) and in 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning on entering compulsory education' (1996) where providers are asked to 'plan educational activities which ensure equality of opportunity, build on children's previous experience and achievement, and respond to individual needs.' (SCAA: 1996) The individual needs of young bilingual children were excluded from the educational agenda during the 1990s while educators were engaged in delivering access to all children through a unified curriculum.

3.7   Discussion

The pattern of responses to the linguistic and cultural 'difference' that linguistic minority children represent over the period which has been reviewed in this chapter draws attention to some striking points which help to account for the parameters which are accepted for their educational provision.

The child-centred philosophy, which emphasises the experience of the individual child, did not account for the extremes of linguistic and cultural 'difference' which young children learning EAL bring as their individuality and their experience to the classroom. The official literature has either problematised this experience in terms of 'disadvantage' which has required compensatory measures, or avoided acknowledging it by claiming that existing practice was adequate to enable young children to learn without intervention. Both views are assimilationist, and an ambivalence between them is reflected in the Plowden Report. Given the numbers of bilingual children and the issues faced by their teachers, the absence of a more extensive early years literature focussed on the learning needs of bilingual children is surprising.

The absence of guidance for teachers is particularly marked in the 1990s when the notion of 'inclusion', which complemented the existing belief that early years education was 'child-centred', helped to mask the fact that neither of these central ideas took sufficient account of bilingual children. In particular, the Swann Report addressed the context for learning English language rather than the forms of intervention and strategies that teachers would require in making effective provision for bilingual children in the mainstream. With the exception of the BUF project, there has been little attention given to this issue since.

Several initiatives have aimed to address issues of the language development of young bilingual children, but their implications have not been taken forward through national policy.

1. The MOTET project adopted an approach and brought results which warranted wider application, particularly in view of the EEC directive on the education of children of migrant workers. The issue of supporting children's mother tongue development was left to the recommendations in the Swann Report, which adopted a much weaker form of recognition of this aspect of 'difference'. 14 years later, it is the Swann Report's view of support for the mother tongue which has influenced the school experience of Nazma.

2. The need to develop teaching materials which would focus on the English language learning needs of bilingual children was addressed through the Scope materials. While the approach used was not suitable once the shift to mainstream provision for children learning EAL had taken place, there has been no further attempt to put together comprehensive materials and strategies to support young children's learning of EAL in a published form. Thus teachers of young bilingual children have little to guide them other than their common sense and experience.

3. While the BUF project was limited to video material and was not supported by an explicit theoretical position or by published written materials, it has been the only work which has provided teachers with suggested classroom strategies for use with bilingual children. It has not been replaced with a similar project focussed on good practice for Early Years educators working with bilingual pupils in the mainstream context. The focus which the BUF project brought to bear on language learning for bilingual children is one which children, some ten years later, would be fortunate to experience.

The failure to follow through these initiatives has meant that the essentially assimilationist view which did not constructively account for 'difference' remained as the institutional context for learning. Neither official reports nor the prevailing early years literature has focussed on the linguistic and cultural experience of bilingual children in a way which responds to their 'different' learning situation constructively. It is necessary to examine the research literature to gain further insight into the way this experience relates to learning in the classroom.

It is self-evident that the bilingual child's response to the requirement to 'fit into' the nursery setting involves the interplay of individual factors inherent in the child with the ways in which early formal schooling is constructed and delivered in the setting. One way in which this context can be viewed is in terms of the choices made by the nursery staff about how they relate to the children, how they structure each session, what children learn, what resources they provide and so on. However, these choices are partly pre-determined by educational tradition (passed on, for example, through training), by social and cultural values (the importance of children learning to be independent, for example) and by social policy (the decision, for example, to provide nursery places for all children in England by the age of 4). In this sense the decisions taken by nursery staff are only interpretations of an existing and given context which has social approval.

Just as the nursery staff as individuals have absorbed what is required for an approved nursery setting so that they can successfully implement it, so the children in the nursery also come to understand what is acceptable. For bilingual children with limited English in particular, processes on the intermental plane (Vygotsky: 1978) are more than an extension of those established in their prior experience in the home, they involve a whole new information set to become internalised not merely as what is expected by their particular nursery but what is passed on through the setting of wider social, cultural and historical forces which have determined the construction and delivery of early schooling.

The importance of this point is that it relates the policies and practices reflected in the foregoing account of official documents directly to the provision made for bilingual children and their personal experience of learning in their setting. For example, the Swann Report's (1985) approval of a 'bilingual resource' was influential in schools' acceptance of bilingual classroom assistants. Subsequent documents acknowledge that they can have a valuable role and thus we may say that the use of bilingual classroom assistants is a tacit policy. It also has economic force since many such posts were funded through the additional Section 11, and latterly, Ethnic Minority Achievement government grant. The data for my study shows clearly how this economic and tacit policy choice had an important bearing on the early experience of nursery for the bilingual children studied. Equally, the laissez-faire attitude of policy makers to the use of bilingual classroom assistants and the lack of recognition that their bilingualism brought both unique opportunities and specific training needs (Bourne 2001) may be said to have influenced the nursery education experienced by the bilingual children in my study. The point being made here is not about whether the examples of policy choices are right or wrong but rather that the bilingual children's experience in the nursery setting and their understanding of what is significant (which is reflected in their language development) is as much influenced by the social, cultural and historical processes conveyed through official documents as it is by the nursery setting itself.

3.8   Summary

In Chapter 2 a case study of two children in the nursery was set in the context of policy and practice for education in the Early Years. The 'child-centred' tradition was acknowledged as well as national goals for learning as defined through the 'Desirable Outcomes' for learning. In this chapter I have explored this national context more fully. I have traced the response to 'difference' through official reports and initiatives since the time when the numbers of children learning English as an additional language became a significant educational issue. I have shown that in the 1970s and 1980s there were projects which responded to 'difference' and which attempted to address the needs of bilingual children in specific ways: through the development of teaching materials (the SCOPE Project) through a bilingual approach to curriculum delivery (the MOTET Project), and through training material to influence practice in mainstream provision (the BUF Project). I have argued that such projects have not been fully exploited at a national level and that the essentially assimilationist views of several major educational reports have contributed to national policies which have failed to recognise the different language and learning needs of children like Nazma in my case study. The lack of specific guidance for educators reflects policies which have defined 'inclusive' parameters based on an assumed 'norm' which does not

include the starting points for children like Nazma. This context is a central factor in accounting for the provision that is made for bilingual children at an early stage in their learning of English.

However this context does not address the learning experiences of such children and I now ask: how have studies accounted for this process and how do they inform the central questions in my study? How does English language learning for bilingual children develop in the early years of schooling? What does the literature tell us about bilingual children taking control of their own learning? What do studies tell us about the discontinuities that may form part of the learning experience of children like Nazma? In Chapter 4 I take up these questions through a review of the literature on second language learning and socialisation for young bilingual children within a sociocultural perspective.

Chapter 4

Language learning from home to school:

Studies of young bilingual children

4.0 Introduction

Although the education system acknowledges the presence of bilingual children who are learning English as an additional language, it is not oriented to their particular learning needs. Educators are expected to make accommodations for children who are at an early stage in their learning of English, but it is the children themselves who are faced with the effects of being unable to communicate in a context, which they do not yet understand and in which they are not at ease. My interest was in how they 'make their way' as they come to terms with the reality of learning a new language in a new social and cultural setting. This broad focus suggests a number of theoretical perspectives.

1. 'Making their way' indicates a degree of individual responsibility and control for actions. Thus one informing perspective is the concept of 'agency'.
2. I draw on Vygostky's view of mental functioning, which emphasises the importance of social interaction and language within a socio-cultural perspective.
3. I link and extend this view of the importance of social relations with the perspectives of Bakhtin and Halliday on the relationship of language and social context.
4. I highlight the notion of situated participation and some key constructs used in considering the support given to children within what Vygotsky called the 'zone of proximal development'.
5. The way language relates to the process of socialisation is reflected through studies, which adopt a language socialisation perspective.
6. I discuss the contribution made by second language acquisition studies and particularly the current understanding of bilingual children's 'silent period' in their second language development.

7. I consider studies, which explore the relationship of bilingual children's home background to early schooling.

These multiple perspectives are closely inter-related; indeed they are seen as mutually implicit and interdependent. Agency is related to Vygotsky's 'socio-historical' view of learning which is itself seen to incorporate and depend on language use that is realised in social context. The importance of social context is explored through accounts of language offered by Bakhtin and Halliday and through the 'situated' nature of children's participation and the role of adults in supporting learning. The process of second/additional language learning is viewed as being dependent on social and cultural setting and thus studies which adopt a language socialisation approach are informative. Equally, cultural, social and linguistic continuities between home and school are closely related to language socialisation and influence the language learning process. Each perspective has something to say about the way young bilingual children 'make their way' in their first year of formal schooling.

I use these perspectives as a framework for addressing the questions posed. However, the studies which contribute to the broad perspectives which make up this framework are not intended to be seen in a linear way. Rather they are parts of a multidimensional picture of the subjects' learning situation, each contributing to, but not fully answering, the questions posed in this study.

The term 'socio-cultural', which is used throughout this chapter, combines several connotations. Owing much to the 'social-historical' (alternatively referred to as the 'cultural-historical') school of the Russian psychologist Vygotsky, it refers to the way human development is linked to social activity and mediated by culture. Since culture draws on past experience, it also conveys an historical dimension.

> 'The central thesis of the Russian cultural-historical school is that the structure and development of human psychological processes emerge through culturally mediated, historically developing, practical activities. Each term in this formulation is tightly interconnected with, and in some sense implies, the others.' (Cole, 1996: 108)

Cultural mediation is effected through 'artifacts' (or in Vygotsky's terms, 'tools'), which include language, as a result of the way 'humans modified material objects as a means of regulating their interactions with the world...' (1996: 108).

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'Culture, according to this perspective, can be understood as the entire pool of artifacts accumulated by the social group in the course of its historical experience. In the aggregate, the accumulated artifacts of a group – culture – is then seen as the species-specific *medium* of human development. It is "history in the present.' (1996: 110).

Furthermore, Cole points out that 'the historical accumulation of artifacts and their infusion in activity implicate *social origins* of human thought processes' (1996: 110). Thus the term 'socio-cultural' has cognitive, social, cultural and historical dimensions.

The centrality of this view of 'culture' in human development is important. Rather than accounting for difference between groups it is 'the universal, species-specific characteristic of *homo sapiens*' (Cole, 1998: 11). Psychologists' accounts of human development have broadly related to the opposition between heredity and environment. As outlined by Cole (1998), three main theoretical positions have been taken to account for human development. The first places the primary emphasis on biological maturation. For example, Gesell claimed: 'Neither physical nor cultural environment contains any architechtonic arrangements like the mechanisms of growth. Culture accumulates; it does not grow. The glove goes on the hand; the hand determines the glove' (Gesell, 1945: 358). The second theoretical position emphasises the dominant role of the environment in shaping development. In an extreme form, this is illustrated by Skinner's statement: 'Operant conditioning shapes behaviour as a sculptor shapes a lump of clay' (Skinner,1953: 91). A third position claims that both biological maturation and environmental learning have equal importance, interacting together to account for development. This position is adopted by Piaget who 'argued forcefully for the equal weight of endogenous and exogenous factors in development' (Cole, 1998: 14). Cole, however, argues a fourth position in which biological maturation and environmental learning do not interact directly but rather through the medium of culture (defined as 'historically specific features of environment' 1998:12). Thus culture is 'a separable constituent of development' (1998: 14). Together with Vygotsky's theory about the primacy of social relations, it is this position, which views culture as having a central mediating role in development, that informs the 'socio-cultural' perspective adopted throughout this chapter.

4.1 Agency

I begin by establishing 'agency' as a construct and by exploring the socio-cultural dimension of the framework. This offers a broad theoretical perspective within which it will be possible to identify studies, which examine aspects of acculturation, socialisation and language acquisition. Throughout this literature review, the socio-cultural perspective is implicit in the discussion of language just as the language perspective is implicit in the discussion of socio-cultural theory.

The concept of agency arises from understandings in philosophy, sociology and, to a lesser extent, psychology about the capacity of human beings to determine their actions and the extent to which these are constrained by laws of nature and society beyond the control of the individual. In philosophy, for example, the position set out by Hume in 'An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding' may be contrasted with Locke's 'An Essay Concerning Human Understanding'. Hume's position with respect to both the natural world and to conscious existence was highly deterministic, a matter of cause and effect.

> 'It is universally allowed that matter, in all its operations, is actuated by a necessary force, and that every natural effect is so precisely determined by the energy of its cause that no other effect, in such particular circumstances, could possibly have resulted from it.......The philosopher, if he be consistent, must apply the same reasoning to the actions and volitions of intelligent agents. ...Thus it appears, not only that the conjunction between motives and voluntary actions is as regular and uniform as that between the cause and effect in any part of nature but also that this regular conjunction has been universally acknowledged among mankind, and has never been the subject of dispute, either in philosophy or common life.' (Hume 1955: 161 and 167-168)

Locke, on the other hand, emphasised individual identity. 'This being premised to find wherein *personal Identity* consists, we must consider what *Person* stands for, which, I think, is a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and consider it self as it self....' (Locke: Essay II xxvii, 335)

Taylor (1989) links the Western tradition of individualism to Locke: 'the human agent was no longer to be understood as an element in a larger, meaningful order. His paradigm purposes are to be discovered within. He is on his own....this yields a picture of the

sovereign individual, who is 'by nature' not bound to any authority. The condition of being under authority is something which has to be created' (Taylor, 1989: 193-194)

Similarly, in the social sciences one can contrast Karl Marx's view of the constraining influence of social structures on human action with Max Weber's emphasis on the concept of 'Verstehen' or understanding from the agent's point of view'. According to Gouldner,

> 'Scientific Marxism came to center on a concept of social structure which holds that persons are constrained, often against their will, to act in patterned ways. ......Marx's structural perspective sees bourgeoisie and proletariat alike as doing what they must rather than what they will; men are under constraint to pursue their typically different courses of action by reason of the different positions they occupy within the social structure. For Marx and Engels, structure centers on constraint and constraint is understood as an impersonal property of a spacelike locus, i.e., a social 'position' (Gouldner, 1980: 89).

While Weber did not ignore the influence of structure, his focus in understanding the meaning of action is on how the participants themselves understand action. This involves reconstructing the situational choices and constraints facing them at the time. He held a less unified and deterministic view of human action than Marx offering a more differentiated account of interests and identities. By allowing for subjective understanding in social explanation, Weber also allowed for the concept of agency. Whereas the concept of structure suggests an explanation of action outside the individual, the concept of agency suggests that those involved are able to influence what takes place.

The concept of agency has received less attention in psychology. 'Agency and the associated issues of voluntary and involuntary action have been the focus of extended debate in philosophy ...but in psychology they rarely emerge in any form other than implicit assumptions' (Wertsch et al., 1993: 336). Nevertheless similar contrasting examples to those used above from philosophy and sociology may illustrate different standpoints in psychology, which have a central bearing on the issue of volition and human agency. In the mid-twentieth century behaviourism was a prevailing theory in psychology. As we have seen in Cole's discussion of theoretical positions in relation to heredity and environment above, Skinner stressed the importance of environment to the extent that his view 'dispossesses autonomous man and turns the control he has been said to have over to the environment' (Skinner, 1973: 200). As Graham (1986) suggests, Skinner 'depicts man as a kind of

mechanical puppet operated by environmental strings. He is thus denied personal agency or responsibility for his actions...' (1986: 86).

In contrast later cognitive theory took account of the role of the mind, adding the concept of human agency. Bandura (1989), for example, claims,

> 'Social cognitive theory subscribes to a model of emergent interactive agency. Persons are neither autonomous agents nor simply mechanical conveyors of animating environmental influences. Rather, they make causal contribution to their own motivation and action...' (1989: 1175).

Bandura argues that individuals act as agents over both their environments and themselves. In terms of bilingual children in the nursery, we may regard their capacity to influence their environment as limited, but their capacity to operate agency over themselves is significant.

> 'In acting as agents over their own environments, people draw on their knowledge and cognitive and behavioural skills to produce desired results. In acting as agents over themselves, people monitor their actions and enlist cognitive guides and self-incentives to produce desired personal changes' (1989: 1181).

The notion of human agency, and the inclusion of the study of the role that the mind plays in determining human action, introduces the possibility of self-determination.

> 'The capacity to exercise control over one's own thought processes, motivation and action is a distinctly human characteristic. Because judgement and actions are partly self-determined, people can effect change in themselves and their situations through their own efforts' (Bandura, 1989: 1175).

Wertsch, Tulviste and Hagstrom (1993) draw on a position argued by Taylor (1989) that the notion of the 'sovereign individual' used in social science is allied with a widely assumed and modern interpretation of unfettered freedom which has resulted in accounts of human mental functioning in which 'agency is viewed as being analytically and developmentally prior to socio-cultural life' (338). They offer an alternative view of human agency based on Vygotsky's claim that 'the social dimension of consciousness is primary in time and fact. The individual dimension of consciousness is derivative and secondary' (Vygotsky, 1979: 30). From this initial position they develop a socio-cultural approach to agency, which emphasises the 'inter-mental plane' (rather than the intra-mental plane') (Wertsch *et al*,

1993: 337), and therefore the 'social dimension'. This leads them to take account of the fact that action by individuals entails the use of 'mediational means'. Indeed they use the term 'mediated agency' to indicate that the individual always operates with mediational means and that this is implicit in the meaning of agency in their terms. One of these mediational means is language which they view as necessarily socio-culturally situated following Bakhtin's ideas about the dialogic nature of language, speech genres, and the way in which individuals employ the 'voices' of others ('ventriloquate') (Wertsch et al, 1993: 345).

This account of agency does not deny individual responsibility for action but at the same time it does not accept the assumption that the individual operates in a kind of personal vacuum. By giving the 'social dimension of consciousness' priority and emphasising the importance of mediational means, it highlights the way 'in which mental processes are situated in cultural, historical and institutional contexts' (Wertsch et al, 1993: 352). This socio-cultural perspective will be taken up in the next section of this chapter. Suffice it to say here that the perspective offered by Wertsch et al is particularly useful for this study since it provides an account of human agency which is inseparable from both socio-cultural and language 'situatedness'.

The purpose of this brief outline has been to establish the centrality of agency as a construct in accounts of behaviour and action in several disciplines. In order to provide definition the construct of agency has been contrasted with perspectives, which provide a deterministic interpretation of the human condition. There are, of course, constraints and opportunities for self-determination in most situations. This is also the case for children entering formal education in nursery settings. In seeking theoretical perspectives which could inform my study of young bilingual children I needed a perspective which would support a view of the individual child's strategic choices within their given context. The concept of agency in this respect has been helpful. It offers a way of seeing the child as adopting strategies of her own volition in highly constrained circumstances.

This has particular significance in an ethnographic study of bilingual children who are at the earliest stage of learning English. Far more than other children, their initial situation may be seen as highly deterministic. Considered in terms of the stark reality they face, these constraints include having to learn a language which most other children and adults speak, having to understand how to interact with their peers in an acceptable way, having to discover the cultural habits that are used (using a knife and fork, for example) and the expectations of how to behave, and having to find out what you are supposed to do with equipment, what routines have to be followed and what counts as learning behaviour. All

this has to be tackled alone and in the absence of those who have until this time offered love, support and control in a known and comfortable environment. It would seem that there is little space in such a highly constrained situation for the bilingual child to be the agent of her own action. Yet my data suggested that she is.

This recognition is important as a counterbalance to the various factors which pre-determine how the child must act. In addition, the account of agency offered by Wertsch *et al* provides a theoretical position which links the behaviour and action of the individual child to social and cultural influences and to socially situated language use. Thus a socio-cultural approach to agency can show how the learning context for the bilingual child acts not merely as a determinant of behaviour and development but also as the means by which individual expression can take place. Despite the fact that the concept of agency has been so little used in education studies, it has provided me with a key construct for seeing the child as an individual (in the sense of Weber's 'Verstehen') who both produces and is produced by the context in which she finds herself.

4.2   A socio-cultural perspective

We have seen in Wertsch *et al* that agency can be seen to be consistent with a socio-cultural perspective. The questions asked in this study have led to viewing social and cultural aspects of bilingual children's learning situation as integral to an account of their language and learning development. Learning takes place in a new social environment with different cultural rules and expectations, which can be taken into account through a socio-cultural perspective. Equally it can take account of the individual child's own social and cultural heritage and experience from the home. This view is consistent with Vygotsky's claim 'that in order to understand the individual it is necessary to understand the social relations in which the individual exists' (Wertsch, 1991: 25-26). Indeed the ideas of Vygotsky are central to a socio-cultural view of learning. As we have seen from the discussion of agency, Vygotsky claimed that 'the social dimension of consciousness' comes before 'the individual dimension of consciousness' (Vygotsky, 1979: 30). A significant formulation of his view about the social origins of individual mental functioning is in his 'general genetic law of cultural development' (genetic here conveys the sense of 'developmental').

> 'Any function in the child's cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. This is equally true with regard to voluntary

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attention, logical memory, the formation of concepts, and the development of volition....[I]t goes without saying that internalisation transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions. Social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships' (Vygotsky, 1978: 163).

Thus mental processes in the individual on the intramental plane are viewed as being derived from social processes on the intermental plane. However, intramental processes are not simply a mirror reflection of the social engagement involved in shaping intermental processes. Social experience is internalised and this process of 'making it one's own' changes it. Nevertheless 'there is a close connection, grounded in genetic transitions, between the specific structures and processes of intermental and intramental functioning...' (Wertsch, 1991: 27).

This general view of the primary significance of social experience for children's development and learning has particular application to children entering a second language medium schooling setting, which they have yet to learn. In terms of their development in their home environment using their first language Vygotsky's account of the relationship between intermental and intramental functioning has the same relevance as for all children whatever their mother tongue may be. However, since children are learning a second/additional language, since they are dispossessed of much of this learning in the new context of the nursery setting, the importance of social processes on the intermental plane may be thought of as having an even more intense and concentrated significance. How these social processes are actually developed will therefore be of crucial importance. It is possible to see, for example, how a child may use play opportunities in the home as part of the process of internalising the social rules that are being learned in the nursery. (see Chapter 5, Section 5.11)

An important aspect of Vygotsky's view of children's development which has particular relevance for adult-child interaction is his notion of the 'zone of proximal development'. He distinguished between 'the *actual* developmental level as determined by independent problem solving' and *potential* development 'as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). Thus the zone is the distance between actual and potential development. Vygotsky argued that the latter was just as important as the former and that teaching should be more closely related to potential development than to actual development. Through interaction, adults (or 'more capable peers') are able to work just beyond the actual current capability of the child and so

enhance learning. 'What the child can do in co-operation today he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it; it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions.' (Vygotsky, 1962: 104) The kind of collaboration, which Vygotsky envisages involves a form of 'scaffolding', provides the child with enough support to enable the child to use a new concept independently. It can be seen, therefore, that the 'zone of proximal development' is an aspect of the social experience, which Vygotsky regarded as central to his primary concern with the intramental and intermental planes of mental functioning. 'Our investigation demonstrated the social and cultural nature of the development of the higher functions during these periods, i.e., its dependence on co-operation with adults and on instruction' (1962: 105).

In Chapter 6 of *Thought and Language* (1962) Vygotsky discussed teacher-child intermental functioning in the setting of formal schooling. The social origins of intramental functioning thus relate not only to the intermental plane as mediated through language but also to the setting in which language is used for the development of concepts. In short, the ways in which language mediates intermental functioning are socio-culturally situated.

Vygotsky related the intermental plane to the role of tools ('technical tools') and signs 'psychological tools') which mediate human action. Examples of psychological tools include: '[L]anguage; various systems of counting; mnemonic techniques; algebraic symbol systems; works of art; writing; schemes, diagrams, maps and mechanical drawings; all sorts of conventional signs; and so on.' (Vygotsky, 1981: 137). His main interest was in language and the way it relates to thought. In particular, he examined the relationship between social speech and egocentric speech and inner speech. He claimed that the structure and function of the latter speech forms differ from those of social speech in terms of both their syntactic and semantic properties. For example, in egocentric and inner speech the use of abbreviation creates a syntax, which could not be in social communication. Vygotsky also argues that in inner speech there is a 'preponderance of the *sense* of a word over its *meaning*' (Vygotsky. 1962: 146.) Whereas 'meaning' is relatively stable and precise, 'sense' is dynamic and fluid because a word acquires sense from the context in which it is used. Equally, a 'semantic peculiarity of inner speech is the way in which senses of words combine and unite.' (1981: 147) This is like the way a word used time and again in a work of literature builds up associations of sense until it comes to stand for far more than any one individual meaning. 'A single word is so saturated with sense that many words would be required to explain it in external speech' (1981: 148). However, although Vygotsky clearly distinguishes these and other characteristics of egocentric and of

inner speech he finds that social or external speech 'contains, potentially at least the traits typical of inner speech' (1981: 148). This, he claims, confirms his hypothesis 'that inner speech originates through the differentiation of egocentric speech from the child's primary social speech' (1981: 148).

Thus it is possible to see the link, which Vygotsky makes between language as a mediational tool and intermental and intramental processes. Although this establishes a theoretical position which foregrounds the importance of language in mental development, and although Vygotsky indicates that language is socio-culturally situated, he does not account for the way language influences children's absorption of their social, cultural and historical context. For this, we can turn to the complementary ideas of Bakhtin.

4.3   A socio-culturally situated view of language

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism (1981) focused on the idea that culture and language are situated in a particular time and place and are therefore inherently responsive involving individuals reacting to what has gone before and in expectation of what is to follow. While Vygotsky's ideas link mental processes to social experience with language as a key mediating means, Bakhtin's view of the essentially dialogic nature of social language extends the idea of interdependence from a language perspective. For Bakhtin, social language implied 'a discourse peculiar to a specific stratum of society (professional, age group, etc.) within a given social system at a given time' (Holquist & Emerson, 1981: 430). Thus social language is socio-culturally situated. In producing an utterance a speaker necessarily invokes a social language, 'and this social language shapes what the individual voice can say' (Wertsch, 1991: 59). What an individual says is unique but it is constructed from social languages and this process involves a type of dialogicality which Bakhtin called 'ventriloquation'.

> 'The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation....it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's concrete contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own' (Bakhtin, 1981: 293-294).

Bakhtin envisages a process whereby one voice speaks through another voice or voice type in a social language (Wertsch, 1991). This process is an aspect of language learning and

language use, which both transmits social and cultural meanings and also enables individuals to convey personal meaning and intention that relates to their specific context. Wertsch *et al* comment: 'From the perspective of how children come to be socialised such that they can function successfully in particular socio-cultural settings, then, the issue is one of learning how to ventriloquate through new social languages' (Wertsch *et al*, 1993: 345). Although Bakhtin had in mind speakers who share the same national or regional language, the idea of 'ventriloquation' may also be thought of as applying in an extreme form to children who are learning English as an additional language. It is what they have to do.

An extension of Bakhtin's notion of 'social language' is that of 'speech genres'. Whereas social languages reflect social position, speech genres 'correspond to typical situations of speech communication, typical themes, and, consequently, also to particular contacts between the meanings of words and actual concrete reality under certain typical circumstances' (Bakhtin, 1986: 87). We might now wish to incorporate the notion of 'appropriacy'. Bakhtin gave some examples of the kind of speech genres he had in mind. These included military commands, greetings, intimate conversations among friends, salon conversations about everyday subjects and so on (Wertsch, 1991). He pointed out that although we use speech genres confidently and skilfully we are not necessarily conscious of using them. However, it is worth noting that although native speakers make natural and unconscious use of them, language learners may need to acquire their use in more conscious ways and, indeed, may have difficulty in developing the kind of flexibility and variation in language use which is displayed by native speakers of a language.

Bakhtin's theory of the dialogic nature of language is helpful in several ways. It offers a theory of language use, which is socio-culturally situated and allows us to see that language learning and language use draws on pre-existing social and contextual forms which are specific to 'typical situations' and to social position. Social, cultural and historical norms feed into this process. At the same time, these ideas may be linked to Vygotsky's view of mental processes being derived from social ones through language as a key means of mediation. In addition, we may relate Bakhtin's view of language as socio-culturally situated to Halliday's perspective on language in social context.

The basis of human language and communicative activity, according to Halliday (1985), is function and semantics – hence the term associated with this approach is 'systemic-functional linguistics'. A key concept used by Halliday (building on Malinowsky and Firth) is 'context of situation' which may be described as 'a systematic relationship between the social environment on the one hand, and the functional organisation of language on the

other' (Halliday, 1985: 11). Halliday's focus on the 'context of situation' for which the notion of 'register' is a central analytical tool is not dissimilar to Bakhtin's 'typical situations' and 'speech genres'. Like Bakhtin, Halliday is interested primarily in social context emphasising the importance of meaning (semantics) rather than syntax which structural approaches to language focus on. The emphasis on social context means recognition of heterogeneous speech communities (just as Bakhtin recognised heteroglossia) and leads to viewing language as a socio-semiotic system through which people make choices about meanings they construct in naturally-occurring discourse. 'Semiotically speaking all social contexts consist of a construct of potential meanings' (Thompson, 1999: 47).

Human discourse, therefore, may be seen as both shaped by and shaping social context. This view is also consistent with Bakhtin's view of the dialogic nature of language. Discourse also creates the potential for individual choice in making meanings through interpersonal exchanges in social contexts. An important aspect of Halliday's approach to language is that it provides a theory, which enables the part which individuals play in shaping discourse to be highlighted. Thompson (1999) draws attention to the link between Hallidays's account of language as social-semiotic and Hymes' notion of 'communicative competence'. The latter 'accounts for individuals knowing when to speak, when not to, what to talk about, and with whom, when, where and in what manner to interact' (Thompson, 1999: 47). Thompson claims that an acceptance of both Halliday's and Hymes' descriptions of language

> 'allows for the possibility that each individual can play an instrumental role in constructing a social context, construing meaning from that (and every other) social context, and contributing actively to the language choice or register and the behaviour of other participants in the encounter. Thus individual discourse participants are potentially empowered in social contexts, with discourse rights' (Thompson, 1999: 47).

This notion of discourse rights has important implications for children learning English as an additional language. The issue for these children is not so much a question of learning a new language as a system but rather how to 'play an instrumental role in constructing their social context' in their interactions with English speakers. It is this focus on language which is the central orientation to language in my study. The issues raised so far in this literature review are key to establishing a theoretical position for examining ways in which learners begin to develop an understanding of how English can be used in the social context of the nursery. This involves learning through language what is culturally and socially appropriate and what counts as 'learning'. From the perspective of educators, we need to understand

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how cognitive development is linked through the mediation of language to social and cultural context. For bilingual children to have the life chances, which others living in the same society have, they need to be able to exercise the social and discourse rights to which Thompson alludes.

4.4 Participation and views of learning in 'the zone of proximal development'.

4.4.1 Communities of practice

A socially situated view of language which emphasises context and participation has important implications for the learning task faced by children learning English as an additional language in the nursery. In particular, Bakhtin's work allows the task to be seen in terms of constructing a 'voice' which is both consistent with the situated nature of community practices and capable of conveying a 'speaking subject's perspective' (Wertsch, 1991: 51). This has linguistic, social, psychological and cognitive dimensions and may be contrasted with a view of second/additional language learning which sees the task in terms of internalising and using the rules of the language. The process of appropriating the 'voices' of others entails engagement and interaction. Lave and Wenger (1991) offer a way of viewing the situated nature of participation. They explore the notion of 'legitimate peripheral participation' within 'communities of practice'.

> 'A community of practice is a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice.' (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 98)

Thus learning may be seen to take place within the context of a participation framework (for example, a nursery setting), which has its own historically established, and changing, conventions, expectations, relations and practices. The importance of the concept of 'legitimate peripheral participation' is that it captures the differing extents to which participants may be familiar with the community practices. Engagement and learning is related to the position participants occupy in relation to the 'practice'. In some cases this may mean assuming a minimal role. Local practices have further important implications. Firstly, they relate to wider systems of relations in social communities. In the case of nursery practices, we may think of how these relate to the community practices of the dominant social group and to nationally approved conventions of practice. Secondly, and most

importantly for bilingual children, they relate to the way participation (no matter how peripheral it may initially be) involves the construction of a different identity.

'Activities, tasks, functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning. These systems of relations arise out of and are reproduced and developed within social communities, which are in part systems of relations among persons. The person is defined by as well as defines these relations. Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations. To ignore this aspect of learning is to overlook the fact that learning involves the construction of identities.' (1991: 53)

Lave and Wenger's view of social practice, with its emphasis on participation in situated social activity, places human agency in an holistic context.

'Theorising in terms of practice, or praxis, also requires a broad view of human agency emphasising the integration of agent, world, and activity......This view also claims that learning, thinking, and knowing are relations among people in activity in, with, and arising from the socially and culturally structured world. This world is socially constituted; objective forms and systems of activity, on the one hand, and agents' subjective and intersubjective understandings of them, on the other, mutually constitute both the world and its experienced forms.' (1991: 50-51)

We have seen that the notion of 'legitimate peripheral participation' raises the issue of the context of engagement which participants may have, and we have also seen the important link between Vygotsky's emphasis on the primary significance of social experience and his construct of the 'zone of proximal development' which draws attention to the potential role of adults (or 'more capable peers') in education. Commenting on Vygotsky's 'general genetic law of cultural development', Cole (1996) argues:

'This view of social origins requires paying attention to adults' power to arrange children's environments so as to optimise their development according to existing norms. It generates the idea of a 'zone of proximal development' which, affords the proximal relevant environment of experience for development. It is the foundation upon which, in an ideal world, the education of children would be organised.' (Cole, 1996:111)

The constructs of 'scaffolding', 'assisted performance', guided participation', and 'synergy' have been used to explore aspects of the educative role of adults (or peers) working within what Vygotsky termed the 'zone of proximal development'.

4.4.2 Scaffolding

The construct of 'scaffolding' has clear parallels with the 'zone of proximal development' although it was not directly drawn from it. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) used it to refer to the process by which an adult assists a child to carry out a task, which would otherwise be beyond the child's capability. They distinguished between scaffolding and simple assistance in completing a task. Scaffolding involved controlling the task so that the child could concentrate on those elements, which were within his/her capability. They argued that the process led not only to achievement at a higher level but also at an increased pace. Bruner (1983) extended the 'scaffolding' metaphor by applying it to an analysis of interactions between mother and child in an account of the pre-verbal foundations of language acquisition. The adult/parent takes on an informal teaching role to assist the early development of language through the use of familiar patterns of interaction or 'formats'. As the child becomes more capable of responding, the adult's leading role is reduced:

> 'If the "teacher" in such a "system" were to have a motto, it would surely be "where before there was a spectator, let there now be a participant". One sets the game, provides the scaffold to assure that the child's ineptitudes can be rescued by appropriate intervention, and then removes the scaffold part by part as the reciprocal structure can stand on its own' (Bruner, 1983: 60).

The central purpose of scaffolding is to enable the learner to focus upon manageable aspects of the task. As these become familiar, so the process can be extended to related aspects. The adult is able to control the demands of the task so that they are neither too simple nor too complex. Wood's (1998) discussion of scaffolding includes an interesting explanation of the underlying reason for the necessity of scaffolding learning. He argues that uncertainty is central to human ability. In unfamiliar situations, there is a high level of uncertainty and this means that the ability to learn is greatly reduced. Assisting the child by breaking down a complex task into more manageable steps enables uncertainty to be reduced and learning to be increased.

> 'Children, being novices of life in general, are potentially confronted with more uncertainty than the more mature, and, hence, their abilities to select, remember

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and plan are limited in proportion. Without help in organising their attention and activity, children may be overwhelmed by uncertainty.' (Wood, 1998: 165)

To varying degrees this may describe the experience of bilingual children entering nursery and it calls into question whether adequate 'scaffolding' is provided to enable them to overcome their 'uncertainty'.

4.4.3 Assisted performance

A number of studies have extended Vygotsky's influential concept of the 'zone of proximal development'. Tharp and Gallimore (1998) set out four stages of the ZPD. In the first stage learners receive considerable assistance from 'more capable others' (1998: 98). This stage ends 'when the responsibility for tailoring the assistance, tailoring the transfer, and performing the task itself has been effectively handed over to the learner' (1998: 100). In the second stage, therefore, the child is able to carry out the task without assistance although performance is not yet fully developed. At this stage, self-directed speech plays an important part in enabling self-guidance to take place. In stage 3, 'task execution....has been internalised and "automatised". However, for a variety of reasons 'de-automatisation' may takes place, which then requires re-learning so that the process is recursive. This may be seen as stage 4.' Tharp and Gallimore also discuss the adjustment made by adults (or more capable others) in the transition from 'other-assistance to self-assistance' (1998: 104) as a graduated process, which is responsive to the child's performance level. They add that once independence has been acquired 'assistance' becomes 'interference'. They point out that although assisted performance is common between parents and children, it is largely absent in school classrooms. If it is the case that working in the ZPD through the assistance of more capable others has greater significance for bilingual children new to the language and culture of the school setting than for most children, Tharp and Gallimore's conclusions about the absence of this form of support for learning are disturbing:

> 'Even when instructional practices allow for increased use of assisted performance, it will not necessarily appear as a regular feature of a teacher's activity.....Even with the benefits of modern instructional practice, there is still too large a gap between the conditions of home and school. Most parents do not need to be trained to assist performance; most teachers do' (1998: 107).

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4.4.4 Guided participation

Rogoff, Mosier, Mistry and Goncu (1998) acknowledge the strength of Vygotsky's formulation of the relation between individual, social and cultural processes but they are critical of the way in which Vygotsky, and the sociohistorical school which followed him, focuses on an analysis which is characteristic of academic learning. Their interest in different cultural contexts of learning leads them to point out that not all communities place a high value on literacy and academic discourse. By privileging such approaches, they argue that Vygotskian theories of development fail to pay sufficient attention to the local constituency in which children's development takes place which may have other goals and social practices than those associated with literacy. Thus while 'the skills and patterns of social interaction practiced in school may relate closely to those necessary for eventual participation in the economic and political institutions of their society' (1998: 228) for middle-class US children, different goals and practices are of significance in other communities both in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

This incorporation of cultures with developmental goals and means of communication other than those which emphasise literacy and academic forms of discourse leads Rogoff (1990) to a revision of the notion of the zone of proximal development. The concept she uses is that of 'guided participation'. She argues that whereas the zone of proximal development has been related to the context of schooling, the concept of guided participation can capture not only practices in different societies and cultures but also the involvement of middle-class children in routine activities in their communities outside education settings.

The perspective adopted by Rogoff is useful when considering the situation of children entering formal schooling from minority communities with a belief system and practices, which are not necessarily the same as those of the majority community or those assumed by the education system. First, it can take account of practices and experience in the home which may help to highlight the adjustment bilingual children have to make when they enter school. Second, by identifying and comparing different community practices, it enables those of the nursery setting to be seen as one set only. These practices, and those of the education system as a whole which privilege literacy and academic learning, have to be adopted by bilingual children for their future success, but by acknowledging other cultural practices Rogoff's position helps to give value to developmental experience for children from minority cultures which takes place outside the classroom. Third, the notion of guided participation matches well with the forms of communication and the organisation and resourcing framework commonly provided in nursery settings, which is designed to match

children's developmental stage. Finally, it is an approach which brings out the active participation of children.

Rogoff *et al* (1998) define 'guided participation' as follows:

> 'Guided participation stresses tacit forms of communication in the verbal and non-verbal exchanges of daily life and the distal arrangements involved in the regulation of children's activities, material goods, and companions. The notion of guided participation emphasises the active role of children in both observing and participating in the organised societal activity of their caregivers and companions. In this more inclusive approach, the aim is to encompass more of the daily activities in which children participate and develop skill in and understanding of the valued approaches of their cultural community.' (1998: 229)

The emphasis in this approach on the active participation of children leads Rogoff (1990) to adopt a further helpful refinement to theories of development based on principles established by Vygotsky. Rather than viewing what children learn from social interaction as a matter of 'internalising' an external process on the intermental plane to the intramental place in a two-step process, Rogoff suggests that the process is one of 'appropriation'. Because they are already participants, children *appropriate* a changed understanding through their own involvement. The concept of appropriation, rather than of internalisation, is useful when considering bilingual children who come to the nursery with a well established set of understandings based on home experience and cultural practices. What they will need to do in the nursery is to appropriate a new set of understandings through their participation in the practices that apply in the new setting.

4.4.5 Synergy and the role of the mediator

For Rogoff, guided participation assists the child in appropriating changed understandings. However as Gregory (2001) points out, the term 'guided participation' implies 'an *unequal* relationship between participants in that learning is unidirectional from the older or more experienced person to the younger child' (2001: 303). A further point is that the terminology used by Rogoff does not highlight the part played by the more proficient teacher, adult, sibling or peer in engaging the child in the ZPD. In her study of siblings playing and working together, Gregory suggest that the reciprocity involved stimulates the development of both children. She extends the ways in which 'scaffolding' has generally been interpreted in her use of the notion of the 'synergy' which takes place between siblings. '...we refer to the

interaction between the children as a *synergy*, a unique reciprocity whereby siblings act as adjuvants in each other's learning, i.e. older children 'teach' younger siblings and at the same time develop their own learning.' (2001: 309) Indeed, she suggests that it is, in Vygotskian terms, a mediational means for transforming social engagement on an interpersonal plane into knowledge internalised on an intrapersonal plane. Drawing on Cole's (1985) understanding of the process of 'internalisation', she argues that 'synergy is the key mediator through which knowledge...is internalised' (2001: 311).

Gregory's use of the notion of synergy emphasises her interest in the ways in which learning involves processes of coming together both within and between people. She views the process of blending different cultural, linguistic and literacy experiences as a form of syncretism which arises from the synergy produced by the child's engagement with mediators and which ultimately influences the shaping of identity. Thus in describing the literacy experience of Bangaldeshi women she comments:

> 'When Ros explains how her Bengali classes enriched her knowledge about literacy in the English school, she highlights the syncretism of different literacies and different ways of becoming literate in all the women's lives. Reading fairytales, comics and reading schemes in English opens new worlds which blend with and transform the traditional worlds of the Bengali and Qur'anic classes and vice versa. But literacy only symbolises a wider syncretism between languages and identities taking place in the women's lives.' (Gregory and Williams, 2000: 140)

Gregory also points to the importance of understanding the role of the mediator (2000: 11) from a socio-cultural perspective. The mediator provides the means for 'scaffolding' learning (in Bruner's terms), or engages in 'guided participation' which enables appropriation of new understanding (in Rogoff's terms), or contributes to the synergy which assists the syncretism that leads to new knowledge (in Gregory's terms). For Gregory the mediator is not just the teacher but may equally be a sibling, a peer or another adult. The mediator assists the child not only to take on new learning but more particularly to take on a new culture and language alongside the existing one. The role of the mediator is likely to be highly influential in most contexts, but nowhere more so than in the case of a bilingual classroom assistant. For bilingual children entering the nursery the presence of such a 'mediator' of language, culture and learning may be a crucial to how a child is enabled to 'appropriate' all that is expected in the new setting.

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4.5   Language Learning and Socialisation

For young bilingual children learning English as an additional language for schooling, there is a close link between the processes of second language acquisition and early socialisation. Pease-Alvarez and Vasquez (1994) discuss the contributions of a number of researchers interested in the connections between children's language and culture (Ochs, 1988, Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, Heath, 1983) and suggest that this interest has been influenced by

> 'the realization that when young children learn language in their homes and communities they learn more than the grammar, vocabulary, and sociolinguistic rules of a given language. ... Thus, the language that surrounds and involves children plays a critical role in their overall development – it is the means by which children are socialized and culturized as well as the raw data they draw upon for acquiring language' (Pease-Alvarez & Vasquez, 1994: 82).

Although the focus here is on the relationship between language development and socialisation rather than on cognitive processes, this position is consistent with Vygotsky's view of the importance of 'the social dimension of consciousness'. In considering children's second language development, a 'language socialisation' perspective allows us to relate the process of language learning to social interaction and enculturation in early schooling: 'It is evident that acquisition of linguistic knowledge and acquisition of socio-cultural knowledge are interdependent... Children develop concepts of a socio-culturally structured universe through their participation in language activities' (Ochs, 1988: 14).

The dependence of language acquisition on social interaction, and social interaction on the use of appropriate language, is referred to by Tabors (1997) as a 'double bind', which many early second language learners experience for a period of time. In a portrait of one child in her study, Byong-sun, the social and linguistic contraints on his interactions with classmates are discussed in relation to Garnica's (1983) social dominance theory. This theory explores the possibility that some children, whom he terms 'omega children', may be; 'a verbally neglected and (socially) isolated member of the group' (Garnica, 1983: 241).

Tabors explores this further, when referring to Byong-sun.

> 'In order to learn this new language, Byong-sun must be socially accepted by those who speak the language; but to be socially accepted, he must already be able to

speak the new language. In other words, in any language-learning situation in natural circumstances, communicative competence and social competence are inextricably interrelated; the double bind is that each is necessary for the development of the other'
(1997: 35).

Tabors highlights the importance of the social setting of the nursery classroom for second language learning children's language learning experience. Through her description of Byong-sun's experience, she summarises a situation which many young bilingual children find themselves in during their first few months at nursery.

'Automatically, because of their lack of language proficiency, they are extensively ignored by the English-speaking children in the classroom, who treat them as if they are invisible, do not initiate communications with them, and often ignore their attempts at initiation... Second-language-learning children are relegated to the bottom of the social heap right from the start. Because of this situation, second-language-learning children like Byong-sun are left alone much of the time at first. They may spend their time playing alone silently, or humming, singing, or talking to themselves...' (Tabors, 1997:38).

Tabors' observation of Byong-sun being 'left alone' for the first few months at nursery may relate to current knowledge about the developmental stages in learning English as an additional/second language, and particularly to 'the silent period'. A discussion of second language acquisition studies in the following section will consider this aspect of young bilingual children's early learning at nursery.

Hirschler's study (1994) examined the role played by native speakers in interactions with second language learners. She has shown how native speakers may be instructed to assist second language learners in the pre-school context.

'Native speakers have varying skills in engaging second language learners in interactions and should be trained in strategies that have a specific benefit for second language acquisition'
(Hirschler, 1994: 6).

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The specific strategies used by the native speakers included, repetition, restatement and request for clarification. Hirschler's study highlighted the importance of the development of social skills for the enhancement of second language acquisition.

Wong-Fillmore's (1979) longitudinal study of five Spanish speaking children's acquisition of English in a bilingual school investigated the strategies the children used to handle the problem of making social contact with native speakers. One of the children in her study, Nora, was far superior as a language learner to other children in the group.

> 'By the end of 3 months of observations, it became quite clear that there would be enormous differences among the five children in what they would achieve during the study year. In fact, after just 3 months of exposure, one child, Nora, had already learned more – or at least she was producing better-formed and more varied sentences – than two of the others, Juan and Jesus, would be able to manage by the end of the study period. Nora herself was speaking English as well as her friends who came from bilingual homes, and very nearly as well as her English monolingual friends'
> (Wong-Fillmore, 1979:27).

In exploring the individual differences among the five children in her study, Wong-Fillmore found that they related to the way in which 'the cognitive and social factors of language acquisition interact together' (1979:207). The social strategies identified in her study included:

> 'join in a group and act as if you understand what's going on, even if you don't; give the impression – with a few well-chosen words – that you can speak the language; count on your friends for help.' (1979:209)

Wong-Fillmore argued that one of the most critical factors, which accounted for individual differences among the second language learners she studied, was having the social skills to make use of the social strategies. She also emphasised the importance of social contact with speakers of the new language, which the learner required before using the cognitive strategies, which lead to language learning. This point echoes Tabors' concept of a 'double bind' for early stage second language learners.

Wong-Fillmore summarised Nora's success as a language learner as

'the special combination of interests, inclinations, skills, temperament, needs, and motivations that comprised her personality. It seemed that she was inclined to do just those things that promote language acquisition'
(1979:221).

She concluded that Nora was motivated to be like the speakers of English and to be part of the social group that spoke the new language. She tentatively suggested that this may be a matter of 'social confidence' and a willingness to 'be playful and experimental' with language.

There have been very few studies of young children learning English as an additional language in the UK nursery context. However, a significant contribution is made by Thompson's (1999) ethnolinguistic study, 'The Box Hill Nursery Project', which was conducted in a nursery in the Northeast of England and investigated young children's social and language behaviour during their first term in school. The use of social network analysis revealed dense friendship networks (where the children chose to interact) and loose pupil networks (where children came together for classroom activities) and provided insights into bilingual children's enculturation into early schooling.

'The friendship network is based on same ethnic groupings. All are Mirpuri-Panjabi speakers of ethnic Pakistani background. The children select their friends from those who are like themselves rather than from those who are different'
(1999: 151).

She also found, 'The language of interactions within the friendship network is predominantly (but not exclusively) Mirpuri-Panjabi, the language spoken by the children in their home' (1999: 152). Thompson suggests that same language friendships play a key role in the enculturation of new arrivals in nursery and emphasises the importance of language in the formation of ethnic identity in young children. An additional finding of the study revealed that none of the bilingual children were still using Mirpuri-Panjabi, their mother tongue, as their preferred language at school by the end of their first term in nursery.

4.6 A second language learning perspective

Turning specifically to a second language acquisition perspective, a number of studies, mainly from the U.S. and Australia, have drawn attention to the early developmental stages of learning a second language in early years settings. Of particular interest is the earliest

stage of learning English as an additional language, often referred to as the 'silent phase'. Research examining the early stages of development has not been widely acknowledged in the UK (NALDIC, 1998). However, the value of recognising these stages is that they provide a framework against which practitioners can exercise their judgement about individual children's progress, and provide appropriate learning opportunities. In 'Guidelines on Baseline Assessment for Bilingual Children (NALDIC, 1998), the early stages of learning English are set out. The following is a description of the first phase:

'Many bilingual children who are at an early stage in their learning of English go through a 'silent period' when they first enter an unfamiliar early years setting. This can last for up to six months or longer. This is not a 'passive' stage. During this time, children will be watching, actively listening, and exploring their environment to understand new experiences and to develop new meanings.' (NALDIC, 1998)

Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke (2000) have listed some of the features of the silent period:
- 'Refusal to interact in any way or be included in interactions;
- Initially no use of non-verbal behaviours;
- Reluctance to respond with gestures or eye contact;
- Rejection of interaction with other children or staff;
- Reluctance to speak (may also be in first language);
- Difficulties in settling into the nursery or school.'

(Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke, 2000: 49)

Tabors (1997) refers to the silent period more accurately as the 'non-verbal period', as children may continue to interact non-verbally.

'When young children find themselves in a social situation in which those around them speak a different language, there are really only two options. They can continue to speak the language they already know, or they can stop talking altogether'
(Tabors, 1997: 40).

Tabors (1997) describes the non-verbal tactics used by second-language-learning children as 'spectating' when the learners observe and listen to others. She found that in the nursery school they used these non-verbal behaviours to accomplish attention getting, requesting, protesting, or joking. She also identified 'rehearsing' as a behaviour, which does not appear

to be communicative, but produces English. In her study she observed that most rehearsing was done very quietly as the children played near English speakers.

During the 'silent' or 'non-verbal' period, children need time to acclimatise to the new context and to begin to 'tune in' to the sounds of in the setting. They need to know that they are accepted members of the group and they need reassurance and encouragement. Clarke (1992) suggests ways this can be done:

1. 'Continued talking even when children do not respond;
2. Persistent inclusion in small groups with other children;
3. Use of varied questions;
4. Inclusion of other children as the focus in the conversation;
5. Use of the first language;
6. Acceptance of non-verbal responses;
7. Praising of minimal effort;
8. Expectations to respond with repeated words and/or counting;
9. Structuring of programme to encourage child to child interaction;
10. Provide activities which reinforce language practice through role play.'
(Clarke, 1992: 17&18)

In her study of four Vietnamese-speaking 4-year-olds' acquisition of English in a bilingual school in Australia over one year, Clarke (1996) examined the time and pace of acquisition of English and the children's willingness to use English and to be included in interaction. Her study provides important insights into the early stages of learning a second language and contributes to our current knowledge about the 'silent period'.

> 'It supports claims that second language acquisition can proceed during a prolonged silent period. It contributes insights into the potential influence of a pre-school context, including the role of the teacher and peers in interactions in ensuring that young learners remain actively involved in second language acquisition during a silent period'
> (Clarke, 1996: 286).

Clarke demonstrates how the pattern of English language learning is similar for the four children in her study. However, the quality of interaction with the teacher is viewed as central to the successful acquisition of English during early days in school. 'It is crucial that the

teacher can provide a match for each learner based on her knowledge of what the learner needs so that the new language is made accessible for them' (1996:24).

Children who have recently arrived in a nursery setting may not realise initially that the language they use in the home is not understood in their new environment. For a short period of time they may continue to use their first language in the expectation that they will be understood. In her study of second language learning children aged 18 months to 12 years, Saville-Troike (1988) observed that the 3 to 7 year-olds used a communicative strategy termed 'dilingual discourse' during the early days of arriving in a setting where their mother tongue is not used. The children continued to use their mother tongue, even though others could not understand them. Saville-Troike states that this communicative strategy

'was generally effective for achieving desired ends when the children were involved in play, especially when there were objects to be manipulated. When context alone did not suffice for meaning to be inferred, however, the response to an unintelligible verbalization was frequently a blank look.'
(Saville-Troike, 1988: 84-85)

In a further study of 9 bilingual children, aged 3:3 to 8:3, during the silent period, Saville-Troike (1988) identified two different types of learners, termed 'inner-directed' and 'other-directed.' She defined the 'other-directed' learners' approach to language learning as an interpersonal, social task. The 'inner-directed' learners, however, approached language learning as an intrapersonal task.

'They appear to be reflective children, who are ultimately likely to be among the most successful in second language achievement. Rather than being assertive in social communication, inner-directed learners by contrast typically go through a period during which they refrain from initiating interaction with speakers of the new language, and produce little if any overt social verbalization in the second language. The fact that the utterances of inner-directed learners have been found to be relatively complex when they resume communicating in the second language clearly indicates there has been no major gap in the process of their linguistic development.'
(Saville-Troike, 1988: 568)

She found evidence in her study that inner-directed learners appeared to talk to themselves, using private speech during their 'silent period'. They also made use of a variety of

intrapersonal language learning strategies including repetition, recall and practice and rehearsal. These findings are similar to those of Weir (1962) who documented her two-and-a-half-year-old son Anthony's private speech in the form of monologues at bedtime. His language play at a young age is similar to the results of Saville-Troike's study of inner-directed learners and demonstrates the control function of private speech.

In a study of a Japanese child, Takahiro, aged 2:6 – 3:1, Itoh and Hatch (1978) described his first three months at a nursery school in West Los Angeles as his 'Rejection Stage', when he spent most of his time on a tricycle, apart from the English speaking children and adults. They comment:

> 'It was not clear whether Takahiro's seeming avoidance of anyone who spoke English was, in reality, avoidance of English or of the entire nursery school situation.'
> (Itoh and Hatch, 1978:78)

A further study by Hakuta (1978) reported that a young Japanese girl in his study did not begin to speak English at a Kindergarten in the United States for six months.

Finally, Liu (1991) in his study of a period of 'almost silence' for an early stage learner, Bob, proposed the following definition of 'silence':
- 'silence means the absence of speech, rather than total silence;
- silence means the silence in the second language, not in the first language; and
- silence means a salient feature of interaction, but not necessarily silence in all types of interaction to which the learner has access.'
(Liu, 1991: 74)

In all of these studies of children learning a second language in a nursery setting, it is clear that the 'silent period' or 'non-verbal period' is an experience shared by all children entering a new second language learning context. The extent of the silent period in the second language learning of children and the length of the silent period experienced by individual children are the key issues discussed in research studies. However, the perspective taken is predominantly a language acquisition perspective; one in which 'cracking the code' (Tabors and Snow, 1994: 111) is the central focus.

4.7 Home and school learning

There are a number of studies, which have documented the difficulties for children who experience discontinuity between the cultural and linguistic practices in the home and the school (Heath, 1983; Moll, 1992a; Gregory, 1993, Rogoff, 1990; Pease-Alvarez & Vasquez, 1994; Valdez, 1996; Volk, 1997, Woods, Boyle & Hubbard, 1999). In her work on the early socialisation of two communities in the United States, Trackton and Roadville, Heath considers 'how teachers' knowledge of children's ways enabled them to bring these ways into their classrooms' (1983:343) and discusses the mismatch between the way language is used in linguistically and culturally diverse families and the way it is used in schools. She identifies this as the cause of the under achievement of some minority groups in the schooling system. However, Volk (1997) argues that an oversimplification of the continuities and discontinuities in the complex relationships between home and school have led researchers to 'focus on differences and ignore the similarities, and to create stereotypes by ignoring differences between families from the same culture' (1997:49).

In Arizona, Moll's research (Moll, 1992a; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992b) involved studying household and classroom practices in Hispanic communities. He used the term 'funds of knowledge' as 'the essential cultural practices and bodies of knowledge and information that households use to survive, to get ahead, or to thrive.' (1992a: 21) Moll's project involved teachers visiting homes to find out about the communities' 'funds of knowledge', and then planning the development of appropriate teaching programmes, which could effectively draw on this knowledge.

Rogoff's use of the term 'guided participation' has already been discussed at a theoretical level. Her study (1993) of toddlers and their care-givers in Guatemala and the United States found that children from a variety of communities, with different socialisation practices, all appear to have in common opportunities to learn, but variations across communities included differences in the 'goals of development and the nature of involvement of children and adults' (Rogoff, 1993: 249). In her work on the early socialisation of two different communities in the United States, Heath considers 'how teachers' knowledge of children's ways enabled them to bring these ways into their classrooms' (1983: 343).

In their ethnographic study of young bilingual children in a nursery and primary school in the UK Woods *et al* (1999) found that parents had concerns about aspects of their children's present and future education. A tension was expressed about the differences between values and practices in the school and home context. Their concerns included:

- 'Loss of influence and status;
- The influence of a different culture;
- The need to learn English;
- The loss of the home language;
- Maintenance of cultural identity'

(Woods et al, 1999: 190-199)

Woods et al argue for a shift in the power relationship between teachers and parents towards genuine partnership.

> 'However, the system was based on a traditional model of teacher-parent relationships. The insights provided by the parents recorded here reveal the potential that lies in a more far-reaching collaborative approach...'
> (1999: 205).

These research studies have indicated the need for continuity between home and school. However, the response of practitioners to the difficulties which bilingual children may face because of the mismatch between home and school practices is varied. As discussed in Chapter 3, an important aspect of the child-centred approach to early years education is that educators should build on children's home experiences. As Bourne (2001) points out:

> 'If primary pedagogy constructs the teacher as the monitor of learning, language itself must be constructed as transparent and unproblematic since it is only through language that children's understanding of their experiences can be monitored and assessed. For primary teachers to be faced with the fact that they cannot understand some of their children to monitor their learning, is tantamount to admitting that they cannot carry out their fundamental role competently' (2001: 258).

There is a need for nursery staff to extend their understanding of bilingual children's home experiences so that they can build on these in their planning for bilingual children's learning experiences in the nursery.

4.8 Discussion

The literature reviewed in this chapter accounts for language and learning development from a socio-cultural perspective. The term 'socio-cultural' was defined as having cognitive, social, cultural and historical dimensions and 'culture' was seen as having a central mediating role in human development. Taking the highly constrained situation of a beginner bilingual child entering the nursery as a starting point, the construct of agency was viewed as central to accounts of behaviour and action. The interpretation of Wertsch *et al* (1993) enabled agency to be seen as being consistent with a socio-cultural perspective. In this approach, the individual dimension of mental functioning was seen to be secondary to the social dimension, and action entailed the use of mediated means, including language. This perspective provided a theory of human agency which accounted for the situated nature of individual action while at the same time allowing a child's actions and responses to be viewed as strategic.

A socio-cultural perspective was seen as grounded in Vygostky's theory about the nature of mental development. Consistent with the view of agency argued by Wertsch *et al (1993)*, this emphasised intermental processes which are derived from social experience which in turn relates to cultural and historical activity. As viewed by Vygotsky, human activity is mediated by 'tools' (or in Cole's terms 'artifacts'), language being a key means of mediation. This provided a coherent theory for relating language to cognitive development and to social and cultural experience. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism reinforced the idea that language is socio-culturally situated. Language learning was seen to entail taking on the 'voice' of others, a process which Bakhtin called 'ventriloquating'. Halliday's view, as well as Bakhtin's, that language is specific to social context and therefore to the appropriate use of registers, has important implications for children learning EAL since their task is not about learning a language in the abstract but about how to construct a 'voice' which accommodates the context of situation. From this position, it is possible to argue that children both learn from and contribute to their social context and that this gives them 'discourse rights' (Thompson, 1999).

These broad theoretical perspectives provided a basis for reviewing studies which allow the focus to move closer to the context of schooling. The participation of children was considered in relation first to Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of 'legitimate periferal participation' within a 'community of practice' and then to the assistance adults give in learning contexts within the frame of Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development'. Scaffolding, assisted performance, guided participation, and the potential for synergy

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between child and a mediator offered different perspectives on the ways in which 'more capable others' support learning.

Language learning and socialisation were seen to be interdependent but the need to engage in social interaction with peers is a particular difficulty for young developing bilingual children in the nursery. They face the 'double bind' (Tabors, 1997) of needing the language they do not yet know to be able to interact, yet also needing social interaction to be able to learn the language. Wong-Fillmore (1979) found that children differed markedly in their response to the problem of making contact with native speakers. She identified some broad social strategies used by children and suggested that social confidence was important for successful language learning. Thompson's (1999) study of social networks similarly emphasised the importance of social interaction and suggested that same language friendships assist enculturation of new arrivals in the nursery.

Second language acquisition studies have established recognisable early stages for second/additional language development and have drawn attention in particular to what has been called 'the silent period'. Clarke (1996) found that the quality of interaction between teacher and child was particularly important, while Saville-Troike (1988) concluded that 'reflective' rather than 'socially assertive' children are more likely to be successful second/additional language learners over time. While these and others studies have shed light on the early stages of learning English in the nursery setting, they have tended to focus on language acquisition in the given situation without identifying the wider constructed context of schooling or its relationship with the home and community context.

Attention has been given to some aspects of the latter area in studies reviewed in the final section of this chapter. These document the difficulties encountered by children through a discontinuity between home and school experience. These studies lead to the conclusion that if nursery teachers are to build on home experience, an often claimed principle of early years education, their knowledge of 'children's ways' (Heath, 1983) is critical. Finding out about and seeking to utilise the 'funds of knowledge' (Moll, 1992) in communities is one way of doing this. What we learn from studies of home and school is that the power relationship between teachers and parents needs to change in order to increase understanding of home and communities practices and to enable an approach which values partnership with parents to be established.

4.9   Summary

From a review of the literature I have established the key frameworks which form the basis for my study. Firstly, a holistic socio-cultural approach to the language and learning development of bilingual children is considered. This is based on the social, cultural and historical approach to cognition provided by Vygotsky. It incorporates and extends a socio-cultural interpretation of agency in the context of early schooling. Secondly, within the socio-cultural perspective, the constructs of scaffolding, guided participation and synergy are used to explore and extend aspects of the role of adults, peers and siblings working within the 'zone of proximal development'. Thirdly, with the exception of Wong-Fillmore, most studies of bilingual children in the nursery have limited their interest to language acquisition and social interaction. Here I argue that the process of learning English is interwoven with these other aspects of learning and specifically the 'Silent Period' is examined in detail.

In Part Two of this study, I present evidence questioning the ability of these frameworks, as they currently stand, to account for the progress of young children as they become bilingual at home and at school. In Chapter 9 I return to each of the three areas discussed above and argue for a refined and extended theoretical framework in which to situate young children as they become bilingual in school.

PART TWO

EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES

Introduction to Part Two

Part two links the earlier sections of the thesis and presents the study of three bilingual children as they 'make their way' through early schooling. This part begins with a methodology chapter (Chapter 5), which aims to establish the procedures for designing the study and analysing the data. Ethnography as a methodology is presented as the methodological approach and the involvement of a mediator of a culture and language is highlighted. I introduce the method of 'multi-layering' used in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 and illustrated in figure 5:1. Finally in Chapter 5 I present an illustration of the methodological approach adopted for the study in a transcript of Samia's 'school game' enacted with her younger brother at home. This example is used to demonstrate some of the key insights provided by the data into young bilingual children's learning at home and at school.

In chapter 6 I present the outer layer of analysis. I consider the context for Samia, Maria and Nazma as they enter the English educational system and the challenges facing their families and teachers. I set the views of the children's Headteachers, teachers and mothers within the context of current policy and practice in respect of young children for whom English is an additional language in the nursery.

In Chapters 7 and 8 I present an inner layer analysis of how each of the three girls, Samia, Maria and Nazma, make their way through early schooling and respond to their ongoing experiences, both at home and at school. In Chapter 7 Samia and Maria are viewed as successful learners. Their response to nursery is presented in an analysis of transcripts both at school and at home, in terms of 'strategies'. These strategies highlight the girls' ability to develop control over their learning. I contrast the ways in which Nazma responds to the experience of nursery, in Chapter 8. I present the strategies used by Nazma, including the

use of a cultural and linguistic mediator, as she finds her way through the experience of early schooling.

In Chapter 9 I consider what we can learn from the insights into Samia's, Maria's and Nazma's experiences of early schooling and the implications of my study for the education of young bilingual children. I draw on an interview with Mussarat to provide an additional perspective on the learning experience of young bilingual children.

Chapter 10 is a reflection on the insights gained from my research. Here I reflect on my personal and professional learning over the period of my study.

Chapter 5

Methodological Approach

BILINGUAL STAFF

TEACHERS

FAMILY

CHILD

HOME

NURSERY

COMMUNITY

A MULTI-LAYERED APPROACH: A FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY
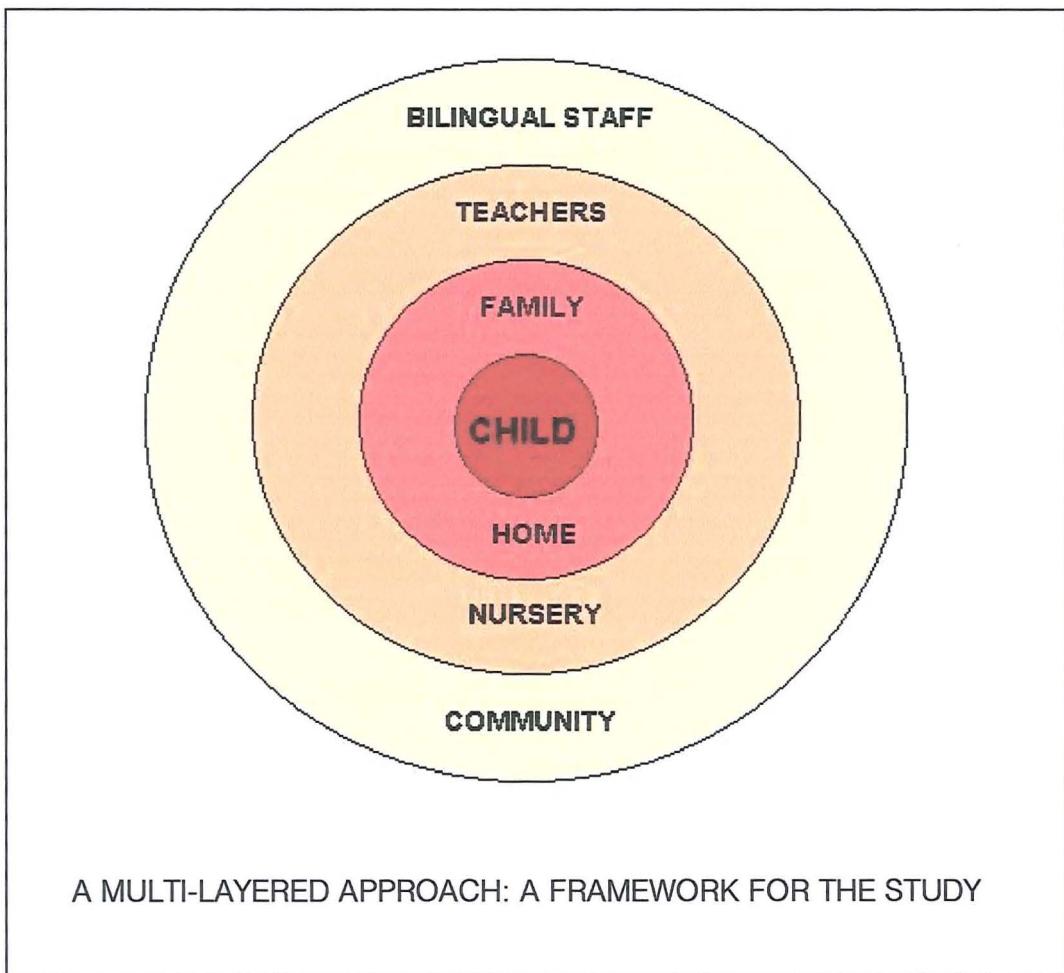
Figure 5:1

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter I present the methodological approach to my study of young bilingual children learning at home and at school. The method of 'multi-layering' is represented in figure 5:1 and presents a framework for my ethnographic study. Ethical issues are not treated separately but permeate the whole chapter, and because of the nature of the research, were of crucial importance. Firstly, I introduce my methodological stance and discuss some of the challenges facing ethnographers. Secondly I present the context for the research. I highlight here the key role of Mussarat, a 'key actor' in the study. I then discuss the importance of the Pre-school Community-based Project in providing access to the children's homes and providing a basis for my developing understanding of young bilingual children's learning. I then introduce the individual children and their nurseries. Thirdly, I set out the procedures for designing and conducting the study and analysing the data. Finally I present an illustration of the methodological approach adopted for the study in order to illustrate some of the key themes of the study.

5.1 Methodological stance

My study began with a broad question: what is the experience of young bilingual children as they start formal schooling? I believed strongly in the importance of collecting and analysing data in ways that would highlight the rich context of the children's experiences and in gaining insights and interpretations from different perspectives. Essentially, I was interested in giving the children and their families a voice throughout the study. I did not want to focus too narrowly on specific features of the children's early learning, but I wished to consider the different factors, which impact on the rich context of the children's experiences. Consequently, I chose a methodological approach based on naturalistic investigations of people, their behaviours and their perspectives. Based on this, a 'naturalistic' method of research was selected. Kamil, Langer and Shahahan (1985) define a 'naturalistic inquiry' as one that

> 'considers how the experience of an individual, group, or society is influenced by and, in turn, influences its surrounding context. It is field based rather than laboratory based; that is, it requires that behaviour be examined in natural settings.'
> (1985: 71)

Kamil, Langer and Shahahan (1985) outline some of the main distinctions between ethnographic and experimental inquiry:

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Table 5.1

Ethnographic inquiry	Experimental inquiry
A Phenomenological base seeks to understand human behavior from the participants' frame of reference	A Positivist base seeks to learn facts and identify causes
B Systematically observes recurring patterns of behavior as people engage in regularly occurring activities	B Sets variables that need to be understood in relation to each other - some (independent) can be manipulated to determine their effects on others (dependent)
C Identifies and describes phenomena from beginning to end across cycles	C Tests relationships
D Develops hypotheses grounded in the event and driven by the conceptual framework of the study	D Preformulates research questions or hypotheses
E Uses field settings that can be further tested with naturalistic experiemnts	E Uses laboratory or field settings
F Confirms findings across a variety of information sources contexts and time	F Computes interrater agreement and statistical probability

(Kamil, Langer & Shahahan, 1985: 72)

Although there have been a number of influential studies in early childhood research, (for example, Tizard and Hughes, 1984 and Wells, 1986), which successfully combined qualitative and quantitative approaches and presented a significant contribution to young children's learning at home and at school, I used an ethnographic approach to my study. Ethnographic studies have made an important contribution to research in the early years (for example, Pollard/Flier, 1996, Connolly, 1998, Thompson, 1999). Mac Naughton, G., Rolfe, S.A. & Siraj-Blatchford (2001) state:

> 'the qualitative studies that are currently being applied in early childhood education are also important in allowing new voices to be heard – these are the voices of teachers, other carers, families and the children themselves.' (2001:194)

In my research I was interested in seeking to understand;

The culture of the educational or learning process:

(1) what is occurring,

(2) how it is occurring,

(3) how the participants perceive the event,

(4) what is required to participate as a member of that educational group (play group, reading group, and so on), and

(5) what social and academic learning takes place.

Aubrey, David, Godfrey and Thompson (2000), writing about early childhood educational research, highlight the aim of ethnography;

> 'to make a person's implicit behaviours explicit, in the belief that these insights will lead to a greater understanding of why people do the things they do.' (2000:111)

They discuss the challenges of researching young children and argue that ethnography is an appropriate research method for studying children's language and learning. In keeping with current thinking about young children, they make the following powerful case for an ethnographic approach:

> 'Instead of regarding young learners as devoid of previous learning and experience, ethnography assumes them to have amassed a wealth of previous learning and experience – in short, a huge amount of knowledge. Ethnography can be of particular interest to teachers because it aims to make explicit that which the children themselves already know implicitly but which they are unable to explain to others or to offer as display knowledge. For this reason, an ethnographic approach is particularly appropriate for studying young children's language and development.'
>
> (Aubrey, David, Godfrey and Thompson, 2000: 115)

5.2 Insider and outsider knowledge: challenges for the ethnographer

Ethnography as a methodology offers opportunities to gain insights into children's learning in a range of contexts. Aubrey, David, Godfrey and Thompson (2001), discussing ways in which ethnography can be empowering for members of the observed community state:

> 'Ethnography aims to help the researchers (the outsiders) and others who are not members of the observed community, to understand the group's values, culture

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and social activities better but also and importantly, ethnography also aims to help the group (*the insiders*) understand themselves and their way of life better.' (2001:112)

However, Griffiths (1998) highlights many of the ethical issues for researchers undertaking research for social justice. These are discussed in relation to undertaking research 'on/for/with' (1998:40) sets of people and the potential for deception which may arise in relation to doing research as an 'insider but outsider'. She states:

'to the extent that the researchers are insiders, they are drawing on the normal ground rules of reciprocity and trust that pertain for social interactions in the community. To the extent that being a researcher means using these ground rules for research purposes, there is a risk of exploitation and betrayal.' (1998:41)

The dilemmas raised here, particularly in relation to trust and reciprocity, were central to the ways in which I carried out my study. I was reminded in my work role as Pre-school Project Co-ordinator and in informal conversations with colleagues working with the children I was studying, of my commitment to working *with* the families (the '*insiders*') and '*giving back*' to the community I was working with and studying. As a white teacher researcher I was aware of the fine line to be trodden between 'giving a voice' to the subjects and betraying them.' Griffiths (1998:41) The impact of a researcher's presence in the nursery classroom, and more significantly in the children's homes, was the subject of much discussion during the early stages of the study. However, I believe that the relationships I established with teachers, parents, children and community outreach assistants and the sensitive and open manner in which we worked together provided an ethical basis for the study.

Some ethnographic researchers immerse themselves in the lives of the communities they are studying by living over a period of time with the people they are studying. One of the most influential ethnographic studies is Shirley Brice Heath's (1983) ten-year comparative study of literacy learning in two communities, Roadsville and Trackton. She raises some key issues in her book 'Ways with words' (1983) in a discussion of educational quantitative research, which includes analysis of input and output factors;

'From an ethnographic perspective, the irony of such research is that it ignores the social and cultural context, which created the input factors for the individual and groups. Detailed descriptions of what actually happens to children as they learn to use language and to form values about its structures and functions tell us what

children do to become and to remain acceptable members of their own communities.'

(Heath, 1983: 8)

These detailed 'descriptions of what actually happens to children as they learn to use language' are the issues which I address in my ethnographic study of young bilingual children at home and at school. Although not living as a member of the community in the way that Heath carried out her research, my study met many of the criteria set out in Spindler's (1982) 'Criteria for a Good Ethnography of Schooling':

'Observation is prolonged and repetitive. Chains of events are observed more than once.

The native (any participant in a social setting) view of reality is brought out by inferences from observations and by various forma of ethnographic enquiry.

Sociocultural knowledge held by social participants makes social behaviour and communication sensible to oneself and to others.

A significant task of ethnography is therefore to make explicit what is implicit and tacit to informants and participants in the social setting being studied.'

(1982:6-7)

In his discussion of validity in ethnographic studies, Spindler underlines the significance of 'prolonged, intimate contact with, observation of, and inquiry about repetitive patterns of behaviour and interaction.' (1982:17) It was this process of inquiry which was the underlying thread of my study.

5.3 The Context

Table 5.2

Child	Mother tongue	Family position	nursery	Age starting nursery	Community language class	Recordings in nursery	Recordings at home	interviews
Nazma	Pahari	Youngest of 6 Grandmother lives at home	Nursery A Watford	3:6 at April 1996 4 terms in nursery	no	15 hrs total	6 hrs total	2 with teacher 2 with mother
Maria	Pahari	Eldest of 2 Grandparents (4), cousins, aunts, uncles live at home	Nursery B Watford	4:0 at September 1996 3 terms in nursery	no	15 hrs total	6 hrs total	2 with teacher 2 with mother
Samia	Pahari	Middle child of 3 Grandmother lives at home	Nursery C Watford	4:4 at January 1997 2 terms in nursery	Attends local Qur'ranic / Urdu class	15 hrs total	6 hrs total	2 with teacher 2 with mother

I present here some contextual information about the children, the community to which they belong, the area in which they live and the schools they attend. Nazma, Samia and Maria were all born in Watford, Hertfordshire. Watford has a population of some 80,000 people and approximately 15% of the children in local schools come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The largest community is Pakistani (accounting for 65% of bilingual children). Most families (including those of the children in this study) originate from the Khotli area of Azad Kashmir, which borders North-East Pakistan. Their mother tongue is Pahari, a dialect of Punjabi spoken by people in Azad Kashmir. It literally means 'hill language': it is spoken in a mountainous region and there are many regional varieties. Many of the children from Azad Kashmiri backgrounds (including those in this study) enter the schooling system with little or no expressive English. Their parents and extended family speak mainly Pahari in the home, and Urdu (the official language of literacy in Pakistan) is also used within some families, sometimes by the father only.

There are significant similarities in the parental backgrounds of the children in the study. All the families originate in the Khotli district of Azad Kashmir (which is across the border from Rawlpindi). In all cases, the fathers emigrated to the UK alone, with limited qualifications. They came to Watford, settled there and have not moved residence since that time. The mothers arrived later, in order to marry, and with only their primary education complete. None of the parents had any formal pre-school experience.

Linguistically, too, they are highly similar. All parents are Pahari speakers. All mothers have very limited English, while all the fathers can communicate in English, and do so in their

working lives, though they have limited literacy in English. In terms of occupation, all mothers work in the home, while all fathers work outside, as, variously, shop-owner, driving instructor and factory worker. They can be viewed, therefore, as forming a highly cohesive group.

The three children's early socialisation was centred at home with their parents, grandparents and other members of their extended family. They have not attended playgroup or any other pre-school setting in this country. Nazma, Samia and Maria attend three different primary schools, but the schools are very similar to each other. Geographically they are very close, one school is located in Central Watford, one in West Watford and one in North Watford. They are all nurseries located in a separate building from the primary school and they are multi-ethnic schools, with between 20% and 35% of children from Azad Kashmiri backgrounds. The nursery staff consists of one nursery teacher and two nursery nurses in each of the nurseries and they are all monolingual English speakers who do not share the first languages of their bilingual pupils. Without exception, they are very experienced nursery practitioners, who have worked with bilingual children and their families in the same multi-ethnic school for most of their professional lives.

5.4 Working with Mussarat: a 'key actor' in the study

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) discuss the complexities involved in gaining access to the research site, and establishing and maintaining relationships with others in the field over the periods of time required for ethnographic research. This is a particularly challenging issue for a white, monolingual researcher, working in the homes of bilingual children. However, in my role as Section 11 primary team manager and Co-ordinator of a Pre-school community based project in Hertfordshire, from 1995 to 1997, I was working with bilingual pre-school outreach assistants in homes and Bilingual Classroom Assistants (funded through Section 11, now EMAG), nursery teachers and nursery nurses in nursery classes. I had been working with the community and schools in Watford over many years, and established very good relationships with nursery staff and bilingual classroom assistants. However, close working relationships established with the bilingual outreach assistants during the Pre-school community based project, provided the access I required to the children's homes and enabled me to gain new insights into the perspectives of families and the bilingual professionals working in the homes. During this time, I had gained permission from the manager of the Minority Ethnic Curriculum Support Service in Hertfordshire to undertake research into the experiences of young bilingual children in nursery and at home and the impact of the pre-school project on their achievement. However, as a white, monolingual

manager of a team of bilingual outreach assistants and a 'researcher', I needed first to establish trust and openness with my colleagues, as an understanding of how this innovative project would develop slowly evolved.

I knew that central to an ethnographic approach is a commitment to understanding another way of life from the native, or emic, point of view. I sought to achieve this by 'looking for an informant to teach... the culture' (Spradley and McCurdy, 1990: 18). I was particularly aware as Co-ordinator of a team of bilingual outreach assistants and as an ethnographic researcher, that I needed to acknowledge the understanding of perspectives other than my own and that I was the 'learner' in this context. During this time, my relationship with one of the Pre-school outreach assistants, Mussarat, became particularly significant, as she became a 'mediator' of culture and cultural practices and language. She was the most experienced member of the team, in terms of length of time working with young children, and a highly respected member of the community. She herself spent her childhood in Azad Kashmir and moved to Watford when she married. She had trained as a primary school teacher in Pakistan, and, after spending some years bringing up her children at home, returned to working with children in school as a Bilingual Classroom Assistant in Watford. In 1993, I worked with her in one of the study schools and accompanied her on home visits. I was impressed by her empathy with families in the community and her ability to interpret for me the mothers' understandings and perspectives. This was the beginning of a long relationship in which we shared insights into the experiences of children in nursery. The title of 'key actor' (Fetterman, 1989) appears appropriate here; 'this individual becomes a key actor in the theater of ethnographic research and plays a pivotal role, linking the fieldworker and the community.' (1989:58).

Mussarat played a key role in the selection of the study children, the translation and interpretation of the interview and language data and, most significantly, the discussion of the insights gained from the study. Fetterman also highlights the significance of trust in this relationship; 'key actors and ethnographers must share a bond of trust. Respect on both sides is earned slowly.' (Fetterman: 61)

Throughout the years of the study (1996 – 2003), I worked alongside Mussarat and in her role of interpreter, she was paid an hourly rate for the work. However, this professional role has extended to a friendship, which still continues. As she starts her studies for an Early Years Foundation Degree at the University of Hertfordshire, I will act as her friend as she goes through the process of Higher Education and our dialogue about the early years of schooling for bilingual children will continue to evolve.

5.5 Working in the Community: A Pre-school Community-based Project

In 1995, following consultation with minority ethnic community groups and headteachers in Hertfordshire, there were concerns that some children from minority language communities do not benefit fully from educational opportunities in the early years and that this has a detrimental effect on their subsequent achievement in the schooling system. Firstly, children were arriving at reception classes in primary schools with no experience of nursery education or other pre-school provision. Secondly, there was a need to bridge the gap between the skills, experiences and expectations in the home and in the nursery. The Pre-school project was set up to work with minority ethnic parents and their children in the community and school context. [See Appendix A for Parents' leaflets] It aimed to increase the opportunities for young children to succeed in the school system by working with parents and their pre-school children in order to:

- Increase awareness about the expectations of school/nursery and to help parents to make informed choices about pre-school provision;
- Develop their children's skills (based on the cultural and lingusitic experiences of the home) in order to enhance their achievements in the school system;
- Develop partnerships between the parents and nursery staff in order to enhance the children's early schooling experience.

Initially, eight schools were involved in the project, including 5 in Watford, and bilingual outreach assistants were recruited from the target communities to visit homes and work with parents and children in their home language. Mussarat worked in the homes of children in Nursery A and Nursery B, and Asmat in Nursery C.

5.6 Working in schools: Three multi-ethnic nurseries

Negotiating access to the classrooms in the three study schools, Nursery A, B and C, was facilitated by my professional role at that time. The three schools in the study were all involved in the Pre-school project and had Section 11 (now EMAG) Bilingual Classroom Assistants working in the nurseries. I had good relationships with the Headteachers of the schools and they gave permission for the conduct of the research in their schools. The three nursery teachers (Karen, Liz and Melanie) were well known to me as I had previously worked as a Section 11 support teacher in all the nurseries. I had therefore been able to establish the confidence of the staff, through my credibility as an early years teacher, and more

recently as the Co-ordinator of the Pre-school project. I had spoken to each of the teachers about the objectives of the Pre-school project and also explained my proposal for a study of the experience of one bilingual child in their nursery. They all welcomed my participation and observation in the classroom. We agreed that I would spend time in the nursery during each child's first term and final term at nursery. The nursery teachers also agreed to participate in formal and informal discussions about the child and to share the on-going records of the child's achievements in school, together with the Nursery Baseline Assessment scores.

5.7 Selecting the sample: Nazma, Maria and Samia; individual cases

During discussions with the Pre-school outreach assistants during the first six months of the Project (October 1995 – April 1996), the basis for selection of focus children for this study was considered. We agreed that in order to build a full description of bilingual children's early experience of schooling, a small number of individual 'cases' would be appropriate. As I accompanied my colleagues on visits to pre-school children's homes, I was struck by the openness of the mothers to talk about their expectations of school and their aspirations for their children. The key theme to emerge was the importance of mother tongue maintenance at home and the central role of the family in its development. It became clear that an important basis for the selection of children in the study sample would be:

- Children's mother tongue development should be appropriate for their age;
- Parents' willingness to participate in the study.

In order to provide the richest possible analysis of young bilingual children's experience of early schooling, three girls were selected, based on the above criteria. Factors related to sex, age and position in family were also taken into consideration (see data collection table 5:2). All three girls shared the same mother tongue, their families originated from Azad Kashmir and now lived in a settled community in Watford. They all entered nursery in the school year 1996/97 (Nazma in the summer term 1996) and they all transferred to the Reception class in school in September 1997.

5.8   Conduct of the study

5.8.1   Participant observation at nursery

As the social context is central to the ethnographic research process, I aimed to collect data about the participants in the study and also contextual data, which Geertz (1975) calls 'thick' data. A key method for obtaining thick, contextual data is through participant observation. I recognised early on that my observation would be as a 'participant', but that the level of participation in the nursery would be unpredictable. Lofland and Lofland state: 'classic participant observation ... always involves the interweaving of looking and listening... of watching and asking.' (Lofland and Lofland, 1984: 13) I spent three sessions in each of the three study nurseries at the beginning of the nursery year and three sessions at the end of the year (the numbers of recordings, however, did vary amongst the children). All members of staff were told that my role in the classroom was that of a researcher who was there to watch how the study child experienced nursery. As I was well known in the nursery, it was possible to observe, talk to staff and occasionally interact with children (although not directly with the study child). Fetterman, writing about fieldwork states that; 'the most important element of fieldwork is being there – to observe, to ask seemingly stupid yet insightful questions, and to write down what is seen and heard.' Fetterman (1989: 19)

I took handwritten field notes on each of my visits to the nurseries. I used small notebooks to record my field notes of observations of the study child and informal discussions with nursery staff and drew rough diagrams of the layout of the nursery (setting out activities available on each occasion). My observations included notes about any aspect of the child's behaviour, including who she was playing with, interactions with adults and a record of the exact timings of the key activities during the session. These field notes were used to contextualise the data from the audio-taping during the transcription process.

5.8.2   Audio recordings in the nursery

As a central focus of the study was the children's learning of English and their use of mother tongue, the collection and analysis of language data was crucial. Audio-recordings were made with a radio-microphone. The study children carried a light - weight transmitter unit, which was clipped onto a belt, and a radio-transmitter microphone, which was clipped onto a collar. They therefore had complete freedom of movement within a radius of 50 metres, which included the nursery classroom and the garden. Each nursery session lasted 2 hours 30 minutes and the entire session was audio-taped.

On my first visit to the nursery, I ensured that a Bilingual Classroom Assistant was present to introduce me and to talk to the study child about wearing the radio-microphone. I had already met the child at home during home visits, but the experience of starting school and wearing a radio-microphone was upsetting at first, particularly for Samia. During one of the earliest recordings in the nursery (3.2.97), Samia asks the BCA (Shabina) to take it off:

[this conversation takes place in Pahari]

Samia:	*Teacher, could you take it off?*
Shabina:	*You don't like it?*
	Now I'll put it higher
Samia:	*I want to go to the toilet*

In this interaction, it is clear that Samia was worried about going to the toilet when wearing the microphone. The presence of Shabina was crucial for Samia's understanding of the recording process. A further reaction to the wearing of radio-microphones was observed by regular reference made by other children in the nursery. This continued throughout the period of tapings and was not confined to the first occasions. The following is typical of the questioning by other children:

[this conversation takes place in English]

ChildA:	Why you got that on?
Samia:	That one teacher
	You can see that one teacher

However, Maria is more explicit about wearing a radio-microphone:

[this conversation takes place in English]

ChildA:	Maria, what you done your dress?
Maria:	I tape on it

This was evidently a source of fascination for the children, as was my relationship to the study child. Samia replied to one child's questioning with:

Samia:	That's my teacher
	She's coming my house

5.8.3 Observations and audio-recordings in the home

In order to understand the children's experiences of learning during their first year at nursery, the collection of 'naturalistic' data in the homes posed the greatest challenge to me as a researcher. Mussarat, the 'key actor' in my study, accompanied me on visits to Nazma's home (the first child in the study to start nursery in May 1996). Nazma's mother appeared comfortable with my presence in the home and, during the after school times, the older siblings chatted freely to me (I had in fact been Naseem's, Hassan's and Yasmin's teacher previously). However, the difficulty that arose related particularly to the collection of language data. I was able to make observations of Nazma at home, playing with her siblings or helping her mother. However, when the radio-microphone was placed on Nazma and the tape recorder switched on, the family appeared to feel they had to 'perform' in the presence of a researcher and tape recorder in their home.

I discussed this problem during the summer in 1996 with Mussarat. We decided that we needed to set the recording equipment up in the home, place the radio-microphone on Nazma, make notes about the context and family members present and then leave the house for the period of recording (approximately 30 – 45 minutes). This worked well. During the first few recordings, there was some reference to the recording, and particularly the fact that I had left the house.

In an early recording in Nazma's home (18.7.96) she asked her mother, in Pahari:

Nazma: *Where's she gone?*
            Why?

During the first home recording in Samia's home (10.4.97), she asked her mother, in Pahari:

Samia: *Why has she left?*
            It's slipping [referring to the radio-microphone]

In Nazma's and Samia's homes, no further reference was made to the recording equipment or the process. However, in Maria's home, there was a clear consciousness of the recording process and the adults directed much of the family conversations.

An early recording (12.12.96) includes the following discussion of the audience for the tape recordings:

[the conversation takes place in Pahari]

Maria: *If I say what I want to be, then the English teachers won't understand*

Grandfather: *No, they want you to talk in your language*

Maria: *If I speak my language, they won't understand*

Grandfather: *It doesn't matter*

This conversation demonstrates Maria's linguistic awareness, which is advanced for a four-year-old child. She understands very early on that her teachers will not understand her own language, but her Grandfather understands the purpose of the research. In a later taping (23.12.96), Maria again demonstrates her understanding of the process:

Grandfather: *You say the things to want to say to your dad to us*
                Ask him for the things you want from Pakistan

Maria: *It's wasting the cassette*

Later on, Mussarat and I listened to the tape together, using the contextual notes made prior to the recording session. This was a lengthy process, as the conversations in the home mainly took place in Pahari and needed to be translated and interpreted. I wrote the transcription in English, using the counter numbers on the tape recorder in the left hand column. I also wrote notes in the right hand margin, which were a record of Mussarat's comments, observations and interpretations of the data. These observations included perspectives from her own personal experiences. We spent many hours discussing her childhood experiences in Pakistan, her knowledge of the families and community and her 'inside' knowledge of early schooling in Britain. Interestingly, these conversations caused her to reflect on her own children's experience of schooling in Watford, their loss of fluency in Pahari and their high academic achievements in the system; the losses and gains for bilingual children. It was these conversations, which influenced the course of the study as it evolved. Mussarat's commentary provided the insights, which led to the analysis of the data at a later stage.

5.8.4 Interviews and documentary data

The major purpose of an in-depth ethnographic interview is to learn to see the world from the eyes of the person being interviewed.' (Ely, 1991: 58) In trying to show how different strands of the children's experience fit together, their mother tongue, their mothers' aspirations for them, their teachers' view of their progression, and their competence in English are considered in interviews with mothers and teachers.

With this purpose in mind, interviews took place with the nursery teachers at the end of the first term at nursery, in the school. I also undertook a more lengthy interview with the nursery teachers about the nature of the curriculum offered in each nursery. In the homes interviews were conducted with the children's mothers, again at the beginning and end of the nursery year.

The interviews consider the following perspectives:

- The views mothers have of their children's overall development and the development of their English;

- The views the children's teachers have of their overall development, including the contribution they feel the family makes in each case in their learning.

5.8.5 Interviews at home

Mothers of the three girls (and any other key members of the family present at the time) were interviewed during one of the early home visits to the home once their child had started nursery, and again at the end of the nursery year. The interviews were semi-structured and covered the following three areas:

Family background

- Country, language(s) and origin of the child and parents;
- Circumstances of arrival in Watford;
- Parents' educational experience and qualifications;
- Parents' fluency in English;
- L1 fluency of parents;
- Language use in the home.

Child's background

- How pre-school children spend their time before starting nursery;
- Pre-school education of children;
- Children's use of spare time outside school learning;
- Attendance at community language/religious classes;
- Achievement of other children in the family.

Mothers' views on early schooling and their children

- Mothers' memories of schooling;
- Mothers' aspirations for their children;
- Mothers' views of what would help their children;

- Parents' views on the support they are able to give their children;
- Parents' knowledge of the pre-school education system in the UK;
- Aspirations for the future;
- Involvement in the school.

The interviews with mothers (and other members of the family) were conducted in Pahari by Mussarat and they were audio-taped. They were designed to combine collecting data about the child and family with establishing a rapport with the families and helping them to understand the interest we had in their children's development during the early years of schooling. The conduct of the interviews varied amongst the three families. This was partly because of the presence of different family members at the time of the interview and partly because some of the questions led, on occasion, to a more detailed response.

5.8.6 Interviews and documentary data at nursery

The nursery teachers were interviewed towards the end of the first term in nursery, after the Nursery Baseline Assessments had been conducted. The interviews were conducted either in the lunch time or after school and, at the request of the teachers, were not audio-taped. I took detailed notes during the interview and shared the written record with the teachers afterwards. In addition to the teachers' views on the children's progress, I was given access to the following documents:

- Hertfordshire Early Years Record of Achievement profile and
- Completed Nursery Baseline assessment scores.

The interviews were semi-structured and covered the following framework:

- The teachers' perceptions of the children;
- The child's progress and achievements;
- Levels of socialisation, language development, overall academic ability;
- The child's strengths and motivation;
- Skills and knowledge brought from home;
- Parents' support for children's learning;
- Views on children's learning at home;
- Views on what could help learning at school?
- Comment on the child's language development;
- Views on bilingual children's language development in nursery;
- Views on the child's future development.

The interviews about the nursery curriculum were semi-structured and audio-taped. They covered the following questions:

How would you describe your nursery curriculum – what is it derived from and how is it organised?

What would you expect from children for them to be successful in this context?

The 'Desirable Outcomes' represent a nursery curriculum, which is inclusive of all children. Do you think that it gives you a framework that incorporates bilingual children?

5.9   Data analysis

Ely et al discuss the process of analysing the data as 'taming the chaos' (1991:140). During discussions with my PhD supervisor, fellow researchers and colleagues (particularly Mussarat), the process of understanding and interpreting the data unfolded over a period of many years. As the different forms of data were collected, transcribed and interpreted, I began to develop speculative thoughts about the themes and categories that arose. It was a lengthy process and the data demanded frequent re-visiting, including listening to the audio-tapes repeatedly. In the process, new questions arose and were discussed with colleagues in school or with Mussarat.

The framework for analysis of data was based on the emerging themes. Ely et al define a theme as:

> 'a statement of meaning that (1) runs through all or most of the pertinent data, or (2) one in the minority that carries heavy emotional or factual impact. It can be thought of as the researcher's inferred statement that highlights explicit or implied attitudes towards life, behavior, or understandings of a person, persons, or a culture.'
> (1991:150)

The nature of my recurring discussions about the key themes related very strongly to the notion of the children as active learners. Although originally I had viewed the analysis of data as learning about the girls' learning of English as an additional language at home and at school, what emerged from my data was a far more complex understanding of the processes involved in learning in a socio-cultural context. It was this that presented the greatest challenge to me as a researcher. How could my analysis present the complexities of young bilingual children, learning to learn during their first year of schooling, in a way that demonstrated their strategic approach?

I decided to adopt a method of 'multi-layering', using Gregory's (1993) ethnographic approaches as a model. The key themes to emerge related to the different understandings of the children's learning at home and at nursery. [See figure 5:1] The outer layer of analysis considers their early schooling from their mothers' and teachers' perspectives. At home, the girls were actively engaged in a full family life with siblings and extended family. At nursery, through the observations and recordings of their interactions with others, their individual responses to the ongoing experience of early schooling began to be revealed. This 'outer layer' was one aspect of what is 'visible' of the children's learning, or not, since their information, views and insights are only minimally shared. Thus, the mothers' views that it will be easy for the girls to learn English at school, for example, is not known to the nursery teacher and has not been the subject of any discussion. In the same way, the teachers' understanding of how the curriculum is planned and delivered, particularly in relation to encouraging independence and so on, is not explicitly shared with the parents.

However, what emerged was an 'inner layer' of understanding, from the point of view of the individual children. I was particularly impressed by the ways in which they found their way through nursery and, in the cases of Samia and Maria, to begin to take control. I viewed these responses to their learning as 'strategic' and began to look at the inner layer of data in terms of strategies. By 'strategy' I mean the ways in which the girls negotiate different micro contexts, steering their way through the demands and opportunities which each presents. The term 'strategy' does not necessarily imply a conscious choice on their part, as there are constraints imposed on them by the early years education system, although it does imply that as an agent of her own learning, they have a controlling role.

5.10 Understanding the themes

As the work of the Community-based pre-school project developed, I increasingly gained the trust of the bilingual outreach assistants and, in turn, they became more willing to share their perspectives on young bilingual children's early experiences. This openness was evident in team meetings, but more frequently during informal discussions after a home visit to a family or when discussing work with specific families or nurseries during a telephone conversation. Often, their own childhood experiences (all the outreach assistants had been brought up in Pakistan or Azad Kashmir) or their own children's experiences of early schooling in local schools became the focus of their reflections. In order to establish the themes for the analysis of the data, I carried out an extended informal interview with Mussarat, which is presented at some length in chapter 9. The key themes to emerge were:

- Building on children's home experiences
- Differences between the values and beliefs in the home and in nursery
- Learning English as an additional language in the nursery
- Mother tongue development and bilingual support.

5.11 The data: a new understanding of children's 'invisible' learning

In the following section I present an illustration of the methodological approach adopted for my study by presenting data which provided key insights into the children's learning.

During the period of listening to, interpreting and transcribing the audio recordings, the following transcript of Samia at home (July 8 1997) provided new insights into the significance of the data. Listening to this particular recording with Mussarat, there was a joint sense of fascination in capturing such a 'natural', 'hidden' or 'invisible' perspective on Samia's learning. Mussarat commented at the time that she had not realised that Samia was able to use so much school language and that she sounded just like the nursery teacher in places.

It was clear from the beginning of this tape recording that Samia and her brother Sadaqat (aged 2 years) were unaware of the microphone, which was clipped onto Samia's collar. At the time (1.30 pm) their mother was in the kitchen and the siblings were upstairs. From the start, Samia had clearly entered her role in the 'school game' she was enacting. She started by inviting her brother into her game by using Pahari:

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[Pahari in italics]

Samia	*Sadaqat, do things right*
	School game
	OK

A little later she invites Sadaqat into the game again:

Samia	*come and play school game*
	[singing]
	thank you miss Polly
	thank you miss Polly
	leave the things here
	let's play little game

Samia skilfully code-switches between Pahari and English through the school game. When she wishes to give Sadaqat a 'real' instruction, she uses Pahari, as in the invitation to join her game above.

Once they are in the school game, Sadaqat makes a limited contribution (a one word English utterance) and Samia is clearly 'in charge':

Samia:	*put books on this side*
	Put half the books in there
	This is your bag
	Are you finish?
Sadaqat	finish
Samia	what's that?
	OK
	I want book
	Put in the book here
	There's your school bag

There is a smooth transition between the two languages and repetition of the same lexis in both languages (for example, book, bag, put). Sadaqat participates in the game, echoing 'finish' in English and willingly playing his part. Samia is clearly in the role of teacher and she uses directives in the exchanges with her younger sibling.

There is further evidence of Samia's fluent use of two languages in the following excerpt. Again, Sadaqat participates in the exchange, contributing the word 'colour' in English:

Samia	*come on in school*
	Come on in school
	Off your bag
	Give it to me next
	And I put in here
	And I put in here
	And Sadaqat what do you like to play?
	Do you like to colour?
Sadaqat:	colour
Samia:	*change your* planning board
	Change your planning board
	Go on this way and tick it
	Sadaqat, give me your dinner money
	OK (whispered)

In this excerpt we can recognise the routines of nursery in her play. For example, she refers to a key aspect of the High/Scope routine, which involves, 'change your planning board', when selecting another activity. She also understands the importance of other key vocabulary items in English, for example, bag, dinner money and colour. Much of her English language use relates to the language used by adults to children in nursery routines. It also reflects the language of instruction. For example, later in the recording, Samia gives a series of instructions to her little brother:

Samia	*Sadaqat, go and get your books*
	That one, sit here
	This is school game
	Where's my folder?
	I get one paper
	Wait a minute
	Read your book
	Where's your book?
	You can read
	Read your book

Sit and read your book

You can't do colours

I cut you

Tidy up time

Go home with your bags

Take your bags and go home

Samia's instructions to her little brother in English include, 'sit here', 'sit and read your book' and in Pahari, 'go home with your bags.' She also uses language of the nursery routine, 'tidy up time.'

The school game ends when their mother calls them and Samia says:

Samia: tidy up time

               Sadaqat, let's go downstairs

Firstly, the significance of the 'routines' of the nursery is evident in Samia's role play. We can also see the influence of adult language use. The predictability and pattern of the language used at certain regular times and in certain places in the nursery is supportive to Samia's learning of English. She is practising these familiar routines and sequences in the role play with her little brother and displays considerable confidence. Given the freedom to experiment in the play situation, Samia takes risks and experiments as she progresses in her use of English.

What is striking is that in the context of the home, her language shows a wider range of lexis, structures and knowledge of English than at school. She is rehearsing the language she has heard at nursery by repeating familiar language in this context. Secondly, Samia uses her mother tongue with considerable fluency in her interactions with Sadaqat. However, there are very few opportunities for mother tongue use in the nursery and there are indications that Samia's use of English, at the end of one term in nursery, may soon overtake her Pahari.

In Samia's 'school game', we have insights into her learning of English which are not observed in the nursery context. Her play with her younger brother as a willing participant, in the social context of her home, reveals how her school learning flows over into play at home. It also reveals how Samia is able to take control of her learning by engaging her brother in her play and practising her language learning and learning that is being acquired through her experience of early schooling. By seeing her as taking control of her learning in

this way, it is possible to view her responses to her experience as 'strategic'. By extension, her responses in the nursery setting may also be seen as strategic. This perspective enables the data to be analysed in terms of the strategies Samia uses in different circumstances. I draw on examples of the strategies Samia and Maria use to enhance their learning in Chapter 7. They are presented in the following contexts:

- At nursery playing with children;
- At home playing with siblings;
- At nursery talking to adults;
- At home talking to adults.

What emerges then, from an analysis of Samia's school game at home, is a picture of the 'invisible learning' of a bilingual child starting school. For Samia, who is going through the process of learning English at the same time as experiencing formal schooling for the first time, the data presented above provides insights into a child taking control of her learning, and the invisibility of this to the teacher. A more detailed picture of Samia's learning emerges, by viewing the data from this perspective.

5.12 Summary

Throughout this chapter, I have outlined the ethical considerations which highlighted the authenticity of my research, particularly in relation to my professional role as Pre-school Project Co-ordinator and in my relationships with the families, community members and school staff (see 5.2, 5.4 & 5.6). The sense of a shared concern to understand Nazma, Samia and Maria's early learning and the authenticity of the study underpinned my methodological approach through:

- developing a community based professional role over many years;
- establishing relationships based on trust and reciprocity with colleagues and the community;
- working with Mussarat as a mediator of culture and language throughout the study;
- collecting data from a range of sources (observations, interviews, audio-recordings, documentary evidence) and in different contexts (at home and in nursery, with adults and with children).

The data was analysed over a period of 4 or 5 years following translation and interpretation of the bilingual data with Mussarat. It was during this process that the key insights demonstrated in Samia's school game (see 5.11) led to the identification of strategies the children used to find their way through early schooling as the basis for data analysis, rather than any other form of coding.

In this chapter I have considered the methodological stance taken in my research. I have argued that ethnography is an appropriate research method for studying young bilingual children's learning at home and at school and discussed the challenges and dilemmas faced by ethnographers. The central section of the chapter set out the context, the procedures and conduct of the study. I then set out the 'multi-layered' approach adopted for the data analysis in chapters 6, 7 and 8. Finally I presented an illustration of the methodological approach adopted for the study in a transcript of Samia's 'school game' with her little brother at home. This example demonstrated some of the key insights provided by the data into young bilingual children's learning at home and at school.

The following chapter presents the 'outer layer' analysis of the context for Samia, Maria and Nazma as they enter nursery.

Chapter 6

Outer layer analysis:

Samia, Maria and Nazma: setting the context for learning

6.0   Introduction

In this chapter I present the outer layer of analysis. I introduce each of the three young bilingual children involved in my study and the context for them as they enter the English educational system. I argue that the situation they enter is determined by current early years policy and the knowledge, understanding and training of their nursery teachers. In this context, I examine what happens to Samia, Maria and Nazma when they begin nursery and how their experience of schooling is viewed by their families and teachers.

Firstly I present stories about the individual children's nursery and home experiences. Then, I consider their early schooling from the perspective of their mothers' views of their children's overall development and the development of English and mother tongue. Thirdly, I consider the teachers' views of the children's overall development, including the contribution they feel the family makes in each case to their learning. I include here reference to the children's Nursery Baseline Assessment scores and ongoing teacher assessments of their progress during their nursery education. In addition, I present evidence of their continuing progress during their first term in Reception, based on an interview with their Reception classteacher and the Hertfordshire Infant Baseline Assessment scores. I also present the three children's end of Key Stage one SAT results, as well as the views of their classteachers in Year 2. Fourthly, I set these views within the context of current policy in respect of young children for whom English is an additional language and introduce the nursery settings. I include the views of the nursery teachers on the curriculum. Finally, I present the social context of each child's nursery classroom; the key procedures, rules and routines.

6.1   Maria

6.1.1 Maria at home

Maria is the eldest child of two in her family. She lives with her extended family: two sets of grandparents (who live next door to each other), parents, cousins, aunts, uncles and her

younger brother. Two of her aunts went to school in Watford and her uncles are still at school and doing well. The family has lived in Watford for seven years. Maria's father lived in Pakistan as a boy and arrived in England as a teenager. He did not attend school, but attended evening classes to learn English. He now works in a factory in North Watford. Maria's mother adds *'he can read and write sufficient English to fill in forms'*.

Maria understands Urdu but speaks Pahari to her grandparents, parents and younger cousins and sibling. All the children are fluent in Pahari. Her aunts and uncles use English in the home and Maria tries to join in. Her mother comments about her language use; *'She is fine – she tries to speak any language.'* She does not yet attend Qur'anic classes, but her mother says that she copies the adults, covering her head and trying to read the Qu'ran. Maria did not attend playgroup but her early socialisation was in the home playing with her cousins and younger brother. Her mother comments that she *'is happy playing by herself and her cousins and her little brother at home. She tries to be the leader as she is the elder sister. She sings songs and plays in her own little world.'*

There were strong links with Pakistan in Maria's early years. She had a six month stay with her family before starting nursery and her father visits Pakistan regularly. Her mother talked about Maria's experiences in Pakistan *'we used to take Maria with us [the women] to the lake near the village to wash the clothes. Maria has seen the river Jhelum and she has been in the water.'*

6.1.2 Maria's mother

During the interviews, Mussarat [a pre-school outreach worker and Bilingual Classroom Assistant] and Maria's mother shared childhood memories as young girls growing up in the Kotli area of Pakistan. *'We used to find 5 or 6 stones, throw them up in the air and play 'pung gitra' (five stones). We made little rag dolls with long, long hair out of left over cloth and thread with my grandmother. A tailor would visit our home to make clothes and the children used the cuttings and folded the pieces of cloth into matchboxes. We also modelled with clay and dough.'*

Maria's mother has high expectations for her daughter and expressed her wish for Maria to become a doctor. She speaks of maintaining cultural and religious values *'providing my daughter keeps her cultural and religious values, I will not stop her from achieving this aspiration.'* She added, *'she's only four and she's got these high thoughts of herself.'* However, she is aware of the possible difficulties in maintaining these values when Maria is older and estimates that her daughter will spend ten to fifteen years in England, to complete her education, and then 'return' to Pakistan.

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6.1.3 Maria's Nursery Teacher

Maria started nursery when she was four years old. Her nursery teacher and two nursery nurses are nursery practitioners who have considerable experience of working with bilingual children and their families in Maria's nursery class. During an interview with the nursery teacher during the first few weeks of her first term in nursery, Maria was viewed as confident and 'brighter than other bilingual children – I knew she was going to achieve. In a small group, she copies and tries to join in.' She added that, 'bilingual children tend to start off shy because they haven't had the same home experiences. Support from home and a strong personality is an advantage for bilingual children at nursery. We try to give them attention and develop the right sort of relationship. It is important you have respect.' However, the Nursery Nurse noted on her Nursery Progress record for Term 1:

'Maria was cross with everyone for being left at nursery in the early days and cried every day.' Her Nursery Baseline Assessment scores underlined the challenges faced by Maria and the nursery staff during her early days at nursery. She scored 20 out of a possible score of 41, with significant areas for development in Language Experience/Mathematical Experience (she scored 3 out of 12) and Approaches to Learning (she scored 4 out of 9).

The section entitled 'Language Experience' in the Hertfordshire Nursery Baseline Assessment is in two parts; receptive and expressive language:

Receptive Language

- Listens attentively and responds appropriately   3
- Listens to others and usually responds   2
- Listens to an adult or child in 1:1 situation   1

Expressive Language

- Communicates clearly using language for a wide range of purpose   5
- Uses sentences with a range of vocabulary   4
- Uses simple sentences   3
- Uses single word utterances   2
- Communicates needs non-verbally   1

The baseline assessment takes place during the first seven weeks of a child's first term in nursery and in both parts Maria attained the lowest possible score (i.e. one). In terms of her language development, she 'listens to an adult or child in 1:1 situation' and 'communicates

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needs non-verbally.' Maria attained similarly low scores in the *Independence* and *Motivation* strands of the 'Approaches to Learning' section of the Nursery Baseline assessment. Thus, in terms of her Independence, she 'often needs adult support/interaction to engage in a variety of activities' and 'Motivation is usually limited to self chosen contexts.

Maria was, however, seen by the nursery teacher as coming from a loving home which nurtured confidence and had high expectations of her; 'her strong personality will get her through. She is quick to catch on.' Her Nursery Progress report for the second half of the first term reflected this view:

'Maria has shown herself to be a very determined and intelligent girl, tackling all aspects of nursery with enthusiasm and skill (providing she has chosen the task).'
In relation to her language development, the nursery teacher observed that Maria loves stories and is keen to bring her book bag in to nursery and added that the Bilingual Classroom Assistant, Kausar Khawaja, works with her twice a week in nursery. The nursery teacher commented that Maria was keen to learn English and the staff supported her by 'talking to her a lot.' Maria was described as having 'a grown-up and mature attitude to school'. The staff commented that she will initiate conversations adults and she has picked up English from the children in the nursery. Her teacher considered that Maria 'will go from strength to strength' in the future.

6.1.4 Maria's Reception Classteacher

Maria's Reception classteacher commented that she had settled in well to the Reception class and was beginning to pick up English. She said; 'Maria's language has improved tremendously since the Baseline assessment. She was very quiet in nursery, but she isn't here. She is very keen to do things. She is reading and picking up sight vocabulary. She speaks in a large group, putting up her hand to answer questions. She knows her alphabet. She is behind with number work. She finds it difficult to verbalise mathematical language. But she has come on in leaps and bounds and asks a question if she doesn't understand.''
Her Infant Baseline Assessment scores reflect the progress she has made. The assessment took place during her first few weeks in Reception. She achieved a total of 38 (out of a possible total of 51). Particularly striking was her score of 15 (out of a possible total of 18) for Social and Emotional Approaches to Learning and 9 (out of a possible total of 9) for Physical skills. It is evident that Maria has adapted to school very well indeed and her strong personality, motivation, concentration and independence have added to a very positive view of her as a learner in school. However, her scores in Language experience (English) and

mathematical experience reflected her position as a young bilingual learner, developing her English language skills. Her score for these areas of learning was 14 (out of a total of 24). However, at this point in her school career, her classteacher views Maria as 'keen to learn and join in. Her Auntie comes into school to ask questions and she is doing her homework.' Her progress is viewed as very good and it is anticipated that she will achieve very well at the end of Key Stage One SATs.

6.1.5 Maria's Year 2 classteacher

At the end of her Key Stage One schooling, I returned to Maria's school to interview her Year 2 classteacher. Her achievements in the end of Key Stage SATs were very good. Her scores were above what was expected at this stage in her schooling.

Table 6.1

Subject	NC Level
Mathematics	2A
Speaking and listening	2
Reading	2A
Writing	2A
Reading Comprehension	2A

Her Year 2 classteacher commented, 'Maria has a good attitude to learning. She is self-motivated to do well, bright and able, 'top' of the bilingual children in her class.' She added that Maria had acted as translator or interpreter for Usman, a child in her class who had recently arrived from Pakistan and that she was confident and mature in this role. In response to a question about links between home and school, her teacher stated that there had been no contact, apart from parents evenings. However, her Auntie had recently been appointed as a Classroom Assistant in the school. Her views on Maria's future progress were:

'Maria has real potential. She will go far.'

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6.2 Samia

6.2.1 Samia at home

Samia is the middle child in a family of three children. She lives with her mother, grandmother and brothers. Her father also shares their home, although he now has a new family in Watford and he is a shopkeeper. Samia's father came to Watford when he was 9 years old. He had some schooling in England and some schooling in Pakistan, but has no qualifications. He speaks, reads and writes in Urdu and English. Her mother (Rubina) attended primary school in Pakistan, but did not complete her schooling. She married in Pakistan and came to Watford with her husband. She speaks Pahari and very little English or Urdu. Samia's older brother was born in Pakistan, but Samia and her younger brother, Sadaqat, were born in Watford.

Samia speaks Pahari to her younger brother, mother and grandmother, but her older brother speaks some English at home. The recognised community language is Urdu and Samia has started to attend Qur'anic classes after school where she will develop the Arabic required for reading and reciting the holy text. Her mother is keen to teach her Pahari at home, and tries to nurture the home culture. Samia had no formal pre-school experience in the UK but she had an extended holiday in Pakistan with her grandmother for six months before she started school. Her grandmother reported that what Samia valued was the amount of space for free play. Samia followed the animals around and played intensively with her cousins and other children in the village. On her return, she frequently said 'Let's go back.'

6.2.2 Samia's mother

Samia's mother and grandmother, both present at the interview, were particularly vocal and clear in their views on the education of children and the differing roles of schools and families. Her mother's view is that there is a clear separation between the roles of the home and the school. Only the home can teach the mother tongue, and that is what it should do. It is only when children come to school that they need to learn English, and to teach that is the school's role. The home can provide the cultural - and, by implication, linguistic - nurturing the child needs in her early years; that this excludes English need not be a problem, as English can easily be acquired later. Samia's mother feels she is doing well at school, *'Samia is an intelligent girl. She is learning very quickly. I hope she will do well, providing she gets enough help, because I cannot help her.'*

Samia's grandmother's views are consistent with these. She sees herself as an uneducated woman who understands fully the importance of education. She tries to help her grandchildren by staying with them and supporting them morally. She and her daughter miss Pakistan, but appreciate the advantages of a UK education. Nonetheless, she sees that the children miss the open spaces and freedom that Pakistan represents for them.

6.2.3 Samia's Nursery teacher

Samia began school a term after her fourth birthday and had two terms at nursery. When she started nursery, the nursery teacher told her mother, 'if nobody helps her now, she will find it hard to adjust to school.' The nursery staff (one teacher and two nursery nurses) are experienced practitioners who have worked in Samia's nursery class for many years. Samia was viewed by her teacher as bright, confident and strong willed. In her Early Years Record of Achievement, the teacher had recorded the following comments for Term 1:

'Samia has settled quietly into Nursery. She uses the planning board to find activities and mostly works alone at painting, jigsaws or sometimes in the imaginative area or construction area.'

'Samia didn't speak today - sometimes says one or two words. I gave her some ideas at Recall eg painting and she nodded agreement.'

Her Nursery Baseline Assessment score was 29 out of a possible score of 41. However, her 'Language Experience' was assessed in Mother Tongue, rather than English, (which was the case for Maria and Nazma) and she therefore achieved a higher overall score. Her score for Social and Emotional and approaches to Learning was 12 (out of a possible score of 30) and highlighted the adjustments Samia still needed to make during her early days in nursery.

Samia's nursery teacher commented that at times she refused to speak and was strong-willed, 'she is bright enough to follow what is going on. She has a definite awkward streak and at times she doesn't do what you want her to do. She can follow activities during work time and engages in a range of activities. She likes puzzles and painting. She is settled, but not chatty, because she missed a term of nursery.' Her nursery teacher also demonstrated an understanding of Samia's language development: 'Her mother tongue is strong therefore I would expect her English to come on well too', but expressed a hope that she would socialise more with her peers, develop greater confidence in English and speak it more. She added that the Bilingual Classroom Assistant (Shabina Butt) works with Samia in the nursery and supports home-school links. Her family are viewed as supportive 'keen for Samia to get on.'

6.2.4 Samia's Reception Classteacher

Samia's Reception classteacher commented; 'She has adapted well to a more formal classroom. She is, however, strong willed and likes to be in control. She knows the classroom routines well, but she has gaps in her understanding of instructions. Relationships are a problem. She is too strong and has a pushy way. She jumps in when answering questions.' Samia's personality was at times viewed as a problem by her teacher. However, her Infant Baseline assessment scores highlighted how very well she had adapted to school. She achieved a total of 41 (out of a possible total of 51). The scores for Social and Emotional and Approaches to Learning were particularly impressive, after only two terms at nursery; 17 (out of a possible score of 18). Her concentration, motivation and independence achieved the maximum score. Her Language Experience and Mathematical experience score was 16 (out of a possible total of 24). Her teacher commented; 'she achieves what she needs to achieve in English. She can communicate most necessary things through words and phrases. She uses her mother tongue during free play and uses Pahari in her friendship groups. She particularly likes the home corner.' There are clearly aspects of her English language development which her teacher identified, particularly small group work with well planned activities. In general, Samia had a very good first term in Reception. Her classteacher stated; 'she understands what is going on and attempts to communicate. She will be OK. She won't have a problem.'

6.2.5 Samia's Year 2 classteacher

During an interview with her Year 2 classteacher, it was evident that Samia had achieved exceptionally well in the end of Key Stage One SATs, scoring above expectations for her age group in English.

Table 6.2

SUBJECT	NC Level
Mathematics	2B
Speaking and listening	3
Reading	3
Writing	2B
Reading Comprehension	3

Her classteacher commented very positively on her progress and particularly her self-motivation. However, the concerns about her personality were still evident and were summarised in the following extract from her end of Year 2 report;

'Her dominant character has resulted in disputes on many occasions. Samia finds it difficult to deal with situations and others when she is not in control and can become very upset.'

In response to questions about home school links, her teacher stated that there was no contact with the family, although she felt that the family supported her learning at home. She used her mother tongue with friends in the classroom at time, particularly to put across feelings.

In summary, her classteacher viewed her as very able (in the 'top' group in the class) and predicted that;

'she will achieve, she has the potential and knows what she wants to do.'

6.3   Nazma

6.3.1   Nazma at home

Nazma is the youngest of six children. She lives with her mother, father, grandmother and siblings. Her siblings attend the local primary and secondary school. Her eldest sister has left school with no qualifications, but does not have a job. Nazma's father came to Watford in the 1960s and had his schooling in Watford. He has no qualifications and is a driving instructor. He speaks Pahari and communicates well in English. Her mother attended primary school in Pakistan, married there and came to Watford in 1977. She speaks Pahari and very little English.

Nazma and her siblings were born in Watford. Her early socialisation was centred at home with their parents, grandparents and other members of their extended family. She has not attended a playgroup or any other pre-school setting in this country, but her early learning experiences have focused on playing with siblings and other members of the extended family. Nazma's mother stated that she enjoys dressing-up and taking part in role play activities with siblings at home, particularly Yasmin. She enjoys sorting clothes and helping prepare and cook food at home. Nazma uses her mother tongue, Pahari, with all members of the family. She understands the English used by older school-age children, but does not perform at the same level. The older children in Nazma's family attend Qur'anic classes after

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school. All members of the family recite verses and prayers in Arabic, and read the Arabic primers and holy Qur'an at home.

6.3.2 Nazma's mother

During the interview, Nazma's mother and grandmother recalled childhood memories in Pakistan, making her own little kitchen outside and playing with clay models; *'at home [in Pakistan] it's completely different for children – here school is better, but home life is more restricted.'* Her mother has high aspirations for her daughter; *'Nazma is quite clever; she does what she is told, follows what she is asked to do and is brighter than the others.'* Nazma's mother does not herself speak Urdu, but would like her children to; all her children speak Pahari fluently, and she is proud of this. It is her explicit aspiration that all her children should grow up speaking two languages - there is no argument in her mind but that bilingualism is advantageous.

Her mother commented that Nazma was upset every morning about going to school. She said that she was very attached to her mother and she likes staying at home with her. Her mother stated; *'I don't know about school, but the teachers know how to help my daughter.'*

6.3.3 Nazma's nursery teacher

Nazma started nursery when she was 3 years 6 months old and had 4 terms at nursery. Nazma's nursery teacher reported that she was very upset during her first weeks in nursery. At the beginning of her first term the nursery teacher noted in her anecdotal notes about Nazma; 'came in normal time, instead of later; cried, wouldn't settle for about an hour or so; just sobbed and sucked fingers and had cuddles; stopped crying for a bit, then had a chuckle.' It was agreed with her mother that she should attend nursery only twice weekly when the bilingual classroom assistant (Mussarat) was present during the first term. There was no Hertfordshire Nursery Baseline assessment in place during Nazma's first term at nursery. However, her nursery teacher wrote a report at the end of each term. In her nursery report written at the end of her fourth term at Nursery, the teacher wrote;

'Nazma is extremely reluctant to communicate in English. She understands most instructions given to her but obstinately refuses to say anything. Occasionally, she will say a whole sentence but soon becomes silent again. She communicates with other Asian children in her home language. She enjoys playing in the home corner and can be quite assertive. Nazma knows and recognises basic colours in English. She can name a circle shape. During collaborative reading sessions Nazma is often distracted. She will sometimes

point to the text but will not say anything. She recognises 8 out 13 children's name cards in her group. Nazma is recalcitrant about joining in with P.E. sessions.'

In an interview her teacher also commented on Nazma's self-sufficient and stubborn personality: 'She is refusing to speak, knowing it is required of her... I expected her to verbalise more, language is taking a long time to come out.' In terms of her language development, there was an understanding of the difficulty of the task facing Nazma when she started nursery: 'It was a strange place, with people speaking a foreign language.' She added, 'she's saying, I know you want me to speak and I'm not going to.'

Her nursery teacher commented on the fact that Nazma 'came to life' with the Bilingual Classroom Assistant and viewed Mother Tongue support as crucially important for her personal, social, emotional and language development.

6.3.4 Nazma's Reception Classteacher

The Infant Baseline Assessment was carried out during the first few weeks in Reception and she scored 23 out of a possible score of 51. In the box labelled 'Areas of significant concern' the teacher wrote, 'hardly ever speaks unless she wants something'. She scored 3 out of a possible 12 for Language and Listening Experience and the lowest possible scores for Social and Emotional and Approaches to Learning. After 4 terms in nursery, these scores represent a very significant challenge for the school. In an interview with the Reception class teacher during her first term, she commented on Nazma's approach to learning; 'Nazma is not keen to learn things. She doesn't do what you ask her, she ignores instructions. She is not good at counting. She won't do the work. It's her personality. Sometimes she refuses to do things.' However, the central concern of her classteacher was her silence; 'when she speaks, she can speak a sentence. But she doesn't speak much. She has stopped talking to me. She doesn't appear to listen. She doesn't look at the teacher. Is she pretending?' Her teacher realised that Nazma would require special support. She suggested giving her a lot of time, one-to-one work, shared reading as possible strategies to help her. She was familiar with Nazma's siblings and compared their early schooling experiences; 'She is brighter than Yasmin, more able. Hasnan was quiet, but didn't refuse to speak. She is silent at register. I am hoping that one day she will speak.'

6.3.5 Nazma's Year 2 classteacher

During the interview with her Year 2 classteacher, it was evident that Nazma had had a 'breakthrough' during the last term in Key Stage One. Her teacher expressed this in terms of increasing confidence in conversation with peers in English, although she was 'only just speaking in class.' However, her end of Key Stage One results reflect the ways in which Nazma is struggling with the demands of the National Curriculum. She scored Level One in all subjects, which indicates that she is under-achieving in all areas of school learning. However, her classteacher stated clearly, 'she does not have a learning difficulty. She is average for a bilingual child. She makes herself understood.'

Table 6.3

Subject	NC Level
Mathematics	1
Speaking and listening	1
Reading	1
Writing	1
Reading Comprehension	1

Her teacher commented that Nazma was, 'very tolerant, pleasant, friendly and extremely motivated.' She went on to reflect more generally on bilingual children's learning in school;
'They need time for a solid foundation to be established. It is important never to push them to be verbal. If they are not ready, you should not force them to speak. There are not enough opportunities for play. They need opportunities to talk and develop their use of language.'

Nazma's classteacher stated that no English was spoken at home and she had therefore learnt it at school. She was pleased with her progress and particularly, 'her spirit, motivation, determination and hard work.' She described Nazma as 'chipping away' at her learning of English.

In terms of her future, Nazma's classteacher predicted;
'She'll be fine. She endears herself. However, she needs time and the opportunity to develop at her own pace.'

6.4   The Children's home experiences

In considering the parental background of the children, there are significant similarities. The first facts relate to circumstances of immigration: all the families originate in the Kotli district of Pakistan (near Rawlpindi). In all cases, the fathers emigrated to the UK alone, with limited qualifications. They came to Watford, settled there and have not moved residence since that time. The mothers arrived later, in order to marry, and with only their primary education complete. None of the parents had any formal pre-school experience.

In terms of what the parents seek for their children, there are many similarities. It is significant to note the youthfulness of the families; in two cases, the siblings and aunts and uncles of the children are themselves still in full-time education; thus Nazma's sister attended a local FE college, while Maria's aunts and uncles are studying for GCSEs at school. Without exception, the mothers have high aspirations for their children. Maria's mother is the most specific, expressing the wish for her to become a doctor, and the other two mothers also believe not only that their daughters have the capacity to achieve at a high level, but also that they will do so within the (state) educational system.

The second feature amounts to a parallel aspiration: that their daughters will retain and develop their first culture and language. All the children speak Pahari at home, with parents, grandparents and siblings. The mother tongue is decidedly the language of primary communication, and this is not just an inclination but a choice. In addition, Samia has already started Urdu language classes, and the other two children will do so eventually

However, despite the similarities in the children's home and nursery experiences, there are clearly individual differences in the ways in which the three girls experience early schooling. Most significantly, Nazma's underachievement in her early schooling is shown in contrast to Samia's and Maria's relatively successful achievement by the end of Key Stage One. These differences are highlighted in the Inner Layer analysis presented in Chapters 7 and 8.

6.5   The Context for the Children's Experience of early schooling

Nazma, Maria and Samia's nursery teachers are experienced practitioners who have worked in multiethnic nurseries in Watford for most of their teaching careers. The first official statutory guidance for practitioners working with young bilingual children is currently available in the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000). This document

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includes a separate section entitled 'Children with English as an additional language.' However, only one of the six statements set out in bullet points relates to learning English as an additional language: 'providing a range of opportunities for children to engage in speaking and listening activities in English with peers and adults.' Because this single generalised statement does not suggest on a more specific level how practitioners can support English language learning, it implies that all that is necessary are opportunities for speaking and listening. A child like Nazma may be faced with a 'double bind' (Tabors, 1997): she is unable to socialise because she has insufficient English, and at the same time her English language learning may be limited by lack of social interaction. The implication appears to be that children will pick up English through social interaction.

All of the principles for early years education set out in the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage document offer a framework within which the needs of bilingual children can be accommodated. For example, the importance of ensuring a positive transition from home to school is underlined, including a statement that 'practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued. Early years experience should build on what children already know and can do' (QCA, 2000:11) – advice that echoes that of many previous reports (for example, Bullock 1975). However, these principles may be particularly challenging to put into practice for practitioners working with Maria, Samia and Nazma. Mussarat, during her interpretation of the bilingual data stated that, from her experience of working in early years classrooms, 'the reception of bilingual children when they first enter nursery decides the direction in which they will proceed during their school life. The outgoing, confident children will find their way through, while others will stay inside their shells and not come out for the time they are at school.' Nazma's teacher reported that she was very upset during her first weeks in nursery. She clung to her mother, couldn't settle and didn't speak, except when the Bilingual Classroom Assistant was in the nursery. In contrast, both Samia and Maria were viewed by their nursery teachers as confident and bright children who coped well with the transition to nursery. Samia talked confidently to her friend in Pahari and was beginning to use some English, particularly during small group time: for example, 'I do painting.' Maria was viewed as 'brighter than her bilingual peers' by her nursery teacher.

6.6   Headteachers' views

At the beginning of the Pre-school Project, the Headteachers of the participating multi-ethnic schools were asked about their expectations of the Project and their views on how

the achievements of young bilingual children in the early years of schooling could be enhanced. Six Headteachers (including Nazma's Maria's and Samia's) completed the questionnaire. In response to question 1, 'how were the families identified?' it was clear from one Headteacher's response, 'families with pre-Nursery age children, whose older siblings are, in the main, underachieving at school', that there was recognition of the need to address the different starting points for young bilingual children as they enter school in order to ensure equality of opportunity. Other Headteachers stated that the families would be identified on the basis of, ' those who appear to have few facilities for their children and do not send their children to pre-Nursery playgroups.' There appeared to be an understanding of the mismatch between the reality of the learning situation for young bilingual children and the provision and practice in British Nursery classes. This was seen as particularly crucial when children entered the education system.

A significant theme to emerge from the questionnaires arose from the responses to question 5, 'what do you think is the notion of play for these families?' The different understandings of the importance of play in the early years of schooling was highlighted in one Headteacher's comment, 'I think they may not see the link between play and learning'. A further comment related this mismatch to the different views and experiences of the parents, 'their own experiences of education haven't exploited the benefits of pre-school education and play.' One Headteacher went further to suggest that parents should have, 'some understanding of the value that teachers put on particular activities, why they do so and what children may learn, for example, cutting, construction kits, cutting out pictures and gluing, painting, imaginative play. Links between reading and writing, learning from use of words around them, i.e. Sainsbury's, TV, not a matter of just learning ABC or rote 123.' In addition, there were many comments about the play materials at home, 'many home have no toys at all' or 'They need support. Kausar (outreach assistant) has noticed toys are often put away, especially if there's a visitor coming.' The absence of toys in the home, together with little understanding of the importance of play in children's learning, was viewed as a disadvantage by the headteachers.

In response to question 4, 'why do you think minority ethnic families are not accessing existing pre-school provision?' there was general agreement that 'families prefer to keep their children in the home, particularly the youngest child of an extended family.' In addition, Headteachers gave the following reasons; 'unaware it exists, unaware of how to access the system, experiencing a crisis in confidence, no English, uncertainty, conflict of roles between home and school.'

The Headteachers' views on how parents might support their children's learning as they enter the schooling system included the following:

- Spend time talking and playing with their young children;
- Expectation of independence i.e. High/Scope approach for their children;
- Develop children's experience of toys/play materials before they enter nursery.

There was agreement amongst the Headteachers that bilingual children entering nursery were at a disadvantage and they viewed the Pre-school project as an opportunity to ensure the best possible start for such children.

It was clear from the results of the Headteachers' questionnaires that the different starting points of young bilingual children entering nursery was a key issue. There is a mismatch between official recognition of bilingual children in this country and the reality of their learning situation, a mismatch between provision and need, and this is particularly crucial as children enter the education system. As a way of highlighting the point, firstly I draw upon the research findings of Tymms and his colleagues in Durham who examined the effects of significant factors on baseline assessment. The research highlights the differential starting points for contrasting groups of children. The significant factors are: nursery education, playgroup attendance, being a girl, deprived neighbourhood, favoured neighbourhood, being four months older than average, English being the second language. Two out of seven factors have a negative impact on children's educational attainment. Whereas a 'deprived neighbourhood' carries a minus factor of under 5, 'children for whom English is their second language' at the point of entry to formal education carries a minus factor of 15.8. Thus EAL children have by far the greatest 'minus factor compared to other groups in the study. This is a striking presentation of the issues facing teachers of these children and also, the difficulties, which the children themselves face in the system.

Secondly, progression in the system is dependent upon children gaining adequate cognitive development through the curriculum and acquiring sufficient English within a relatively short period. If this is not achieved, the demands of the curriculum (increasingly dependent upon literacy skills) will lead to underachievement for many bilingual children at later stages in their schooling. This is evident in the experience of Nazma and her elder sister, Naseem. Early years educators therefore need to know how to ensure that bilingual children develop the skills they will require in order to 'catch up' with their native speaking peers before the gap between the knowledge and language they can use in the classroom and the demands of the curriculum becomes too wide. Given the starting point of those

children who enter nursery with little or no English, and the urgent need for them to make swift progress, the relaxed attitude in official documents towards bilingual children fails to give attention to the advice teachers need.

Finally, early years educators are also concerned that some children from minority ethnic communities do not benefit fully from educational opportunities in the early years and that this has a detrimental effect on their subsequent achievement in the schooling system. This is underlined in evidence cited in the CRE publication 'From Cradle to School' (1996:36), 'children with the greatest need have least access to those early childhood services best equipped to provide educational support. The significance of nursery education and its association with educational performance, particularly for children with first languages other than English, is highlighted in the data arising from Birmingham's Baseline Assessment of children on entry to school. The data shows the 'differences between the performance of children who have received previous nursery education and children who have not are particularly marked for those who have Bengali, Punjabi and Urdu as their first/main language and less so for those with English as their main language.' (SCAA, 1996:209)

I have shown that there are significant cultural and linguistic discontinuities for bilingual children as they start formal schooling and that their distinctive situation is not addressed in current views about good nursery practice. The pre-school community based project aimed to work with minority ethnic parents and their children in the school and community context in order to make the transition from home to school more effective.

6.7   The nursery teachers' views of the curriculum

In order to understand more fully the nursery provision and practice experienced by Samia, Maria and Nazma, I conducted a taped interview with two of the three nursery teachers, Karen and Melanie (Liz was unable to participate in this interview). This interview took place after the children had left the nursery and the two teachers agreed to the recording at this point. I aimed to establish here a more detailed view of the curriculum offered to bilingual children and to present the teachers' attitudes to bilingual children's experience of their early schooling.

Both nursery teachers describe their nursery curriculum in relation to the SCAA 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning' document and the High/Scope curriculum. Karen summarised the approach in the following way:

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'We do High/Scope curriculum. It's based around active learning. The staff, children and parents, everybody involved managing their time, their activities, it's based around a plan, do, review routine, which is actually quite strong.'

Melanie discussed the principles which underpinned her curriculum:

'Trying to promote self esteem, trying to encourage the children to become independent and to initiate their own learning, trying to develop an inquiring mind, trying to extend the activities that they choose to do. I think these principles are ones promoted by High/Scope.'

I now present a detailed picture of how each teacher organises the nursery session, firstly in Karen's words:

'High/Scope is very heavily based on choice. So the environment and everything in the environment is structured in such a way that the children have access to it. So at worktime - worktime in this nursery is nearly an hour - and the children plan their own activities at that time - we use a system by which they can plan verbally or non-verbally using photographs. And they have a little planning card with their name on and their picture on which they put next to what they would like to plan on a picture board, and then they go to the activity - say for example its painting - they have to go to the art and craft area, they have to get for themselves a pallette, they have to mix their own paints - we only put out powder paint and we only put out red, blue, yellow, and white - if they want other colours they learn to mix them and make them. They've got liquid to mix it with and they mix their own paints, they've then got to get their own paper, and make sure their name's on it, some of them can write their names, some of them can copy their names, and there are name-cards available which they go and get which are velcroed onto something else so they know which is theirs. Or they're responsible for asking an adult to help them with that. They then do their painting, they hang it up to dry, and they wash everything up and leave it clean and tidy for the next child - and its a routine and they can be totally independent within that routine. The environment is structured in a way that they can do things independently. We don't put the playdough out on the table at the beginning of the session, the playdough is on the trolley, there's four separate pots, there's four aprons, so all children can do playdough if they plan it - they get their playdough, they get their tools, they put on their apron, they do the activity, and they tidy it all away onto the trolley so there's space for another child to come and

do their own as well. And its their decision to do playdough, it's their decision to painting, or drawing, or jigsaws.'

Secondly, in Melanie's words:

'We start off now with a circle time. Children come into the nursery and they find their name and we then have a chatting time and I try to encourage the children to bring in something they've found or a postcard from Granny or something that someone's just bought them or. Sometimes it's not actually things that they've brought to show, but sometimes it helps if they've got a prompter, if they've got a leaflet that they got from the Butterfly house or they want to talk about. So, we have a general chit chat and we do a counting thing we count the boys and we count the girls, we put the day up, we don't actually do a formal register, but I encourage the children to look around and to see where there's a name and nobody there, so they really know children's names. We then talk about the activities we've got out for that day, because we actually put some activities out on tables. A lot of the activities, the children are completely free to choose what they want to get out. They might want the bricks out, they might want the mobilo out, but on some activity tables, we actually put some activities we actually want the children to experiment with or to use. We talk about those and we talk about the adult initiated activities. The children are then free to choose what they want. Sometimes, we'll extend the circle time and let it involve some stories, partly so that I can take a small group out, that might be to do some extension work on something they've been doing, or a group that needs some reinforcement or whatever. They tend to be ability grouped and during that time, when I've got some bilingual help, children can be taken out. Then the children are free to choose exactly what they want to do and we go outside if the weather's fine and the children have a drink. We then clear up about 40 minutes before the end, so the children have about one hour and a quarter of activity. We then do a little review session. We encourage if they've made a model or particularly want to share something, they're encouraged to draw a picture of it, they can share it with the other children and we do some singing and rhymes and story.'

Both nursery teachers identified a common feature as the routine of the nursery session which is carefully planned and predictable for the children. There was a strong sense of the organisation of the nursery session which was powerfully structured in their minds in terms of routines, time spans and/or areas for activities. In both nurseries there is a considerable amount of time allocated for 'free choice' play, followed by a 'review' of the children's

learning. They had a very strong sense of how time and space are divided and of how the balance of routines, variations and choices fits within this framework. A second feature was that they were equally clear about the principles which guided the aims of the provision. These were expressed in terms of independence, choice and the ability to initiate their own learning. The over-riding importance of the notion of independence was striking. This appeared to mean being able to undertake a range of tasks without adult assistance. The educational importance of this key principle appeared to be unquestioned. An evident relationship was implicit between the key principle of independence and children's ability to plan which activity they might choose to do. The interviews reflected a sense that the value placed on independence and choice has as such to do with an accepted organisational structure as it did to the children's learning. Overlaying the organisational structure and the key values were two curriculum frameworks, 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning' and 'High/Scope'.

In response to a question about how the nursery curriculum is suited for bilingual children, firstly Karen responded:

> 'Some of the children whether they are bilingual or not to begin with are very shy and they don't want to plan verbally, they don't explain to tell us what they're doing, but they have got this physical thing of moving the card on the planning board, they can actually move the card around and put it where they want to work. So they haven't actually got to speak, or they can walk around and they can just point, we're quite happy for them just to point at where they are going to work, and gradually then they start to say 'painting' and then a bit later on we might get 'I'm going to do painting', a bit later on we might get 'I'm going to do painting, I'm going to paint a frog' or whatever, and then you might get ...you can extend that and say 'What do you need to do your painting or what colours are you going to mix to do your painting' so their plan can be enlarged on, so you've got, right from the beginning you've got this and they can do it non-verbally and then you can extend them verbally. It actually works quite well for the bilingual children. It gives them time to build up their confidence because until they're confident and that they want to speak, they shouldn't have pressure on them to speak, so we don't sort of say 'What's this' and make them name things and things like this. Some children don't say anything for the first term they're in here, bilingual children, sometimes it's longer than that but when they do start speaking you can't stop them because the first things they actually say are whole sentences. They've been taking it all in and suddenly they feel confident enough to use it, and it's wonderful because they do,

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they use it really really well. They are all different but I think if they're strong in their first language their English develops very quickly. Having said that you always get gaps in vocabulary and understanding, like you know at the beginning it's very difficult as well to pick where those gaps are ... so there are gaps.'

It is clear that Karen views her approach to the curriculum as supportive for bilingual children. She is aware of the 'silent period' for early stage bilingual children and she has a positive attitude to children's first language development.

Melanie was asked the question, 'do the 'Desirable Outcomes' give you a framework which includes bilingual children? Her response was:

'Broadly, yes, although very little besides things like valuing a child's culture. There's very little mention for bilingual children. I think we use the baseline assessment. They have now got a column in lang. and lit. for the children to be assessed in their mother tongue, which is very good, although it doesn't appear on the score on the computer print out. You're doing it but they are saying, is this of any value. The maths one which really does need to be done in mother tongue, because one of the questions is whether they are using mathematical language, bigger than smaller than, when the child has very little English, they're obviously not going to be using mathematical language in English, although big and small is usually acquired quite quickly, but you can't assess it and it is difficult to assess if the mother tongue doesn't marry up with the person giving mother tongue support, which is sometimes the case. It still needs a lot of work done.

I think more of a mention needs to be made in the 'Desirable Outcomes' rather than you saying, it could be fitted in there, there's nothing specifically mentioned about bilingual children and there should be.'

Karen's response to the question, 'the Desirable Outcomes are designed for all children, do you think that it gives a framework that incorporates bilingual children?

'As a teacher who has been teaching a long time they don't offer me any help because they're too narrow. With the experience I've got and the things I've taught before, I don't see that they give the children enough, they certainly don't pin-point bilingual children in any way.'

Both Karen and Melanie are experienced nursery teachers. They both state very clearly that the statutory curriculum framework, 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning' does not provide guidance for teaching bilingual children. In addition, they both said that they had not received any initial training in working with bilingual children. Melanie had attended a course about bilingual children at the Section 11 Centre some 9 years previously which she still remembered and valued.

Melanie stated that, before she attended the course:

> 'I had very little understanding of what was going on. I didn't fully appreciate the necessity to promote the child's first language and I can her myself saying, with the best will in the world, speak English. I need to be shot. But it was through a lack of knowledge and understanding.'

Judgements about how best to respond and what the English language development for bilingual children might be during their time in the nursery is based on common sense and experience.

However, Karen stated:

> 'I think we should be more aware of giving children time. With an awareness we shouldn't be putting pressure on a child to speak, also staff need to be aware that the expectations at home may be different as well, that there may be conflicts between expectations at home and at school.'

6.8 The Social context for learning

6.8.1 Samia's Nursery

The following description of Samia during one session at the end of her first term at nursery is presented to highlight the key issues for discussion.

Samia has been attending school for four weeks. At 9 o'clock she enters nursery holding her mother's hand. She finds her 'giraffe' picture and places it on the 'planning board'. She has planned to play in the small construction area on the carpet. She plays with the small coloured bricks, threading them onto a string, sitting on her own silently. Shabina (BCA) moves over to the carpet and talks to Samia about the bricks. The conversation takes place in Pahari, but Samia also uses the English colour names. At 9.30 Samia moves over to the planning board and changes her picture to work in the art and crat area. She sits on her own colouring and experimenting with the coloured crayons. It is 'tidy up time' at 9.50. The teacher announces this, 'Five more minutes of work time left.' Samia tidies up and moves over to the gluing area to hang up her apron on the peg. It is small group or 'recall' time in the nursery. There are 8 children in her small group and the teacher begins by leading a counting activity, 'let's count and see how many children we've got today.' Samia joins in, counting up to 8 in English. At 10.15 it is 'Recall time' in the small group, while the children drink their milk, 'I want you to tell me all about what you were doing when it was tidy up time.' The children talk in turn about what they were doing. The teacher then asks Samia, 'what did you do today?'. She replies, 'colouring', and is silent. Her teacher adds, 'I think Samia did some matching trays and a drawing today'. At 10.40 the teacher leads an activity about Percy the Parkkeeper. Three children, including Samia, cut and stick coloured paper onto a large cut out of this story character. The children answer the teacher's questions, 'what colour do we need to do his boots?' and Samia listens, involved in the activity. Finally, she says, 'finish' and moves to her peg, puts on her coat and goes outside into the garden. At 11.20 all the children gather on the large nursery carpet for singing. It is home time at 11.30. Samia's mother appears at the door and she goes home.

The nursery Samia attends is situated in a separate building adjacent to the primary school. The large open plan room has the main areas of learning clearly set out as follows; art and craft area, construction area, imaginative play area, natural area, book corner, computer area and the outside garden area. There are approximately 30 children in the morning session of nursery, which Samia attends for two and a half hours a day (9.00-11.30). Nearly

half of the children are bilingual and the majority of these are Pahari speakers. The nursery teacher, Karen, works with two nursery nurses and a part-time bilingual classroom assistant. She has extensive experience of working in multi-ethnic nursery classrooms and has a good knowledge of the minority ethnic families who attend her class. The structure and routines of the nursery are particularly significant as it follows a High/Scope approach to the curriculum. This encourages the children to 'plan' their activities using a planning board when they first arrive in the morning, to 'do' the activity during 'work time' and then to 'review' or 'recall' their learning with their 'key' adult in a small group. In addition to this central 'plan do, review' routine for the nursery session, there are focussed teacher-directed small group activities based on the High/Scope 'key experiences' which cover the requirements for the Early Learning Goals set out in the curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (QCA, 2000). The session ends with outside play in the garden and then story and singing in a whole group on the carpet.

Throughout her first term in nursery, Samia has been developing her understanding of the procedural rules and expectations of this new social world. For example, she knows the routine at the start of the session in which children are expected to identify 'their' picture and place it on the 'planning board' to show what area or activity they wish to choose. She knows the different areas of the nursery and what they are used for. She knows that it is acceptable to play quietly on her own at certain times while in teacher-led group activities she will be expected to join in. The behavioural expectations of adults are embedded in the activities and often reinforced. Some are expressed through instructions ('tidy up and go to your group'); some are conveyed in questions ('right, Samia, what are you going to do now?'); and others are reinforced in adult talk about activities ('some of you haven't had a turn'). As we will see later (in Chapter 7), the language which relates to these expectations, often expressed as instructions, become a feature of Samia's own use of English.

Haste (1987) states that 'in acquiring these rules, the child learns the basis for interactions with others, and the shared cultural framework for making sense of the world' (op.cit.: 163). During her first term, Samia has had to learn a wide range of rules and routines to do with how time and space is organised in the nursery and with the behaviour that is expected. At the end of her first term she has gone beyond the initial stage of insecurity in a new environment. She has the confidence to attract the teacher's attention when necessary and to object when shapes she is playing with are taken by other children ('No mine. Not yours'). Nevertheless, her limited understanding of English has meant that her acculturation in the setting has included times of stress and difficulty for her. The process of adaptation involves a new shaping of her identity as Samia discovers and internalises what is acceptable in the

sociocultural environment. Willett (1995) points out that learners acquire more than linguistic rules through interactional routines: 'they also appropriate identities, social relations and ideologies.' (op.cit.: 477)

6.8.2 Maria's Nursery

The following vignette of Maria during one session in her fifth week at nursery provides a composite picture of her experience during the early days at school.

Maria enters nursery and finds her place on the carpet alongside the other 28 children in the class. This is her fifth week at school. She cried during her first days at school but she is quiet now. At the beginning of the morning the teacher introduces the activities for the session to the whole class. It is then small group time and Maria joins a Nursery Nurse for a planning session. In response to the question repeated three times 'Maria, what would you like to do?' Maria responds, 'painting' and moves over to the hand painting activity table. She paints her hands alongside Kiran, silently and then washes her hands. She then moves to the dough table and sits with two English speaking girls who are engaged in imaginative play, making cakes. Maria is silent except for one interaction. When asked 'can I have some more cake?' she responds emphatically 'no.' At the cutting activity Maria is making a face using paper shapes and a Nursery Nurse interacts with her. She makes one word responses to questions about her face; 'one', 'two', 'nose', 'mouth', 'eye', 'brown.' Maria then moves over to the carpet and plays with wheeled toys and small construction on her own. Then she stands and watches the other children. She sings 'ba ba black sheep' to herself quietly as she plays. It is home time and she is collected by her Auntie at the nursery door.

The nursery Maria attends is situated in a separate building adjacent to a primary school in North Watford. The areas of learning are set out in a large open plan room and include, an imaginative play area, construction area (on the carpet), sticking, drawing and painting area, dough table, book corner and outside garden area. There are approximately 30 children in the morning session of nursery, which Maria attends for two and a half hours a day (9.00 – 11.30). In the morning nursery session approximately one quarter of the children are bilingual and there are four Pahari speaking children in addition to Maria. The nursery teacher works with two nursery nurses and a part time bilingual classroom assistant. All the staff in the nursery have considerable experience of working in a multi-ethnic school context. The structure and routines of the nursery follow a 'child-centred' and traditional play-based approach to the curriculum. At the beginning of the session, the children gather on the

carpet and are introduced to the range of activities by an adult. They then choose from the range of learning experiences available for the session. The adults support the children in specific areas or undertake observations of the children. The children are free to move to their chosen activity as they wish for most of the nursery session. During the last half hour, they have a snack and a story or singing session, usually in a small group.

In this vignette of Maria during her fifth week at nursery, the following issues can be raised:

- She is at an early stage of English language development and plays quietly on her own for much of the time.
- She is supported by a Nursery Nurse and encouraged to contribute to conversations about the painting, dough etc, using one word.
- She has learnt the nursery routines and procedures and she is able to participate in activities without speaking to other children. Maria is missing out by not experiencing the ongoing rich play experiences, either in English or mother tongue.
- There is no evidence of use of mother tongue in the nursery (except when a BCA is present). This is in contrast to accepted nursery language policy and QCA Guidance on EAL.

6.8.3 Nazma's nursery

Nazma's nursery has been introduced in Chapter 2. I shall reproduce the following vignette during her seventh week in nursery to highlight key issues about the context for Nazma's early learning.

Nazma enters nursery holding her sister's hand. Her sister, Yasmin (aged 4½), moves over to the large carpet where the children sit with the nursery teacher at the beginning of every session. Nazma follows her, chewing her dress, staying close to her sister and watching everything. She stopped crying during the fifth week at nursery and she now comes every afternoon. The children listen to the teacher talking about caterpillars and many join in the discussion in English. Nazma is silent. Mussarat, (Bilingual Classroom Assistant), enters the nursery. She gathers a small group of Pahari speaking children together to share a book. This activity had been planned with the nursery teacher and was linked to the current topic. The children switch into Pahari (their mother tongue) for this activity. Nazma listens and points to a picture of a dog (kutha) and cat (billee) in an Urdu alphabet picture book, but does not speak. They go outside to play. Nazma stands on the outside watching the other children and holds Mussarat's hand. She has learnt the climbing frame routine and repeats

the climbing and sliding activity several times. The children go inside and choose from a range of play activities. Nazma watches. She stays at an activity for one minute and moves on. This is repeated several times. She then wanders around the room sucking her fingers. It is story time on the carpet. The children sit and listen to the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Nazma sits close to her sister and watches. Their mother appears at the door and they go home.

(Drury, 1997b)

There are a number of factors that affect Nazma's limited engagement in the setting after five weeks of nursery:

- There is no evidence of co-operative support for her from other children;

- There is no evidence of any one-to-one contact with the teacher;

- Engagement is wholly dependent on the presence of Mussarat who enables her to listen to Pahari although she does not speak herself;

- She listens to English in use in the context of a general discussion and of a story: however, there is no evidence of understanding or of any support for her through English;

- There is no evidence that the cultural assumptions made in the nursery are being made explicit to Nazma.

6.9   Summary

In this chapter I have considered the context for Maria, Samia and Nazma's learning as they enter the English educational system and the challenges facing their families and teachers. It is clear that the children's mothers have high aspirations for their daughters but are unable to support them in their school learning. The children's teachers are working within a context of limited official guidance for supporting young children learning English as an additional language and a Government agenda of Target setting based on Nursery Baseline assessment data. This represents an enormous challenge for Samia, Maria and Nazma's teachers as the girls enter the schooling system and they set about the task of learning learn in English.

In the next two chapters I examine how the children themselves experience early schooling and present an inner layer of analysis. How do Maria, Samia and Nazma find their own way through nursery and what are their individual strategies for 'getting by' and beyond that, learning during their first year of formal schooling? How do they syncretise home and school learning?

Chapter 7

Inner layer analysis:

Samia and Maria: becoming successful learners

7:0 Introduction

Bilingual children starting school are obliged to face the challenges of learning the language and culture, which they find in the nursery context. These circumstances are predetermined by the early years policy, practice and training of nursery staff. However, I argue that within this context, children make their own choices and exercise some control. The data I present in this chapter demonstrates how Samia and Maria individually respond to the nursery situation, find their own way through early schooling and make choices. I have chosen to interpret the data through the ebb and flow of the children's lives. I argue that the ways in which they make their own way through nursery may be thought of as strategic in the sense that they are the ways the children adopt in order to deal with the situation in which they find themselves. By drawing attention to the strategies each child is using in response to the flow of their experience, I argue that children do this with all the resources at their disposal and with their individual personal characteristics and personalities. Although there are strategies children have in common, because the situation is very similar, each child tackles the task of learning to learn in nursery differently and each strategy is adapted individually. The strategies highlight the girls' ability to manage the situation and set about learning the language and culture of early schooling. Through this interpretation, it is possible to show aspects of Samia and Maria's learning, which are invisible to their teachers and demonstrate their individuality and developing control over their learning.

The data presented in the 'inner layer' of analysis in this chapter shows how two young bilingual children respond to their ongoing experience, both at home and in nursery and at the beginning and end points of their year in nursery. I argue that Samia and Maria exercise considerable control over their learning in the nursery and home context, both with children and with adults. This is identified in the strategies they use in response to their situations as key players in their own learning. This is in spite of the outward fact that as the children acclimatise to their new environment, they spend long periods of time on their own with

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minimal engagement in the setting and without speaking. This is a difficult and very important time for the children and, although there is no spoken evidence in the data to indicate their response to the situation, observations made during their early days in nursery present a picture of their experience. Therefore, prior to the presentation of the strategies, which reveal how control takes place, I offer a description, or 'vignette', of each child's activity during a nursery session based on notes made while I observed their early response in the nursery context.

7.1   Maria and Samia at nursery

Context 1: playing with children
Table 7.1

Strategy	Samia	Maria
Asserting possession	Transcript 1 Transcript 2	Transcript 3 Transcript 4
Practising English	Transcript 5	Transcript 4
Rehearsing English	Transcript 6	
Asking questions	Transcript 7 Transcript 8 Transcript 9	Transcript 10
Language play	Transcript 11	Transcript 12
Taking a leading role		Transcript 13

The following vignettes are presented to illustrate Samia's and Maria's early response to the nursery context. This is followed by an interpretation of their strategic response to the experience, illustrated by examples from the transcripts.

7.1.1   Asserting possession: Samia Vignette (3.3.97 week 7 in nursery)

Samia enters nursery holding her mother's hand. She finds her 'giraffe' picture and places it on the 'planning board'. She has planned her 'worktime' in the art and craft area and she stands watching a nursery nurse organising a hand painting activity at the painting table. The children are individually making hand printed cards for mother's day. She takes her turn at the activity in silence, except for the correct one word response to questions about the colour of the paint and the card. (What's that colour? Yellow) Samia then moves onto the carpet where children are playing with a wooden train set, solid shapes and small construction materials. She is silent while she plays on her own. After a few minutes, another child takes one of her shapes and she protests 'No, mine, not yours. Look.' There is no response and she continues playing. There is talk going on around her, but it is not addressed to Samia. The nursery teacher walks past the carpet and Samia attracts her attention, 'Mrs Ashley, look.' The teacher interacts with Samia, asking about her model, 'What's this doing, Samia? After several attempts using the same questions, Samia replies 'star' and the teacher builds on this in the short conversation with her. The teacher walks away and it is 'tidy up time'. At 'small group time' and Samia sits with the teacher in a group of seven children. The focus for this session is the song 'heads, shoulders, knees and toes' and playing a game to teach the parts of the body. She joins in the refrain of the song 'knees and toes', listens, watches attentively and participates predominantly non-verbally during the game (for example, the teacher asks, 'Samia, can you give me one leg'). Then the teacher directs the children, 'It's time to go out in the garden'. She finds Samia sitting on her own singing to herself 'knees and toes, knees and toes', before she goes outside to play. (Drury, 2000: 47)

As the vignette shows, during her early days in nursery, Samia listens to the English speaking children and watches their play. She spends long periods of time playing on her own and for much of the time she is silent. The other children in the nursery do not include her in their play or initiate conversations with her. However, she has the confidence to use mainly one or two word utterances, which she uses 'telegraphically' to stand for a more complete meaning. Examples of her use of English at this stage are: 'go back', 'I making', 'I teacher', lot of'. Throughout the nursery session (3.3.97) she interacts in English with other children only six times and, with the single exception of the word 'look!', each involves asserting possession (e.g. 'no, mine). This is highly significant and suggests that for some children there may be a time, in a new social context where a substantial number of other children need to be taken into account, when insecurity requires 'disengagement' rather than 'engagement' in order to protect personal space and possession. Thus early examples

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of the use of English stem from a social imperative to protect the self. This takes place prior to other early attempts to use the new language either in response to an adult or to children. It 'plays into' the 'double bind' which Tabors (1997) refers to which highlights the dependence of language acquisition on the acceptance of children with very limited English by their English speaking peers for the necessary social interaction to take place In the following transcript we can clearly see how Samia's responses 'play into' or 'promote' this 'double bind'. The need to protect her play materials discourages interaction with another child and, at this point in time, self protection has high priority. In the context of Samia's experience of the 'double bind', her assertiveness may be seen as a stage in her progress towards social integration and an important strategy for 'getting by' during her first few months in nursery and may be seen as an argument against the 'double bind' rather than with it.

Transcript 1 (Term 1)
Samia has moved onto the carpet where children are playing with a Brio wooden train set. She is silent whilst playing on her own.

1 Samia:	No, mine
	Not yours [to another child]
	No (indistinct) big boy

| Samia: | Look [to another boy] |

[There is no response.
There is talk going on around her while she is playing, but not addressed to Samia].

5 Child 1:	No, this is mine
Samia:	It's mine
Child 1:	You're hurting me, get away from me.
Samia:	That's mine
Child1:	Hey, you're breaking mine.

When Samia protests to a child playing near her who has taken a piece of her model by saying, 'no, mine, not yours,' this is ignored by the other child. She makes two further attempts and this interaction helps her to establish her presence and may be seen as a necessary precursor to more constructive interaction with other children which will then become the major stimulus for her language learning. However at this point in time it

illustrates her social isolation in the nursery. The other children playing near her are talking to each other, but she is mostly ignored and her English is not yet sufficient to enable her to initiate interactions constructively.

Later in the same nursery session, Samia uses the strategy of self assertion again:

Transcript 2: (Term 1)
Samia: Shut up, I teacher
              Not yours here OK

7.1.2 Asserting Possession Maria Vignette (31.10.96 week 7 in nursery)

Maria enters nursery at 9.00 and finds her place on the carpet alongside the other 28 children in the class. She cried during her first days at school but she is quiet now. At the beginning of the morning the teacher introduces the activities for the session to the whole class, 'cut out the two eyes, stick them on the face and then draw in the rest of the things on your face.' It is then small group time and Maria joins a Nursery Nurse for a planning session. In response to the question, 'Maria, what would you like to do?', repeated several times, Maria responds in English 'painting.' She moves over to the hand painting table, paints her hands alongside Kiran, silently, and then washes her hands. At 9.50 she moves to the dough table and sits with two English speaking girls who are engaged in imaginative play, making cakes. Maria is silent, except for one interaction. When asked, 'can I have some more cake?', she responds emphatically, 'no!' At 10.15 Maria is at the cutting and sticking activity. She is cutting out paper shapes to make a face picture and she is looking at her face in a mirror. A Nursery Nurse interacts with her during this activity and Maria makes one word responses to questions about her face; 'one', 'two', 'nose', eye', 'brown'. At 10.40 she goes to the book area on the carpet and changes her library book. Maria then plays on the carpet with the wheeled toys and the small construction on her own. She displays high levels of concentration during this activity and is silent. At 10.50 she stands and watches the other children playing with duplo and small construction. At 11.15 Maria sings 'ba ba black sheep' to herself quietly as she plays. The children gather on the carpet with their book bags and coats. It is home time at 11.30 and she is collected by her Auntie at the nursery door.

During her early days at nursery, Maria listens actively to the English spoken by other children at play, and to the adults' interactions with her. In the three taped sessions during her first term at nursery, Maria is evidently more confident in her conversations with adults,

particularly the BCA and Nursery Nurses. She plays alongside other children and participates in on-going nursery activities. During the first recording at nursery (31.10.96), Maria is sitting at the dough table with two English-speaking girls. They have an extended conversation about the 'cakes' they are making with the playdough. Maria listens, but does not join in with their talk about the 'cakes'. However, she uses the strategy of self-assertion, to protect her playdough in the following transcript.

Transcript 3 (Term 1)

1	Child 1: I	look at my cake
		look at my cake
		there's a cherry on
		this cake has got a cherry on top
5		this is my cake
		my cake is so heavy I can't lift it up
	Child 2	it's a giant
	Child 1	yes, it's a giant cake
		Oh, the cherry fell off
10		look
		[to Maria]
		oh you're making a pancake?
	Child 2	where shall I put them?
	Child 1	put them on a spoon
		Can I have some more cake?
15	Maria	no

[Maria indicates strongly that she does not want to give her dough to Child 1]

	Child 1	they're cooked
		They're cooked
		123456
		you're making a lot
20		ready to eat

This is the only recorded example of Maria speaking with other children in nursery during her first term.

During her third term at nursery, Maria is more confident in her use of English. In one particular session at nursery (19.6.97), she uses a range of strategies during her interactions with other children.

In the following transcript, Maria is at the writing table, writing her name. Another child joins her and Maria's self-assertion is evident here.

Transcript 4 (Term 3)

1	Maria	let my do it
		let my show you
	Child 1	no
		What you have to do?
5	Maria	let my do it
		get off
		you off that
		you come down, down, down
		[singing to herself, to the tune of Twinkle, twinkle]
	Child 1	[indistinct]
10	Maria	no, it's mine
	Child 1	why you got that on? [referring to the radio mic.]
	Maria	I know

7.1.3 Practising English

In addition to asserting possession, for example in line 10 (transcript 4), Maria is taking risks and practising her English. In lines 1,2 and 5 (transcript 4), Maria is practising the phrase 'let my do it' and using a variation, 'let my show you.'

Although Samia is not yet able to use English for social interaction with her peers, she uses 'practising' strategies, either on her own in private speech or with another child. During her first term in nursery, the following interaction with a Pahari speaking friend, Bahriye, in the bathroom, demonstrates her practice of the word 'go':

Transcript 5: (Term 1)

1 Samia:	Go back OK
	Go back
	Me no

		Go back
5		Go
Bahriye:		Me no go
Samia:		Go
		I have [indistinct]
Bahriye:	[indistinct]	
10 Samia:		Go
		Go back
Bahriye:		Me toilet
Samia:		Me
Bahriye:		Ouch, shut the door or I will hit you

In the context of the bathroom at nursery and with her friend as her conversation partner, Samia is able to practise her limited English. She uses one phrase 'Go' and 'Go back' 7 times in this 14 line interaction with Bahriye. She is using this phrase as playful self assertion and practising her English in a 'unexposed' context.

7.1.4 Rehearsing English

In the following short transcript Samia is experimenting with her English. In private speech she is using rehearsal strategies, which indicate that she is developing an understanding of structures by using substitution. In this example she picks up ('echoes') the commentary of an English speaking peer sitting near her ('I making a box') and repeats this with variation four times.

Transcript 6 (Term 1)

1 Child A:	I making a box
Samia:	I making ears [to herself]
	I making ears
	I making
5	I making wheels

7.1.5 Asking Questions

At the end of her two terms at nursery, Samia is developing confidence in her use of English. She takes risks during her conversations with children while playing. This is

demonstrated by her use of questions as a strategy for engaging with a bilingual child during a cutting and sticking activity.

Transcript 7 (Term 2)

1 Samia:	How did you make it that?
	Why didn't show it me... [to herself]
	I want something from... [to herself]
	Have you... where did you get it that?

During the same session at nursery (7.7.97), Samia is doing an alphabet caterpillar puzzle with her friend, Bahriye. She is still at a stage when formulaic language predominates (in this case quite extended forms). She has heard different forms but has not yet sorted out pronoun substitution possibilities. She has an extended conversation with her in English (45 lines). She uses the strategies of, Asking questions, and Practising English, and this enables her to actively generate her own learning.

Transcript 8 (Term 2)

1 Samia:	We saw it caterpillar in'it?
Bahriye:	yeah, like this fat H caterpillar
Samia:	yeah that caterpillar [laughing]
	It was there I think
	Go there
	Go there
	Where that go?
Bahriye:	where that go?
	Go there
10 Samia:	where?
	No that don't go there
Bahriye:	here
Samia:	where that go?
	Silly fat sausage
15	Where that go?
	That go there
	Where that go?
	That goes in here

The use of the question 'where that go?' helps Samia to direct the activity (doing the caterpillar puzzle) and the repetition of phrases enables her to practise her English in a natural and stress free context. Her friend, Bahriye, joins in with the repetition and asking questions and provides a supportive framework for this activity. The use of the colloquial phrase 'silly fat sausage' demonstrates how her developing knowledge of English is drawn from peer social interaction. She is clearly confident to take risks in her language use, for example in the use of the question tag 'in it'.

A further example of Samia's developing English is a short interaction with another child while working at a cutting and sticking activity:

Transcript 9: (Term 2)

1 Samia:	Mine's are nice
Child A	uh?
Samia:	mine's are nice
	Yours are yucky
5 Shabina:	Samia, put the scissors down.
Samia:	How did you make that?
	Why didn't you show it me…
	I want something from…
	Have you… where did you get it that?
	You always already go in your trip and you already write it…
	I didn't go on the my trip

In line 4 Samia uses colloquial language learnt from peer social activities ('yucky'). There is a very apparent change in her use of English from 4 months ago when she started nursery. She knows and uses full question forms ('How did you make that?') and is confident enough now to try to express complex meanings ('You always already go in your trip'), despite the fact that she is not yet able to do so entirely successfully. There are a number of examples in this transcript of a stage of English use when she has the confidence to use an increasingly wide range of words and phrases although she is not yet able to put the structures together correctly.

While playing with small construction on the carpet with another child, Maria asks a series of questions, which demonstrates her developing confidence in English.

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Transcript 10 (Term 3)

1	Child 2	how do you make a gun with this?
	Maria	gun do it see [indistinct]
		Do you like this?
		Do you like this?
5	Child 3	OK
	Maria	do you upside down?
	Child 3	not really
	Maria	you want big one?
	Child 3	what you say?
10	Maria	you want big one?
	Child 3	yes
	Maria	OK

Maria is taking risks in this conversation, trying out her question forms (do you like this? Do you upside down? You want big one?) and managing to make herself understood during her play.

7.1.6 Language Play

Having fun with language is an important strategy for Samia during her second (and last) term at nursery. She is no longer simply using self-assertion, but there is genuine language play on a mutual level with peers. During the following extract from a conversation with a friend in the nursery bathroom, Samia takes a lead and imitates her friend in the language play with the words 'pooh' and 'pussy'.

Transcript 11: (Term 2)

1 Samia:		Look teacher coming garden
		Pussy cat
Child A:		dried a pooh
Samia:		dried a pooh [laughs]
5 Child A:		dried a pooh pooh
Samia:		dried a pussy pussy
		Have it pussy
		Have your breakfast pussy

In this extract, Samia is showing confidence and enjoyment in the interaction with her friend. This 'playing with language' is a key strategy for getting by and learning in English. It is crucial for the development of spoken language and for the early literacy work, which she will encounter when she starts school during the following term.

Maria is playing with small construction on the carpet with an English-speaking child (Child 2). In the following transcript, Maria is confident in her conversation with a friend, taking risks with her English and engaging in language play.

Transcript 12 (Term 3)

1	Maria	come do that one
		do that one
		look I do a pooh pooh
	Child 2	don't do any guns
5		what's this
		pink thing
		get out you pink thing
	Maria	go away you idiot
	Child 2	why did you say that?
10	Child 2	oops a daisy
	Maria	oops a daisy
	Child 2	oh a pooh
		Don't do them guns
	Maria	I do other one let's do it I can't
15		I can't do this right
		Can't do...
		Do like do
		Do like
		Do like this
20		Do like this
		Do like this
	Child 2	you do that one
		And you do that one
		And you do that one
25	Maria	do that

Maria is having fun in this interaction, taking a lead and imitating her friend (see lines 10 to 12). From line 16 to 21 she is repeating the short phrase 'do like this' and rehearsing the

language by repeating it to herself. Interestingly, her friend picks up on this in line 22 and joins in with Maria's strategy.

7.1.7 Taking a leading role

There is evidence during Maria's third term in nursery that she is beginning to play a leading role in her conversations with adults and children. This is demonstrated by contrasting her contribution to the play at the dough table in term 1 (see transcript 1) with the following transcript at the dough table in term 3.

Transcript 13 (Term 3)

1	Maria	you can't roll and you can't put [singing to herself]
		back in your playdough
	Child 2	you make rubbish
		And she
5	Maria	you making rubbish
	Child 2	I'm not
	Maria	yeah
	Child 2	I'm not
	Maria	I'm making cake
10	Child 2	I'm not making [indistinct]
	Maria	I done that one [singing to herself]
		Da da
		We can't do...
15		Can't do...
		It's not yours
		[laughing]
		can't roll it up
		Saqeeb
20		no

There is evidence in this transcript that Maria is taking control of her learning at the dough table. At line 9, she announces 'I'm making cake' and there are echoes of the conversation at the dough table in Transcript 1. She is, at the end of her first year at nursery, able to play an active part in the conversation, while playing with playdough with her peers. We also see Maria singing to herself (lines 12 – 19) and rehearsing her English – a process which will continue with her developing confidence.

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7.2 Samia and Maria at home

Context 2: playing with siblings

Table 7.2

Strategy	Samia	Maria
Rehearsing English	Transcript 14	
Code-switching	Transcript 15	
Knowing colours	Transcript 15	

7.2.1 Rehearsing English

Samia's play with her younger brother, Sadaqat, at home provides new insights into the way she is learning. She is freed from the constraints of appropriateness that apply in the nursery and can apply herself with greater confidence. In this social context, Samia engages in a 'school game' with Sadaqat. The following transcript is an invitation from Samia to her brother to 'enter' the game in Pahari:

Transcript 14: (Term 2)
[Pahari in italics]
1 Samia: little bit

Things back

Little bit back

That not school [to Sadaqat]

5   *Come in school*, Sadaqat

Come in school

In the first three lines Samia is repeating a short phrase, which leads to a variation or extension. Given the greater freedom to experiment in the play situation and in the context of her home, Samia's language shows a wider range of lexis, structures and knowledge in English than at school. She is clearly rehearsing the language she has heard at nursery by repeating 'chunks' or 'formulaic' phrases in familiar situations.

7.2.2 Code-switching

We also have insights into Samia's mother tongue, which she uses with considerable fluency in her interactions with Sadaqat. In the nursery, there are indications that Samia's use of English, at the end of one term in nursery, will soon overtake her Pahari, as there are very few examples of code-switching in this context.

Transcript 15: (Term 2)

[Pahari in italics]

1. Samia:	*Sadaqat, stand up*
	we're not having group time now
	group time
	you can play, Sadaqat
5.	*shall we play something?*
	you want to do painting?
	[noise from Sadaqat]
	O.K. get your water
	let's get a water
10.	let's get a water
	let's get a paper
	baby didn't cry
	hurry up (whispering)
	you want paper
15.	and put in the painting
	do that and what are you choose colour
	black
Sadaqat:	back
20.Samia:	no, there's a black
	did you finish it?
	painting
	you make it
	Sadaqat, do it with this finger
25.	*do it like this, do it like that*
	wash
	which colour *are you going to choose*
	next thing

	don't do it, Sadaqat
30.	*orange satsuma*
	I'm doing it satsuma colour
	(clapping, knocking)
	you are having your...
	(crying)
35.	like it?
Sadaqat:	*mummy* [calling to mother]
Samia	*let's do some painting*
	do it like this, Sadaqat
	red
40.	*don't do it*
	now you can do it
	now we've done it
	finish
	I have
45.	*Sadaqat, put it over there*
	and let's do some painting
	wash up
	Sadaqat, give it to big sister
	give paper and I'll do wash up
	put paper over there
	now it's story time

When Samia wants to draw Sadaqat into the game or when she wants to give him a 'real' instruction, one that she wants her brother to follow, she uses Pahari. There is, therefore, a distinction between the game, which is the 'school game' in English, and what she needs to do to make the game work which requires the use of Pahari. But there are times when the distinction between engaging her brother to enable the game to work and the use of English to play the 'school game' breaks down and Pahari is used instead of English within the game ('I'm doing it satsuma colour'). This merging of purpose is reflected in the code-switching and code-mixing ('what *colour* are you going to choose?'). Samia code-switches into Pahari to keep Sadaqat engaged ('Sadaqat, do it with this finger'). There is a smooth transition between languages and the same lexis is used in both mother tongue and English during the conversation, for example, painting, colour, satsuma (orange).

7.2.3 Knowing colours

At line 16 in transcript 8, Samia's 'school game' highlights the importance of 'knowing colours' at nursery. She asks Sadaqat 'what are you choose colour?' and then offers 'black' as a possibility. Sadaqat answers, 'back' and Samia corrects him, 'no, there's a black?' Later at line 27, Samia asks ' in Pahari,'which colour are you going to choose?

Maria is the eldest child in her family and, during the recordings in her home, the adults (her parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts) play a key role in her interactions. There is only one example of Maria's talk with her siblings. This may partly be because her siblings and cousins are very young (Saqeeb, her brother, is two and the others are babies), and partly because of the special attention she receives as the first grandchild living in an extended family. The adults in the household also demonstrated an awareness of the recording equipment and the audience throughout.

7.3. Samia and Maria at nursery

Context 3 Talking to adults at nursery

Table 7.3

Strategy	Samia	Maria
Asking questions	Transcript 16	
Knowing what the teacher expects	Transcript 17 Transcript 18	Transcript 19
Knowing colours	Transcript 20	
Join in whenever possible	Transcript 21	
Practising English		Transcript 22 Transcript 23
Repeating English		Transcript 24 Transcript 25 Transcript 26
Respond and take risks when addressed by adults		Transcript 27
Being centre of attention		Transcript 28

7.3.1 Asking questions

During work time (3.2.97), Samia plays with bricks in the small construction area on the carpet in nursery. The Bilingual Classroom Assistant, Shabina, joins her during her solitary play and the conversation with Samia takes place in Pahari.

Transcript 16 (Term 1)

[Pahari in italics]

1 Samia: *What is this, Teacher?*

             Where shall I put this?

Shabina: *What is this?*

Samia: *This is a* duck

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5 Shabina:	*What colour is the* duck?
Samia:	*This is a* blue *colour and this is a* red *colour*
	I couldn't find the same piece
Shabina:	*Is this the piece?*
Samia:	*No this doesn't fit here*
10 Shabina:	*Try it*
	Does it fit?
Samia:	*No, it doesn't*

Samia uses quite complex structures in her mother tongue for example, lines 2, 7, & 9. Her language use in Pahari with Shabina matches the expectations for an L1 English speaker at her age. In this transcript Samia asks questions to engage the BCA in her play (lines 1 and 2) and uses key words, particularly colours, to display her knowledge in English. It is clear that working with a BCA and using her mother tongue enables Samia to engage actively with learning in nursery

7.3.2 Knowing what the teacher expects

When Samia is with adults she conforms to what she understands is required. She demonstrates that she is able to do this well, picking up what is expected and she 'reads' the nursery environment well. This is illustrated by an early transcript of Samia at nursery (3.2.97) during a teacher-led small group activity. The children are asked to recall what they have done at nursery and this activity has a predictable routine, which is repeated each day.

Transcript 17 (Term 1)

1 Teacher:	Shall we ask Samia what she did today?
	What did you do today? You tell us…
	What did you do [whispered]
Samia:	[indistinct]
5 Teacher:	Did you play with some shapes that were different colours?
Samia:	colouring
Teacher:	colouring – you did some colouring
	Perhaps you did that after the puzzles
	What colours did you put on your picture?

[BCA interprets the question in Pahari. Samia says she can't remember]

Samia knows how to conform to the adult expectation – to answer a question directed to you when you know the appropriate word. As discussed earlier, 'colouring' is a key word for Samia and she uses it appropriately to answer the teacher's question.

Samia's developing confidence in using this strategy is evident in a later transcript (7.7.97):

Transcript 18 (Term 2)

1 Teacher:	Who is going to do their recall first?
	What did you do today?
Samia:	did colouring
Teacher:	colouring
5 Samia:	Book corner
Teacher:	what did you do in the book corner?
Samia:	puzzle
Teacher:	puzzle what was on your puzzle
Samia:	caterpillar
10 Teacher:	caterpillar puzzle
	And did somebody read to you in the book corner?
Samia:	yes
Teacher:	and what did they read?
Samia:	cow
15 Teacher:	cow did Shabina read a book about a cow?
	No, what was it about?
Samia:	girls
Teacher:	about girls in the book
	Do you want to tell us anything else you did today?
20	Ask Jordan what he did
Samia:	Jordan, what you done today?
Jordan:	I played garden

At the end of her second term at nursery, Samia has learnt to do what is required in this exchange with the teacher. She replies to the teacher's questions with one-word answers and is 'playing safe' in her responses. She is conscious here of not 'getting it wrong' in the small group context. She also asks Jordan a question, which is not grammatically correct, but serves an appropriate function here.

Transcript 19 Term 1

During the first recording in the nursery, Maria listens and responds appropriately to adults.

[Maria is in her small group, planning with the Nursery Nurse – N.N.]

1	N.N.	What would you like to do?
		Maria, what would you like to do?
		Maria
		Maria, what would you like to do?
5	Maria	painting
	N.N.	painting?
		Find your apron then
		Apron

Maria understands what is expected of her in the context of small group planning. She uses the appropriate word, 'painting', and is then able to proceed with the painting activity she has chosen.

7.3.3 Knowing colours

In conversations with adults in the nursery, Samia's knowledge of colours enables her to participate in a limited way and conform to adult expectations. In a teacher-led small activity (3.2.97) the children are making a picture of 'Percy the Park keeper' using different coloured paper.

Transcript 20 (Term 1)

1 Teacher:	We need different colours to do Percy
	What colour did we need to do his boots
Samia:	black
Teacher:	so we need some black to do his boots
5	What colour do we need to do his shirt?
Child A:	green
Teacher:	what shall we use dark green or light green?
	Most children want this one
	What about his waistcoat?
10 Child B:	brown
Teacher:	is that brown?
	Is that brown?
	Is that brown?

In this extract Samia is able to contribute appropriately to the group activity. The importance of her knowledge of colours is demonstrated here and this is also evident in her 'school game' with her little brother at home (see transcript 15). She has learnt the classroom routines very quickly and the key words associated with them.

7.3.4 Join in whenever possible

Samia is able to join in with the familiar classroom routines, particularly during teacher-led small group activities. The language used by the adults in the nursery, including repetition, modelling, asking questions and using words in categories (numbers, clothes, colours etc) enables Samia to become involved. One example involves the routine of counting in the small group. This takes place every day and follows the same pattern.

Transcript 21

1 Teacher:	Shall we see how many children we are today
	Get your counting finger together
	Are you ready?
Samia:	12345678
5 Children:	1234567
Teacher:	7
	Let's see how many drinks we've got today
	7 children how many drinks do we need?
Children:	7
10 Samia:	7
Teacher:	We're going to count and see how many
	1234
Samia:	1234567
Teacher:	Let's try again, everyone watch and join in
15	1234567
Samia:	1234567

7.3.5 Practising English – singing

During small group time the children sing the song 'Heads Shoulders knees and toes' while they are drinking their milk. Samia joins in the 'knees and toes' routine. It is then time to go out to play in the garden.

Transcript 22

1 Teacher:		Samia can you finish your milk
Samia:		knees and toes, knees and toes
		Knees and toes
		Knees and toes
5		Knees and toes
		Knees and toes
		Knees and toes
		Knees and toes
		Knees and toes
10		Knees and toes
		Knees and toes
		Knees and toes

[Samia is singing to herself]

Teacher:		Are you still singing Samia
		Sing it with me
15 Samia:		Heads shoulders knees toes
Teacher:		The word in the middle is and

Samia's language practice is derived from the significant classroom routines and activities, such as songs, which are from adult-led contexts. This practice also takes place at home (see transcript 17).

During her third term at nursery, there are examples of Maria practising her English, both on her own and with adults. In the following excerpt, she is also demonstrating her knowledge of key words, for example, shapes and colours.

Transcript 23 (Term 3)

[Maria is at a cutting activity]

1	N.N.	What are going to do now Maria, some cutting?
	Maria	round and round and cut and cut [speaking to herself]
		Cut and cut and cut and cut
	N.N.	are you cutting a ball?
5		what shape is it?
		What shape is it?
	Maria	triangle
	N.N.	triangle yes very good

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		Shall I get you some crayons to colour it with in a minute?
10		what colour crayons would you like?
	Maria	red
	N.N.	red any other colours?
	Maria	blue
	N.N.	red and blue OK

In lines 2 and 3 Maria is practising her English, speaking to herself in line 2 and out loud in line 3. This is an important part of her English language development and the cutting activity provides a good opportunity for Maria to practise these language forms. In this transcript Maria is also able to show her knowledge of key vocabulary items for successful learning in the nursery, here colours and shapes. She understands and is able to respond appropriately to the adult's questioning routine here.

7.3.6 Repeating English

In her interactions with adults, Maria uses repetition as a key strategy for engaging in learning activities. In the following transcript during the first recording in nursery, Maria responds to the Nursery Nurse by repeating her last utterance.

Transcript 24 (Term 1)

[Maria is making a face using paper shapes]

1	N.N.	right what's that?
		What is it?
		It's an eye, isn't it
	Maria	eye
5	N.N.	good girl
		how many have you got?
		One
	Maria	one
	N.N.	two
10	Maria	two
	N.N.	right, what colour are your eyes?

This transcript is an excerpt from a longer interaction with the Nursery Nurse, during which Maria uses the repetition strategy as a way of engaging with the adult and practising her English. She is rewarded by the adult with warm praise (see for example, line 5) and she

clearly enjoys the sustained one-to-one interaction with the Nursery Nurse. The following short extract demonstrates Maria's sense of enjoyment of the game', once she has completed the nursery activity, making a 'face' picture.

Transcript 25 (Term 1)

1	N.N.	Maria
		right
		here your face
		are you clever?
5	Maria	yes, clever
	N.N.	clever girl
		Very clever

Maria's immediate response 'yes, clever' (line 5), demonstrates her engagement in the 'repetition' strategy and her sense of fun, even at this very early stage in her learning of English.

Transcript 26 (Term 1)

[Maria is at the sticking table with 3 English speaking children and a nursery nurse, making a Christmas card with shiny shapes]

1	N.N.	stick the tree on
		what do you need to put on to make it pretty?
	Maria	make it pretty
	N.N.	what are you going to put on to make it pretty?

This strategy is evident throughout her first term at nursery. By the end of this term, Maria continues to repeat the final utterance spoken by the adult, but this is extended from a single word to a longer utterance, 'make it pretty.'

7.3.7 Respond and take risks when addressed by adults

In her conversations with adults at nursery, Maria is clearly confident, even during her first few months of early schooling. This is illustrated in the following transcript of a book sharing session with a Nursery Nurse.

Transcript 27 (Term 1)

[Maria is sharing a book, 'Starting School' with a Nursery Nurse. She is talking about the pictures]

1	Maria	mummies and daddies
		sisters
		coats
		toilets
5		do you know something, I drawed a fire engine
	N.N.	did you, lovely
		Put it in your book bag

In the context of the book corner and sharing a book with a familiar adult, Maria is confident enough to name familiar items (see lines 1 – 4). However, her contribution in line 5 is her longest utterance recorded in nursery during her first term and demonstrates her willingness to take risks with her developing English language.

7.3.8   Being centre of attention

As the above transcripts have shown, Maria is confident and motivated in the company of adults in the nursery. She clearly enjoys the opportunity to be 'centre of attention', particularly with one of the Nursery Nurses. This is echoed in her experience at home, where she is able to take a leading role with adults and manipulate the family.

In the following transcript, she is in the music room with a Nursery Nurse, enjoying being 'centre of attention'.

Transcript 28 (Term 3)

1	N.N.	what shall we do then shall we sing some songs?
	Maria	mama
	N.N.	hey?
	Maria	mama I love you
5	N.N.	mama I love you – do you know that song?
		Who sings that?
		Spice Girls
		Sing it for me then
	Maria	mama I love you I don't care you my friend
10	N.N	oh that's lovely my little girl likes that song

	what else can you sing?
Maria	ba ba black sheep
N.N.	go on then
Maria	ba ba black sheep have you any wool yes sir yes sir 3 bags full

Maria is clearly enjoying this opportunity to perform her repertoire of English songs and become centre of attention. This is a role to which she is accustomed and, by the end of her first year of early schooling, she has been able to manipulate the situation to enable her to show what she can do well.

7.4 Samia and Maria at home

Context 4

Talking to adults at home

Table 7.4

Strategy	Samia	Maria
Practising English	Transcript 29	
Practising Pahari	Transcript 30	
Being centre of attention		Transcript 31
Knowing what adults expect		Transcript 32

7.4.1 Practising English

During the first taping session in her home (on 10.4.97) Samia has a conversation with her mother, grandmother and little brother Sadaqat.

Transcript 29

[Pahari in italics]

1 Samia:	Ba ba black sheep
	Yes sir yes
	One two
	Twinkle twinkle

5	Ba ba
	Twinkle twinkle
	Twinkle twinkle
	I got pencils [to Grandmother]
	Twinkle twinkle
10 Grandmother:	*don't touch that*
Samia:	*I'm not going to talk*
	Mum, Sadaqat's got a sweet
	Head shoulders knees and toes [Sadaqat imitates her]
	No, head shoulders knees and toes
15	Eyes and nose and nose and eyes and mouth
	Touch your forehead, touch your hair, shoulder
	Knees and toes

In this excerpt Samia is singing 'practising' language. She uses the familiar nursery songs, Ba ba black sheep, twinkle twinkle little star and heads shoulders knees and toes in this practice of English. She is again 'using' or incorporating her brother Sadaqat in her play. There are echoes of her teacher's interaction (transcript) when she corrects his version of 'Heads shoulders knees and toes'. She skilfully code-switches from her English nursery songs to Pahari when speaking to her Grandmother or giving her brother important instructions.

7.4.2 Practising Pahari

During a lunchtime at home with her mother, grandmother and brother, Samia practises her language, this time in Pahari.

Transcript 30
[Pahari in italics]

1 Mother:	*Have you been outside?*
Samia:	*They both went outside with us*
	They sit with us
	They sat with us
5	*Then their mothers came*
	Their mothers went somewhere
	Then they came and they sit with us
	Then their mothers sat with us

10 *Then they went home*

Transcript 31

[Pahari in italics]

1Samia: *This is my own chappatti*

Look this is my own chappatti

Did you want to eat it? [to Sadaqat]

This is my chappatti

5 *He's dropping his chappatti*

Don't drop it otherwise God will not give any more chappattis

Grandmother: *Be careful or your clothes will get dirty*

Come on I'll clean you up

In Transcript 30 and 31 Samia repeats the words sit/sat and my own chappatti correctly in Pahari, through repetition.

7.4.3 Being centre of attention

During all of the tapings at home, Maria is the focus of attention in the family. Her Uncle and Auntie mainly encourage her to use English (for the purpose of the recordings?), but her parents and younger sibling use Pahari with her. However, despite the considerable pressure she appears to be under to 'talk to the microphone', she maintains control of the situation and copes very well as the 'centre of attention.'

During a recording in term 3 (18.7.97), Maria returns to the Spice Girls song (transcript 13).

Transcript 32 (Term 3)

[Pahari in italics]

1 Uncle *come on speak English*

Maria you are

I don't care

I don't care

5 I don't care

I don't care

Auntie that's a Spice Girls songs, isn't it?

I don't care, I don't care

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		How does it go?
10	Maria	every song and then it's Spice Girl
		like that I don't care
	Auntie	yeah that's a Spice Girls song
		Have you heard it
		It was on the TV
15	Maria	sing it then
	Uncle	you sing it
	Maria	no you sing it
	Uncle	you don't want to sing, do you

In this conversation with her Auntie and Uncle, Maria is clearly in control. She is conforming to the adults' instructions to speak English, but is reluctant to perform the song for them. Later in the recording, her father joins in the family discussion. Maria is still centre of attention, but she switches into Pahari and, at his request sings her repertoire of English nursery rhymes; 'Twinkle, twinkle' and 'Ba ba black sheep'. Her father is a key person in her family. She listens to him, always speaks Pahari with him and shows respect. Through these interactions at home, she has gained an experience of talking to adults, manipulating the situation and gaining control. This experience has had an impact on her relationships with adults at nursery and supported her learning of English in the school setting.

7.4.4 Knowing what adults expect

In all of the recording at home, Maria conforms to the expectations of adults at home. In the first recording (12.12.96), the following monologue is in response to the adults' expectations (and their perceived expectations of the research study) for her to talk about herself.

Transcript 32 (Term 1)
[Pahari in italics]

1	Maria	*when I am a big girl I'll be a doctor and drive a big car*
		my father's gone to Pakistan
		he said I'm going all by myself this time
		but when it's holiday time I'll take you
5		*we'll go together again*
		my father's in Pakistan
		one of my uncles is in Pakistan as well

Iftikhar is in Pakistan – they are all there

At school we've got playdough, we do cutting

10   *we do everything*

we read books and we put books in the bag

After listening to the tape recordings of Maria at home, Mussarat commented, 'Maria's language and behaviour are mature for her age. She has a wide experience – this should help her to find her way in life and mix better in the classroom. She is ready to get on.' She is certainly able to conform to adult expectations, but additionally, she is able to manipulate the family situation and take control. The ways in which the family involve her in their talk are supportive for her developing confidence as she experiences early schooling.

7.5   Discussion

In this chapter I have highlighted some of the ways in which Samia and Maria find their way through nursery. With the exception of the part-time support of a bilingual classroom assistant, the language used by adults and most children in the nursery is English. It follows that there can only be very limited communication between adults, and also English speaking peers, and the bilingual children. Similarly the expectations, values, manners and styles of interaction in the nursery belong to a culture which is expressive of an English approach to early years education, to schooling and, of course, the wider society. With the exception of the bilingual classroom assistant, adults in the nursery know little about the home experience of the bilingual children. Thus it is for the bilingual learner to make the necessary adaptation to the language and culture of the nursery. It is evident that although adults in the nursery employed a variety of means to assist Maria and Samia, the key player in the learning process is the child herself. By seeing the girls as 'taking control' of their learning, it is possible to view their responses as strategic. This perspective enables the data to be analysed in terms of the strategies they use in different circumstances. I have drawn on examples of the strategies they use to enhance their learning in their growing engagement in the nursery.

For the children, the experience of being in school in an English medium environment with many other children in a context which is formalised through its rules, routines and expectations is of crucial importance. Whilst adults might view its significance in relation to education and life chances, for these bilingual children, it is initially about going into the 'unknown', about 'managing to get by' with unknown peers, new adult authority figures and

new social and cultural norms. The strategies which I highlight are related to learning a new language, but they also reflect ways of coping in a new environment.

Thus engaging with the various aspects of nursery experience involves a combination of language learning and language use for different purposes and, although others influence the changing situation they are faced with, it is Samia and Maria themselves who take control of their learning.

Secondly, a key point that emerges from the data is that much of the developmental process which Samia and Maria go through is not visible to the nursery teacher. The perception that 'Samia didn't speak much today' by her nursery teacher, for example, may be only part of the reality of Samia's experience. For her, the rehearsal and practising of language rarely takes place in a context which is observable by the teacher. The skills Samia shows in play with brother (her use of English at that point in time, her facility with code-switching, her ability to engage and sustain her younger brother's involvement, her manipulation of 'school knowledge') are not visible to the nursery teacher, as is the case with her lively engagement with Bahriye in the bathroom in the nursery. Similarly, Maria's successful rehearsal and practice of English rarely takes place with adults at nursery. However, the leading role she takes with her extended family at home is not visible to the nursery teacher, although she demonstrates her ability to be 'centre of attention' with a Nursery Nurse in nursery on a number of occasions.

7.6   Summary

For Samia and Maria who are going through the process of learning English at the same time as experiencing formal schooling for the first time, I have drawn on the data to show firstly the control they have over their learning and the strategies they adopt and secondly the invisibility of much of this to the teacher. The detailed picture that emerges enables us to see how the children themselves are at the centre of their learning.

In chapter 8 I consider Nazma's strategies for 'getting by' and learning during her first year of schooling. Her experience highlights the challenges facing educators of bilingual children and demonstrates the importance of a linguistic and cultural mediator in the early years of schooling.

Chapter 8

Inner layer analysis

Nazma: finding her way

8.0 Introduction

In this chapter I highlight the ways in which Nazma finds her way through nursery. As in Chapter 7, I present an inner layer analysis of how she responds to the ebb and flow of her ongoing experience, both at home and in nursery and at the beginning and end points of her four terms in nursery. I present the ways in which Nazma responds to her situation as strategies, although it is evident that her response to the experience of nursery is very different to Samia and Maria's. During the time I spent with Nazma's family at the beginning of the study period, I became particularly interested in her response to early schooling. Why did Nazma use the strategy of silence for such a long time? Why did she not 'know what adults expect' or 'join in whenever possible' in the nursery, which were all strategies Samia and Maria used with adults? What were the strategies Nazma was using at home and why was her response to nursery so different?

In order to begin to understand Nazma's perspective on her early learning, I decided to enquire further into the nursery experience of one of her older siblings, Naseem. I argue here that there are parallels in the experience of the two sisters, which the older sister is able to articulate. I therefore present Naseem's memories of her early experiences of schooling in order to throw light on Nazma's apparent unwillingness to talk to adults in the nursery context and her lack of confidence in the nursery setting.

At the end of one of the recordings at home during the first term, I had a conversation her elder sister, Naseem, which revealed her perspective on Nazma's early learning and conveyed a sense of what it felt like for her starting nursery.

1	Rose:	Can you remember anything about nursery?
	Naseem:	when I first started I was crying then I got used to it
		I did speak some English
	Rose:	when did you start to speak more English?

5	Naseem:	when I was about 7
	Rose:	do you think you were like Nazma?
	Naseem:	no, I did play with other children
	Rose:	what was it like when you first went to nursery?
	Naseem:	I wasn't used to it
10		I wasn't used to stay
		I didn't like the second class
		The teacher was nasty
		I didn't understand the work and if we said it she said I explain
		She had baskets to put our work in and she used to mark it
15		And me and my friend didn't understand them
		so she ripped them up
	Rose:	how did you feel?
	Naseem:	all the class looking
	Rose:	you were 5 or 6 then?
20		What would have helped you then?
	Naseem:	to have a teacher who understands my language
	Rose:	how do you think Nazma's going to get on?
	Naseem:	fine, she talks a lot at home
		She talks a bit of English, she's alright

The picture that Naseem offers of her early experience of schooling is not a happy one. She is remarkably unequivocal in her responses to the questions, for example her statement about her Reception class teacher, 'The teacher was nasty.' (see line 12). She demonstrates a consciousness of the use of both languages (see lines 3-5 for example) and she recognises the need for a 'teacher who understands my language' (line 21). She also remembers vividly her self-consciousness about not understanding 'the work' at school and the implication of being made to feel inadequate. In line 7, Naseem seems to realise that Nazma does not play with other children, but she also recognises that she 'talks a lot at home' (line 23) and she thinks she will be 'fine' at school. As her elder sister, she appears to be aware of the contrast between how Nazma is at home and how she is in the nursery. Her own experiences in a Reception class (lines 11 – 19) are stated in a way that Nazma is unable to express at her age and they provide additional insights into how her younger sister may herself be feeling about school learning.

In contrast to Samia and Maria, Nazma displays very few strategies which demonstrate that she is taking control of her learning in nursery. I argue that Nazma's experience of early

schooling is similar to that of her older sister's and that her limited range of strategies at nursery may stem from her fear of failure in the new socio-cultural setting of school. However, there are insights into her learning, with the BCA in nursery and her powerful use of the strategy of silence, which can be viewed as 'strategic.'

In this chapter I firstly present first the range of strategies used by Nazma at home, both playing with siblings and talking to adults. In this context, I am able to demonstrate her active involvement in play with her siblings and in mealtime conversations with her grandmother and mother. This perspective on Nazma's learning is contrasted with her experience in nursery where she has no interactions with other children or the nursery teacher and nursery nurses. However, I demonstrate the key role, played by the Bilingual Classroom Assistant, Musserat, as mediator of Nazma's learning. By drawing upon her home experiences and using mother tongue, Musserat mediates between home and school. Although for most of the time there is little evidence of the kind of active participation in the nursery shown by Samia and Maria, when Nazma is able to spend some extended time with Musserat it is possible to see an engagement within the Zone of Proximal Development, which enables the kind of 'appropriation' of new understanding which Rogoff (1990) associates with 'guided participation.'

8.1   Nazma at home

Table 8.1

Strategy	Playing with siblings	Talking to adults
Practising English	Transcript 1 Transcript 2	
Rehearsing English	Transcript 3	
Language play	Transcript 4	
Asking questions		Transcript 5
Knowing what adults expect		Transcript 6

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Context 1: playing with siblings

Nazma's play with her siblings at home (particularly her sister Yasmin) provides insights into the way she is learning, which are not seen at school. The nursery staff (with the exception of Musserat) have an understanding of Nazma which is largely based on the way she 'presents' in the nursery setting, an understanding which is reflected in their notes (presented in the 'vignette'). This perspective may be contrasted with her social interaction in the home. The recordings of Nazma at home are characterised by a focus on preparing and eating food (the tape recordings took place either during lunchtime or after school) and playing with her siblings.

8.1.1 Practising English

In the following transcript, Nazma is playing with her older sisters, Noreen and Naseem. Noreen is encouraging her to practise her school English.

Transcript 1 (Term 1)

[Pahari in italics]

1   Nazma: [singing]

twinkle twinkle little star

how I wonder what you are

how I wonder what you are

5   twinkle twinkle little star

how I wonder what you are

how I wonder what you are

        Noreen: good girl Nazma

[Nazma is crying and goes upstairs]

10   Noreen: daddy's sleeping

        Nazma: *don't come inside*

Hello hello

        Noreen: *do you know* ba ba black sheep

        Nazma: yes sir yes sir twinkle twinkle [laughing]

[they are chasing each other]

15   Naseem: shup up

        Nazma: shut up

        Naseem: what you say

        Nazma: what you say

        Noreen: *don't say that*

Nazma is performing to her sister's expectations and demonstrating her repertoire of English nursery rhymes. She is also code-switching between English and Pahari with ease during this conversation with her sister. She is encouraged by Noreen with 'good girl Nazma' in teacher-like English. As this was one of the earliest recordings in the home, there is a sense of awareness of what is appropriate for the microphone and to be listened to by the teacher (see line 19). The older siblings are clearly aware that their talk on the tape recording should not include 'shut up'. Noreen switches into Pahari to give a 'real' instruction to her little sister 'do you know ba ba black sheep'.

In the following transcript, during Nazma's fourth term of nursery, she is practising her English with her brothers and sisters at home after school. Nazma is playing with her sister Noreen outside in the yard.

Transcript 2 (Term 4)

1	Nazma:	little… [singing to herself]
		I went in the bed in the bed [singing]
		Why did you come there?
		Why did you come there?
		You can't by by there
	Noreen:	can you ride this bike?
	Nazma:	why did you do never playing do
		Why are you playing me you
	Noreen:	I said can you ride it?
	Nazma:	I got play with it
		[N. singing to herself]
	Nazma:	no you can't use
		You can't that
	Noreen:	go inside
	Nazma:	inside stay?
	Noreen:	I said you
	Nazma:	shut up

In the context of her back yard and with her older sister, Nazma is able to practise her English. As Nazma does not use this strategy in school, the opportunity to practise her limited English with her sister at home is crucially important for her. However, Noreen is not willing on this occasion to help Nazma with her English practice and persists with her questioning, 'can you ride this bike?' until she instructs her to 'go inside'. However, by

understanding Nazma's home experience in terms of the strategies she is using (in this case practising English), we gain valuable insights into her learning. Nazma's use of English in this informal context shows that it is very insecure and this may well be a significant factor in her reluctance to respond in the more formal setting of the nursery.

8.1.2 Rehearsing English

The following transcript takes place immediately after Transcript 2. Noreen has left her in the back yard and Nazma is quietly singing to herself and using rehearsal strategies, repeating the phrase 'hop in' with variations.

Transcript 3 (Term 4)

1	Nazma:	hop in there
		hop in there
		hop in do
		hop in do
		[singing to herself]

8.1.3 Language Play

There are few examples of Nazma having fun with English, but again it is during her play with siblings at home that the opportunity for language arises. In the following excerpt, Nazma is playing with Hasnan (her older brother) and Yasmin (her sister). Her siblings are trying hard to make her speak English and Hasnan is teaching her the nursery song 'One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive' in this example.

Transcript 4 (Term 4)

[Pahari in italics]

1	Nazma:	*what shall I do?*
	Hasnan:	12345 caught a fish alive
		Why did let it go
		Why it bit my finger
5	Nazma:	12345
		12345 fee for for
	Hasnan:	caught a fish alive
		Not fort a fish alive
		12345
10		not port a fish alive

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		caught a fish alive
	Nazma:	[singing to herself]
		12345
	Hasnan:	not caught a forki tor
15	Yasmin:	12345 once I caught a fish alive

The older siblings clearly understand the importance of knowing the nursery songs at school and Hasnan is trying to teach her the words of the song '12345 Once I caught a fish alive' using his own strategies (see lines 8 – 11 and line 14). As these strategies appear not to be working (Nazma simply repeats 12345 – see line 13), Yasmin models the first line again for her (line 15), but Nazma still refuses to join in with their language play. Nazma, as the youngest sibling, is clearly used to being the subject of her brothers' and sisters' 'teaching' and her role as the 'little sister' includes being made fun of, on occasion.

Context 2: talking to adults at home

In contrast to her experience of nursery, Nazma plays a full part in her family life. The interactions at home with her mother or Grandmother (the two key adults at home during the recordings) frequently focus on food and eating in the family and take place in Pahari. It is in this context that Nazma is lively and confident.

8.1.4 Asking questions

Transcript 5 (Term 1)

[Pahari in italics]

[Yasmin and Nazma are in the kitchen with their mother]

1	Nazma:	*what are we going to do?*
	Mother:	*we need to eat then we need to get ready for nursery*
		What do you want?
	Nazma:	*nothing*
5		*Mummy, look at this* [referring to the microphone]
		Mummy, what are you doing?
		Mummy?
	Mother:	*I'm going to cook chappattis for you*
	Yasmin:	*it's for Grandma and Nazma*
	Nazma:	*why have they left this here?* [referring to the recording equipment]

In this excerpt, the two younger sisters are going about normal family life with their mother. Nazma demonstrates that she is able to ask questions in Pahari and engage fully with her mother and the preparations for lunch. There is attention and interest in the recording equipment and the microphone as this was one of the earliest recordings in the home.

Later on in this recording, we see Nazma behaving appropriately during the mealtime and conforming to the adults' expectations.

8.1.5 Knowing what adults expect

Transcript 6 (Term 1)
[lunchtime with Grandmother, Yasmin and Nazma; Mother is cooking]
(Pahari in italics)

1	Mother:	*now you sit here and be good sisters*
	Yasmin:	*Nazma is copying me*
		This is mine
	Mother:	*say thank you*
5	Y. & N.:	thank you mummy
	Mother:	good girls
	Nazma:	*I can drink this*
	Grandma:	*eat quietly and don't fuss*
	Mother:	*here you are*
10	Y. & N.:	thank you mummy
	Nazma:	thank you thank you
		Humpty dumpty [chanting to herself]
	Y. & N.	twinkle twinkle little star
		How I wonder what you are up a..
15		Twinkle twinkle little star
		Jingle bells jingle bells
	Nazma:	*that's mine*
		Give it to me [while eating]
	Mother:	*have you finished*
20		*Shall we get ready*
	Y. & N.:	yes
		No
	Mother:	*go and wash your hands*

Yasmin and Nazma show that they are able to conform to what is expected of them by their Grandmother and mother during lunchtime. It is interesting to note that their mother encourages them to use English to say thank you (see lines 4 – 6), the only occasion during the recordings at home. Again, Yasmin and Nazma are practising their nursery songs. Nazma has taken the lead here (see line 12) and Yasmin joins in with her practice. Their Grandmother plays an important role in the family by encouraging appropriate behaviour, which the children respect.

In summary, Nazma uses a range of strategies in the home context, both with siblings and significant adults. She is responsive and quite lively. Her use of her mother tongue is confident and at a level which might normally be expected for a child of her age. The significance of learning English is underlined in her practising, rehearsing and playing with language when playing with her siblings. They, in turn, act as mediators of language and culture, helping Nazma to begin to bridge the transition between home and school.

I now contrast Nazma's learning at home with her experience of early schooling, again considering her response to adults and other children.

8.2 Nazma at nursery

Table 8.2

Strategy	Playing with children	Talking to adults
Silence [or being unobtrusive]	Vignette	Transcript 9
Rehearsing English	Transcript 7	
Practising English	Transcript 8	
Respond by drawing on home experiences		Transcript 10 Transcript 11 Transcript 12
Find a cultural mediator		Transcript 13

Context 3: Playing with children at nursery

8.2.1 Silence [or being unobtrusive]

During Nazma's first term at nursery, she does not interact with other children or participate in nursery activities (see chapter 2 for a description of Nazma's early experience of schooling). She watches other children and is silent for much of her time in nursery sessions.

Vignette (first term in nursery)

The following vignette, or picture of Nazma's first term in nursery, is taken from observation notes made by the nursery staff during April, May and June, 1996.

[Musserat is the BCA and Yasmin is her sister]

17.4.96	first visit, clung to mum crying
18.4.96	played with Yasmin
23.4.96	started today, cried, wouldn't settle for an hour or so, just sobbed and sucked fingers and had cuddles
24.4.96	cried most of the time, stayed with her sister for a little while
25.4.96	Musserat brought Nazma and Yasmin from home, upset, mum stayed and joined in
29.4.96	mum said she would bring her after the summer, teacher suggested she came only on Wednesday and Thursday when Musserat there
1.5.96	came in happily with mum, upset all afternoon
2.5.96	started to cry when mum left, sat on Musserat's lap, followed Musserat around
3.5.96	crying, suggested she attend Wednesdays and Thursdays only
7.5.96	absent, doesn't seem to be attending very regularly
8.5.96	more settled, played in home corner
9.5.96	cried for a while, did some colouring
15.5.96	sobbed quietly for a bit
20.5.96	came in on Monday with Yasmin, did drawing
23.5.96	Yasmin holds her hand and leads her around, sucks her fingers
4.6.96	did tracing, wouldn't attempt tracing over her name until helped
10.6.96	wouldn't try to trace over her name unless helped by an adult, keeps putting fingers in her mouth
17.6.96	separating a bit from Yasmin today

The compilation of observation notes made by the nursery staff during Nazma's first term at nursery creates an unhappy picture. Nazma is clearly distressed by the early transition from home to school. This is most clearly evident in the recurring notes about her crying, sucking fingers, holding her sister Yasmin's or Musserat's hand or clinging to her mother. Musserat plays an important role in this transition period, even collecting her from home on one occasion. The suggestion that she should attend only on the days when Musserat works in the nursery (Wednesdays and Thursdays) is significant here. The nursery staff, however, appeared concerned that she 'wouldn't trace over her name, unless helped by an adult'. This note appeared twice during June and demonstrates the importance they place on children learning to be independent and on the early literacy activities based on writing her name. However, for Nazma, this early experience of schooling will form the basis for all future learning. During the interpretation of the bilingual data, Mussarat stated that:

'the reception of bilingual children when they first enter nursery decides the direction in which they will proceed during their school life. The outgoing, confident children will find their way through, while others will stay inside their shells and not come out for the time they are at school.'

In the following analysis of the strategies Nazma uses at school and at home, we can clearly see her 'inside her shell' at nursery, and using the powerful strategy of silence with the nursery staff and children.

8.2.2 Rehearsing English

One exception to Nazma's silence at nursery is the following excerpt during her first term.

Transcript 7 (Term 1)

[The children are lining up after playing outside.]

1	Nursery Nurse:	Right go and line up please
		Line up properly
	Child 1:	we're going in
	Nazma:	going in [whispering to herself]

This is the only example from the recordings made during her first term when Nazma speaks in English, echoing another child. She quietly repeats an utterance, which is used regularly as part of the nursery routine, 'going in' time. The context in which she decides to speak is 'risk-free'; she is outside the nursery classroom and distant from adults in the

nursery. However, there is no evidence during Nazma's first term that she is playing with or talking to other children in the nursery, apart from her sister, Yasmin.

8.2.3 Practising English

Transcript 8 (Term 4)

By the time of her fourth term at nursery, Nazma has learnt to participate in activities and do what is expected at nursery. However, there is little evidence of interaction with other children. An exception is the following transcript of Nazma with her sister Yasmin. At this stage Yasmin has moved to the Reception class, which is in the adjoining classroom. The nursery and Reception classes share the same toilets and bathrooms. By chance, Yasmin and Nazma are in the toilets together.

[Pahari in italics)]

1	Nazma:	*Papoo* [calling out Yasmin's nickname]
		There's wee there
		You can eat this
		It's pizza you eat it [N. has a piece of plastic pizza in her hand]
5	Yasmin:	*no*
	Nazma:	*go on eat it it's hot*
		It's pizza – go on
	Yasmin:	*I'll tell*
	Nazma:	*we've been to the toilet* [talking to another child]
10		*Dirty*
		Very very tightly
		Wash it up do this [N. is singing this]
		Don't touch it [referring to the microphone]
		Teacher will hit you
15		Wash up [N. resumes her singing]

In this excerpt, Nazma is behaving as might be expected for a four-year old child. She has a piece of plastic pizza in her pocket (taken from the home corner) and she is lively in her playful exchange with Yasmin. Nazma's interaction with her sister is animated and demonstrates her ability to engage in imaginative play in Pahari (see lines 3 – 7). In the

'safe' context of the bathroom, Nazma tries to engage her sister in play. It is interesting to note that Yasmin (now in Reception) does not allow this play to develop and ends the interaction with 'I'll tell'.

Nazma uses the context of the bathroom to practise a song from nursery 'wash it up, do this'. She is confident in this context with her sister to begin to practise her English. This, however, is the only example of such an interaction. She is socially isolated in nursery and the chance appearance of her sister Yasmin in the bathroom during a nursery session provides a lifeline for Nazma at this point.

Context 4: Talking to adults at nursery

During her four terms in nursery, there are no examples in my data of interaction between the nursery teacher or nursery nurses with Nazma. This is a startling finding, bearing in mind that Nazma has four terms in nursery and her learning of English may be crucially dependent on the interactions with adults at school. It is evident that Nazma does not engage with the English-speaking staff during her time in nursery. She therefore does not 'know what adults expect' or 'join in whenever possible' or 'respond without taking risks when addressed by an adult', which are strategies used by Samia and Maria. However, she adopts an additional strategy; 'be unobtrusive' and 'be silent' for much of her time in nursery. An exception to this, however, is the context created by the presence of the Bilingual Classroom Assistant, Musserat, who is very significant in the recordings made in nursery. For Nazma, it appears that Pahari is the principle source of cognitive and linguistic development. The use of her mother tongue is virtually a lifeline to learning for her. Without Pahari, and the presence of Musserat or her sister, she appears a wholly isolated individual in a context where only a foreign language was spoken.

8.2.4   Silence [or being unobtrusive]

The following transcript, recorded during her first term at nursery is an example of the nursery teacher trying to engage Nazma by sharing books with her in the book corner. Nazma is silent throughout.

Transcript 9 (Term 1)

1	Teacher:	Do you want this one? [to Nazma]
		Thomas and the dinosaur
		The engine's big
		Do you want that one?

5	The very hungry caterpillar
	In the light of the moon a little egg lay on the leaf
	One Sunday morning the warm sun came up
	And pop out of the egg came a tiny and very hungry caterpillar

	Pigs
10	Hens
	Sheep
	Finished?
	Read it to Nazma [to another child]

Nazma's strategy of silence when addressed by the nursery teacher and nursery nurses demonstrates that she is taking considerable control over her learning in the nursery context. She has responded to the demands of the nursery and the expectations of the adults by presenting a wall of silence.

8.2.5 Respond by drawing on home experiences

There are other times during Nazma's nursery experience when she responds to the BCA and makes a contribution based on her home experiences. Here the conversation takes place in her mother tongue. Through a mediator of language and culture, Nazma is able to draw on her home experiences and to engage and find meaning in the learning experiences at school.

Transcript 10 (Term 1)

The children are working in a small group with Musserat.

Musserat tells the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' in Pahari.

(Pahari in italics)

| 1 | Nazma: | *we eat it at home* [pointing to picture of water melon in book] |
| | | *we eat it* [excitedly] |

[Nazma joins in counting the fruit in the book – in English]

	Musserat:	he was a beautiful butterfly
	Nazma:	*I've seen a butterfly in my garden*
5	Musserat:	*how many eyes?*
	Nazma:	two *eyes*

One came in my garden and I hit it

This excerpt shows Nazma at her most responsive in nursery. Unlike any other interaction in this context, she is able to contribute her personal experience to the story telling session with the BCA. Nazma's spontaneous response to the picture of the butterfly at the end of the story is to relate this to her own experience of butterflies in her garden. Musserat is able to build on her contribution by asking how many eyes it has (see line 6), but Nazma continues with her personal story about the butterfly in the garden, using her first language with considerable fluency in this context. Here she demonstrates her confidence to contribute in a small group, using her developing language skills appropriately. It provides a striking contrast to her 'silence' and unwillingness to engage during most of the nursery recordings.

The following excerpt, again during her first term at nursery, shows how she draws on her home experience to engage in a conversation with Musserat in her first language.

Transcript 11 (Term 1)

[Pahari in italics]
[Nazma is playing outside with the large duplo bricks]

1	Nazma:	*I can't do it*
		I'm little
	Musserat:	*come and do it*
	Nazma:	*no I can't do it I'm little*
5	Musserat:	*but you come to school*
	Nazma:	*but I cry at home*
	Musserat:	*why do you cry at home?*
	Nazma:	*because my mum doesn't give me an ice-cream*
	Musserat:	*what's that?*
10	Nazma:	*aeroplane*
		We go to Pakistan
	Musserat:	*what have you made?* [referring to duplo]
	Nazma:	*a cockerel*
		This is my hen
15	Yasmin:	*give me some and I want to join in*
	Musserat:	*this is a hen*
		This is the cockerel
	Nazma:	*cockerel says cockarooaroo*
	Musserat:	*yes cockarooaroo*

What does she do?

Nazma: *the hen lays eggs*

[all join in with cockerel noises and counting cockerels]

This conversation with Musserat shows how she is able to engage with the play activity (in this case making cockerels and hens with duplo) by drawing on her home experience with an adult who understands this and is able to talk to her in Pahari. She is then able to respond in an appropriate way to the adult's questioning (see lines 20 – 21) and demonstrate her understanding. She appears to need to talk about things of immediate personal importance before she is able to engage in the 'school learning' offered at nursery. In addition, there is evidence in this transcript that she appears to view herself as unable to do things (see lines 1-4), or possibly uses this as an additional strategy to engage with Musserat. This may be an aspect of 'being the youngest sibling in a large family', or even 'attracting Musserat's attention.'

During Term 4, Nazma uses the same strategy (drawing on home experiences) to engage with learning experiences at nursery. She is working with Musserat in a small group. The focus of the session is drawing and writing about the story 'Peace at Last'. She has drawn pictures of daddy, mummy and baby bear and she then engages in a conversation about her own family in her first language with Musserat.

Transcript 12 (Term 4)

[Pahari in italics]

1	Musserat:	*what about daddy?*
	Nazma:	*he's asleep*
	Musserat:	*where was your dad last night?*
	Nazma:	*he was upstairs sleeping*
5	Musserat:	*where do you sleep?*
	Nazma:	*I sleep with my mum*
	Musserat:	*where does Yasmin sleep?*
	Nazma:	*she sleeps with Zakkia in her room*
	Musserat:	*what about Naseem?*
10	Nazma:	*she sleeps in her own room*
	Musserat:	*where are your older sisters?*
	Nazma:	*Zakkia and Naseem have gone to school*
	Musserat:	*they go by themselves*
	Nazma:	*I come with my mum*

Hasnan comes to school, Nazma and Yasmin come to the same school

By discussing the details of her own family's sleeping arrangements in her mother tongue, Nazma is then able to engage with the story of 'Peace at Last' and daddy bear's difficulties in getting to sleep. Musserat is able to support Nazma's exploration of the topic because she knows her family and is able to engage her with the school task. Without the 'bridge', which Musserat is able to make between her home experience and school learning, Nazma would remain silent and 'in her shell' for the whole of her time in nursery.

8.3 Nazma and Musserat

The crucial importance of Musserat, as the mediator of culture and language for Nazma during her early days of schooling is highlighted in transcripts 10 – 12. Nazma found the transition from home more difficult than Samia and Maria and spoke only when Musserat was there. There are clear insights in the following transcript of the role the mother tongue plays for her in the nursery. Pahari was for her the basis for her cognitive and linguistic development. There was little opportunity for her to be aided in her acquisition of English by peers for whom it was their mother tongue (Hirshler, 1994).

For Nazma, without Pahari, and the opportunity to use it with a mediator, she would be a wholly isolated individual in a context where only English is spoken. Her mother tongue represents an ongoing bond between home and school, and thus an important continuity between the two domains. The tension for Nazma is to make the adjustment from home to school without losing the language and culture that sustain her.

The following transcript demonstrates her ability to engage with Musserat and to use her mother tongue for learning in this context.

Transcript 13 (Term 1)

[Pahari in italics]

1   Musserat: *What's this?*

         Nazma: *Apples*

         Musserat: *what's this?*

         Nazma: *Pears*

5   Musserat: *What's this?*

	Nazma:	*Lemon, yuk I don't like that* [making a face]
	Musserat:	*Don't you like it because it's sour?*
	Nazma:	*Yes*
	Musserat:	*1,2,3 green apples*
10	& Nazma:	[counting together]
	Musserat:	*1,2,3,4 pears* [counting together]
	& Nazma	
	Nazma:	*We eat them, we like them,*
		We get them, we go to a shop and we buy apples and pears...
15		*We went to the shops with mum and Hasnan*
		And we bought lollies
		We had Hasnan's birthday
		We went in a big 'mosque' and there were lots of people
		[the 'mosque' is in fact a hall]
20		*Friends and everybody was there.*
		There was cake
		I went with Hasnan to the shops.

(Drury, 1997a)

This conversation is embedded in Nazma's family and culture and illustrates the importance for Nazma of building on home experiences. Firstly, the opportunity to sit and look at a book with Musserat provides an appropriate context for Nazma to relate a story from her home experience at length. She talks about significant events in her life, knowing that Musserat will understand. Secondly, Nazma also knows that Musserat will be able to interpret the meaning of her stories. Nazma knows the names of different fruits in her mother tongue and speaks clearly and fluently about her home experiences. The crucial role of bilingual staff is highlighted here as this is the only occasion during the nursery session when Nazma is able to talk and begin to make sense of the 'strange world' she has entered. Musserat, as mediator, enables her to bridge the two contexts of home and school and to cross the Zone of Proximal Development.

8.4   Discussion

The interaction between Nazma and Musserat (transcript 13) shows clearly the unique position of the bilingual assistant to mediate the new language and culture for Nazma. Nazma's language and knowledge of speech events in Pahari is adequate for her community and family needs. Indeed, at home she has enjoyed a full, 'normal' linguistic

environment that is essential for the development of language in young children. For her, it came in the form of a language not well recognised by the educational system; and these linguistic circumstances have provided a good basis for a curriculum delivered exclusively in English – for Samia and Maria. Yet, when Nazma enters nursery she appears not to have the necessary skills to engage with the learning experiences. We have also seen that Nazma and her siblings are 'active participants' in a range of activities at home, but these resources, or 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al, 1992) of the child's world outside the classroom are rarely drawn on in school.

It is clear that bilingual staff have an important role in helping mediate a continuity between the cultural and linguistic expectations of both home and school. Musserat is able to bridge the gap between experiences in the home and those within the nursery. She uses her mother tongue for learning purposes in the nursery, talks to Nazma about her home experiences and communicates with parents.

In relation to her strategic response to nursery, firstly, I have highlighted some of the strategies Nazma uses as she begins to learn the language required for formal schooling and considered the perspective of her older sister. In the conversation with Naseem, it is clear that learning English was a key concern for her ('I didn't understand the work') and that to 'have a teacher who understands my language', would have helped her early learning. Naseem also talks very openly about how she felt about her teacher's response to her work; 'And me and my friend didn't understand them so she ripped them up.' This experience clearly had a negative impact on Naseem's view of herself as a learner during the early years of schooling and may be reflected in her little sister's response to her early experience of nursery. Nazma is unable to relate to the new linguistic and cultural experience of nursery and she, too, appears to fear failure in this context. Nazma uses the strategy of silence and 'being unobtrusive' effectively throughout her four terms at nursery (and throughout Reception and Year 1), by not talking to adults in nursery (apart from the BCA). Nazma's involvement in learning at nursery with adults appears to be totally dependent on drawing on her home experiences. In addition, she appears to view herself as 'unable to do things' at school (see transcript 11). This is then reflected in her end of Key Stage 1 SATs results.

Despite this, however, Nazma was not disempowered by her experience in nursery. The strategy she adopted with adults, to be silent, demonstrated her ability to manage the situation she was faced with as she entered school. I argue that this enabled her to 'manage' or 'control' the circumstances presented to her in nursery. In the same way, she

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strategically used her mother tongue through a linguistic and cultural mediator, as a means of finding her way through the experience of early schooling.

Secondly, Nazma has no interactions with other children in nursery, except her sister Yasmin. This lack of social and linguistic interaction with her peers is likely to have had a detrimental effect on Nazma's achievement during her early years of schooling. However, we have some insights into her playful practising of English in the nursery bathroom (see transcript 8). In contrast to this, her active engagement in the home with her siblings, where she participates in lively exchanges centred on family events, demonstrates her ability to practise and play with her newly acquired English. There are examples of her siblings' attempts to teach her English, particularly English nursery rhymes and songs (see transcript 4).

8.5   Summary

I have shown in this chapter that, in contrast to Samia and Maria, Nazma's response to early schooling was to withdraw into a shell of silence in the nursery classroom. This response may be viewed as strategic, in the same way as her persistent use of mother tongue with Musserat in an English medium environment. These insights into Nazma's learning at home and at school were presented in order to highlight 'invisible' aspects of bilingual children's experiences as they begin school.

In chapter 9 I consider the implications of the study of Samia, Maria and Nazma for early years educators.

Chapter 9

Discussion and Implications for the education of young bilingual children

9.0   Introduction

My study of Samia, Maria and Nazma has provided insights into young bilingual children's learning in the early years of schooling, which have hitherto been invisible to nursery educators. As in Pollard and Filer's study of four children's learning, which focussed on the ways in which 'they learn and make their way through a succession of new situations and experiences ...' in contexts which 'contain challenges and threats which young children have to negotiate' (Pollard with Filer, 1996: 3), I have examined three bilingual girls' ways of setting about learning in the early years of schooling. In identifying the children's strategies for coping with such situations and learning within the nursery context, there are parallels with Bruner's view of learning in action, 'in which the child is a protagonist – and agent, a victim, an accomplice.' (Bruner, 1990:85). I have argued that the nursery context the three girls enter is highly constrained and determined by early years policy and practice. An important aspect of this is the lack of training and guidance for nursery staff working with young children learning English as an additional language. In a recent report Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) have been critical of the lack of training and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) have also recognised the need to address these issues. I have also argued that despite the difficulties faced by bilingual children at this crucial stage in their schooling, including learning the language spoken by most other children and adults in the setting, Samia, Maria and Nazma adopt strategies which enable them to set about learning the language and culture of early schooling and become agents of their own action. These strategies adopted by the girls are set in the context of the need to succeed in the education system and overcome the underachievement highlighted in Nazma's elder sister, Naseem's experience of schooling (outlined in chapter 1). I have described the task facing developing bilingual children from a socio-cultural perspective, emphasising the inter-relatedness of language, culture and socialisation.

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In this chapter firstly I return to the three key frameworks outlined in Chapter 4 and examine how the data from my study contributes to a refined and extended theoretical framework in which to situate the experience of young bilingual children as they become bilingual in school. Secondly, I consider Nazma's experience of early nursery from Mussarat's perspective and highlight four key areas which have implications for educators of young bilingual children. Thirdly, I consider the insights gained from Samia and Maria's success as learners in the nursery and the role of a cultural and linguistic mediator in bilingual children's early learning. Finally I summarise the implications of my study for educators of young bilingual children and policy makers.

9.1 A new theoretical perspective

In my study of Nazma, Samia and Maria I have described the task facing developing bilingual children from a socio-cultural perspective, emphasising the inter-relatedness of language, culture and socialisation. In the following section I illustrate how the data contributes to and extends the theoretical frameworks outlined in 4.9.

9.1.1 The role of the child in her own learning

In Chapter 4 I showed how literature in this field stresses the situated nature of individual action while at the same time allowing a child's actions and responses to be viewed as strategic. However, the data in my study both incorporates and extends the socio-cultural interpretation of agency presented in 4.1 by viewing the key role of the child in the context of early schooling. An additional new dimension to this theoretical perspective is the role of the young bilingual child taking control of her learning English in the context of home and school. I shall illustrate this by drawing on examples of the data presented in Chapters 7 and 8.

Firstly I discuss Maria and Samia's successful strategies and I emphasise here the child as agent and in control of her own learning.
In order to increase their chances of 'doing well' at nursery, the language Maria and Samia need in order to fulfil adult expectations can only be acquired through the language adults use with them and with other children. The language generated through interaction with children is crucial for social well-being and for the learning that takes place through 'free' and 'structured' play activities, but this in itself will not be enough for success in schooling. Maria and Samia need to 'read' and engage with the learning that adults expect which requires responding to questions, using materials in the appropriate way, participating in adult led activities and following the kinds of exploratory and repetitive practices, which are employed for concept development prioritised in the curriculum. But it takes time to respond to adults with confidence since the situation has greater potential to 'expose' the learner. The memories of Naseem (see chapter 8.0) are

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testimony to this. On the other hand, there are examples of the ways in which both girls practise their English with other children and rehearse their new language when on their own. This is a key way in which they find their way through nursery during the early years and is illustrated in the following transcript:

Transcript 6 (Term 1)

1 Child A:	I making a box
Samia:	I making ears [to herself]
	I making ears
	I making
5	I making wheels

By the end of their first year in nursery, Maria and Samia are more confident and take risks in their English language use. They use the strategies of practising and rehearsing English, asking questions and playing with language, in the context of a play activity with peers, or, in the case of Samia, in the bathroom with a friend.

Transcript 5: (Term 1)

1 Samia:	Go back OK
	Go back
	Me no
	Go back
5	Go
Bahriye:	Me no go
Samia:	Go
	I have [indistinct]
Bahriye:	[indistinct]
10 Samia:	Go
	Go back
Bahriye:	Me toilet
Samia:	Me
Bahriye:	Ouch, shut the door or I will hit you

These are contexts where the girls feel safe and are able to take risks with their English language learning.

Samia and Maria have contrasting approaches to adults' expectations, at home and in nursery. Recognising the special significance of responding appropriately to adults, Samia makes use of her developing English with hesitancy, showing her control by minimising risk-taking. Her

strategies at nursery include 'respond without taking risks when addressed by adults', 'conform to adult expectations' and 'join in whenever possible'. A particularly significant strategy (both in nursery and in her 'school game' at home with her brother) is using knowledge of colours.

Transcript 20 (Term 1)

1 Teacher:	We need different colours to do Percy
	What colour did we need to do his boots
Samia:	black
Teacher:	so we need some black to do his boots
5	What colour do we need to do his shirt?
Child A:	green
Teacher:	what shall we use dark green or light green?
	Most children want this one
	What about his waistcoat?
10 Child B:	brown
Teacher:	is that brown?
	Is that brown?
	Is that brown?

Both Samia and Maria have learnt that they need to be able to show their understanding of 'colouring', for example, (there are also examples of other key vocabulary items such as numbers, shapes in the data) through the appropriate language interaction with an adult. However, Samia demonstrates increasing control when using her home language with a bilingual adult in the nursery and with her mother and Grandmother at home.

Transcript 30

[Pahari in italics]

1 Mother:	*Have you been outside?*
Samia:	*They both went outside with us*
	They sit with us
	They sat with us
5	*Then their mothers came*
	Their mothers went somewhere
	Then they came and they sit with us
	Then their mothers sat with us
	Then their mothers went to the Infant school
10	*Then they went home*

In contrast, Maria is at her most confident in her interactions with adults at home and in nursery. She takes every opportunity to manipulate the situation (particularly at home with her extended

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family of many adults) and 'take charge' of the conversations. At home, Maria is the focus of attention in the family. She is in control of the situation and displays a mature use of Pahari and English in her interactions with adults at home. She uses English with her Aunt and Uncle and displays considerable skill in her code-switching with different members of her family.

Her mother tongue is mature for her age and she uses complex language in her conversations with her father, mother and younger brother. In addition, she is strategic in the ways in which she 'conforms to adult expectations' and offers monologues to the microphone (see example below, for example), as this is her means of 'being centre of attention' in the household.

Transcript 32 (Term 3)

[Pahari in italics]

1	Uncle	*come on speak English*
	Maria	you are
		I don't care
		I don't care
5		I don't care
		I don't care
	Auntie	that's a Spice Girls songs, isn't it?
		I don't care, I don't care
		How does it go?
10	Maria	every song and then it's Spice Girl
		like that I don't care
	Auntie	yeah that's a Spice Girls song
		Have you heard it
		It was on the TV
15	Maria	sing it then
	Uncle	you sing it
	Maria	no you sing it
	Uncle	you don't want to sing, do you

This strategic role is one she is able to begin to act out during her early experiences of schooling and one in which she is viewed as successful, by adults at nursery.

The strategies presented in the section above highlight the role of the child as an agent in her learning of English in the nursery and at home.

9.1.2 Scaffolding, Guided Participation and Synergy: The role of these in the lives of young bilingual children

In Chapter 4 I showed how studies relating to scaffolding, guided participation and synergy focused either on the adult as mediator (scaffolding and guided participation) or the synergy between older children using the language of school. My work argues for recognition of the young child playing a key role in extending the concepts of scaffolding, guided participation and synergy. I argue here that my data goes beyond the 'unequal relationship' indicated by Rogoff's 'guided participation' and contributes new understandings and insights to the notion of 'reciprocity' interpreted in Gregory's theory of 'synergy' by indicating that the child mediates learning for herself through interacting with a younger child. Data from my study reveals ways in which this synergy and scaffolding begin from a very early age amongst bilingual children in spite of a very limited command of the new or 'school' language.

Samia's play with her younger brother at home reveals not only how school learning flows over into play at home, but also how she scaffolds learning herself. She 'manages' the play with her brother in such a way as to both engage him and to reinforce her language learning and the learning that is being acquired through the nursery curriculum. She also demonstrates her considerable skills in the sophisticated code-switching she employs in her 'school game' with Sadaqat.

Transcript 15: (Term 2)

[Pahari in italics]

1. Samia:	*Sadaqat, stand up*
	we're not having group time now
	group time
	you can play, Sadaqat
5.	*shall we play something?*
	you want to do painting?
	[noise from Sadaqat]
	O.K. get your water
	let's get a water
10.	let's get a water
	let's get a paper
	baby didn't cry
	hurry up (whispering)
	you want paper
15.	and put in the painting
	do that and what are you choose colour

	black
Sadaqat:	back
20.Samia:	no, there's a black
	did you finish it?
	painting
	you make it
	Sadaqat, do it with this finger
25.	*do it like this, do it like that*
	wash
	which colour *are you going to choose*
	next thing
	don't do it, Sadaqat
30.	*orange satsuma*
	I'm doing it satsuma colour
	(clapping, knocking)
	you are having your...
	(crying)
35.	like it?
Sadaqat:	*mummy* [calling to mother]

Samia's home play with her brother also reveals the extent to which she has absorbed the everyday language used by adults in the nursery. This contrasts with the language that she learns through social interaction with her peers. It also shows the extent to which she has absorbed the routines and expectations in the nursery setting. This cultural learning is very important for her confidence in knowing what to do and how to behave and is closely interwoven with her language learning. Her use of language of adults in the nursery in her play is an example of how her language learning and her developing socio-cultural positioning is related to taking on the 'voice' of influential others and demonstrates the process of 'ventriloquation' (Bakhtin, 1986). In lines 18 - 20 in this excerpt the synergy or unique reciprocity whereby an older child 'teaches' her younger sibling and at the same time develops her own learning is evident. This is also demonstrated through the ways in which she code-switches to include Sadaqat in her role play (see lines 4 - 6 for example). Throughout Samia's school game with her younger brother she is scaffolding her own learning and demonstrating understandings of early schooling which have been invisible to educators of young bilingual children.

9.1.3 The role of Asserting Possession in the 'Silent Period': contributing to knowledge of the process of learning English as an additional language

In Chapter 4, I showed how second language acquisition studies view the Silent Period as principally passive. In this section I outline the contribution my study makes to the current knowledge and understanding of the process of learning English as an additional language in the early years.

The stages of the early development of English as an additional language have been established in the research literature as cited in Chapter 4 (Wong Filmore (1979), Tabors (1997), Clarke 1996). The 'silent period', the use of 'silent rehearsal' of language, formulaic language and telegraphic speech have been recognised as 'normal' processes and this information is helpful for practitioners (NALDIC Baseline Assessment Working Paper). However, until now self assertion has not been recognised as playing a crucial role during this period. Through my data I argue that self assertion should also be recognised as a 'normal' response at the stage before early social language has begun to develop. Given the possibility that it could be interpreted negatively, it would be helpful for nursery staff to know that self-assertion should be seen as a recognised phase in the early stages of learning English.

A specific outcome of my study, therefore, is a new perspective on the early development of English as an additional language, particularly the Silent Period. Although second language acquisition studies have established recognisable early stages in the learning of English, they have not been discussed in the wider socio-cultural context of young children's learning at home and at school. I argue that the use of the strategy of self assertion is a normal stage that children go through at the early stages of learning English as they adjust to the new environment of early schooling. The use of self assertion may be viewed as an important aspect of asserting their own identities before early social language has begun to develop.

The key aspects of learning for Nazma, Samia and Maria relate to English language learning, social interaction, nursery routines and the learning that is encouraged through the delivery of the nursery curriculum. The process of learning English is interwoven with these other aspects of learning. They are mutually interdependent aspects of how they 'make their way' through the experience of attending nursery. They need social interaction in order to learn English but at the same time they need English in order to be able to engage with their peers. During their first term in nursery, Nazma, Maria and Samia spend long periods of time listening actively to the English spoken by other children at play. However, the need to assert their identities, and use the strategy of 'asserting possession', commands all their English language resources in the early transcripts. The use of self assertion, for example, 'no, mine; not yours', is a key strategy

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for 'getting by' during their first few months in nursery, a time normally referred to as the 'silent period' in the developmental process of learning English as an additional language.

Transcript 1 (Term 1)

Samia has moved onto the carpet where children are playing with a Brio wooden train set. She is silent whilst playing on her own.

1 Samia: No, mine

                    Not yours [to another child]

                    No (indistinct) big boy

Samia: Look [to another boy]

[There is no response.

There is talk going on around her while she is playing, but not addressed to Samia].

5 Child 1:   No, this is mine

Samia: It's mine

Child 1:   You're hurting me, get away from me.

Samia: That's mine

Child1:   Hey, you're breaking mine.

The findings suggested by my data point to this use of self assertion being a quite normal stage that children go through at the early stages of learning English as they adjust to a very new and challenging environment.

I have discussed the successful strategies adopted by Maria and Samia (in chapter 7), and their subsequent high achievement in the educational system (assessed here in terms of National Curriculum SAT results) in Chapter 6. Later in this chapter I shall discuss what we can learn from the successes of these children and the implications for early years educators.

However, firstly I consider the contrasting experience of Nazma, who does not achieve in the same way as Samia and Maria. Her sister, Naseem's reflections on her early schooling have been discussed in chapter 8, together with Nazma's strategies at home and at school during her four terms at nursery. What can we learn from Nazma's experience of early schooling? What are the implications for early years educators?

9.2　Understanding Nazma's experience of nursery

In order to gain a fuller understanding of the experience of children like Nazma, I carried out an extended informal interview with Mussarat during the period of my study. I was particularly interested in exploring Mussarat's experience as a BCA, Pre-school Outreach Assistant, respected member of the community and mother of six children. I present this interview at some length, together with a discussion of how this relates to Nazma's experience of early schooling, in order to include Mussarat's perspective on the learning experience of bilingual children. There was no formal interview schedule but the key themes of inquiry were as follows:

- Building on children's home experiences;
- Differences between the values and beliefs in the home and in nursery;
- Learning English as an additional language in the nursery;
- Mother tongue development and bilingual support.

9.2.1　Building on children's home experiences

The main strategy used by Nazma during her nursery experience was to 'build upon her home experience.' The understanding of how to build upon children's home experiences, particularly children who do not share the language and culture of school, is of crucial importance for educators of young bilingual children. A bilingual classroom assistant or other adult from the same community may provide class teachers with a link to this home experience without which they would be unable to deliver this fundamental principle held by all early years practitioners.

The first part of the interview was in response to the question; 'What aspects of nursery provision do you think are helpful for bilingual children, and what aspects might they find more difficult?

M:　　To be honest, in my opinion, everything in nursery, school building, they're all very new to children – bilingual children –I'm thinking of children from Asian backgrounds mainly – the whole system, everything, is a strange place, strange materials, everything is new, to most of those children when they first start nursery and the responsibility on the grown-ups, it's a big responsibility

This comment mirrors the sense of 'a strange place', demonstrated in the data from the early observations of Nazma at nursery. Mussarat then went on to reflect on the responsibility of adults and particularly her own role as a bilingual adult in the nursery.

M	If somebody like me who speaks the language or looks like his family or mother or sister or auntie, they feel that much comfortable, because I heard from the teachers, those children come in there a little bit more confident.

M	I've been working with young children for some time now and, having had my own family through the system, I feel those children are really in a sense lost.

Mussarat then proceeded to explain why bilingual children, in her words, are 'at a disadvantage';

M	When a child comes from home, their home experience is completely different, which is not the child's fault, and children come in, and they hardly see anything from their home background whatsoever. I suppose then it's hard for those children to settle in and do things. You know, when we use playdough, and one child is saying 'I'm making a cake. I'm making lots of cakes', the other child is just standing there rolling, rolling, rolling, because you know, he couldn't think of anything to make out of playdough.

M	At the moment, home learning is altogether ignored completely – they start from scratch.

R	Yes, and you have a particular understanding of that because of the pre-school project. So how could nursery staff have a better understanding, and build on the home experiences more?

M	At the moment, most of the teachers have no idea about Asian children's backgrounds, unless they've been lucky to have someone like me who can't stop talking about things. I don't know what they do when they train teachers…but they haven't any knowledge of children's backgrounds. They should be aware that these bilingual children's families have been here for 3 generations now, and they are still here and they want to keep their identity and culture. They want to carry on and keep it alive.

Mussarat underlines the crucial importance of understanding children's home backgrounds here. She states that, from her perspective, 'home learning is ignored completely – they start from scratch' and makes the point strongly that this puts bilingual children at a disadvantage because 'it is hard for children to settle in and do things.' We have seen in this study that bilingual staff have an important role in helping mediate between the cultural and linguistic expectations of both home and school. Musserat is able to bridge the gap between experiences in the home and those within the nursery. She uses her mother tongue for learning purposes in the nursery, talks to Nazma about her home experiences and communicates with parents. It is evident, therefore, that all nursery staff need to take steps to understand better children's home

experiences in order to plan for teaching. At the same time, there is a need for more extensive, organised and planned use of bilingual staff, which fits in with and extends nursery practice. There are also issues raised here in relation to the training of teachers.

9.2.2 Differences between the values and beliefs in the home and in nursery:

In a discussion of the differences between the values in nursery and the values in the home, I asked Mussarat about the importance placed on children's independence in the nursery;

M   Oh yes, there is a very big, huge difference. Because in our culture, we care for our children, dress them, wash them, up to the age of 7 or 8, where it's possible, when your children lets you, it's our caring side. Whereas, as I said, in nursery they want them to be independent right from the beginning.

M   So, there's a clash there, the two things are clashing. The child comes home and mummy hangs up his coat. But the teacher wants them to do it themselves. So this is a clashing point. It's very important for us as a carer of the child at home, so we do all the things we can.

R   Do you feel that that clash is something that parents feel matters to them?

M   Yes, through the experience I've had with parents, teachers and everybody, teachers only mind if the child cannot do it, or are not prepared to do it, they wouldn't see their side, why they aren't doing it. They say 'oh this child is lazy.' They label the child very early on...

R   So the teachers don't understand that different backgrounds and different values...

M   They haven't enquired about it. They haven't questioned that, why these children are not doing it. Whereas if we explained to parents why we are asking children to be independent for schooling, they will try their best to fulfil that.

The difference in expectations of home and school is exemplified in the observation notes of Nazma's early days in nursery, 'she wouldn't attempt tracing over her name, unless helped by a adult', whereas at home, the caring and nurturing of the young child was viewed as culturally important.

The fact that teachers had not questioned their assumptions about these issues was clearly a central theme for Mussarat. She went on to relate how teachers ask parents for information for Nursery Baseline Assessment;

M   They will ask them can he do it, you know, to complete the form. They will ask can this child do this, this, this, but they will not ask them about why they do things. And sometimes they say 'oh this child is very clumsy', those sort of silly labels you know, and I feel angry sometimes. I wonder, have you asked somebody about it?

The early 'labelling' of young bilingual children, particularly through Baseline Assessment and other nursery assessments, is part of the view of 'disadvantage' raised by Mussarat in the interview. If the starting points for bilingual children when they begin formal schooling were better understood by nursery staff, more consideration might be given to the adaptations necessary to take them into account and Nazma's chances for success within the system might be improved.

9.2.3 Learning English as an additional language in the nursery

I asked the question, 'How do bilingual children learn English in the nursery?

M   I mean, from the parents' point of view, they send their children to learn English and everything else in school.

M   I think it depends when children come into nursery. Most children, if they are bright and outgoing, if they have all the opportunities and everything, they will be picking up English for learning not in reception, but at the end of reception. But the children I work with, you know average, everyday average children, normally in that age-group they don't want to talk to others, they just get on with their own activity, they're in their own little world, you know. So those children will find English for learning quite late, maybe Year 3, or so.

M   Yes, learning is happening, they are learning the skills, I think, but if we talk about language, unless language is talked to or listened to and encouraged, it won't happen I don't think. It will happen, but that's for later. If a child is given a little warmth, in a one-to-one situation, given that chance, that child is more likely to speak and learn and repeat in the same language.

Mussarat's observations here about young children learning English at nursery are pertinent to Nazma's situation. She refers to such children as 'everyday average children', who 'just get on

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... in their own little world.' She states that from her experience, such children will have acquired 'English for learning', as opposed to.'English for survival' by Year 3. However, her view is that 'if the child is given a little warmth, in a one-to-one situation,' she will learn English more effectively. This is a theme, which continues in her discussion of the role of adults in the nursery.

R   How much English are they learning from adults?

M   Very little I suppose. If there is time, and one child, or a little group of children, is given time every day, those children will be much more talkative, I strongly believe that. They'll be better off than a child who hasn't had that opportunity at all – that's what's happening, not all children are having quality time.

M   They [adults] don't talk to children in passing, but you know if a child is really knocking on their shoulder, saying 'look at me', that's what they like to do. But not all children are like that, you see. They are not all used to 'knocking on shoulders', but they want to be encouraged to say and do things. Then those children will become more confident and see that somebody's caring about me.

R   What about bilingual staff?

M   It is difficult to make a judgement but once me, or people like me, are there, those bilingual children feel confident, it's OK, you can see in their eyes, they're happy. And when we do activities, they are much happier to engage with those activities and do what they're asked to do. Whereas, they'll do this with any other teacher, but they'll do it reluctantly.

R   How would you describe the development you would expect to see in the early stage bilingual child over 3 terms in nursery?

M   I think the opportunity should be there for children to come out of nursery after 3 terms, they should be well equipped with learning for surviving, you know, English for survival. Most times, they'll be able to ask questions and the majority will still be speaking reluctantly. But, there is a lot of room for those children to develop, the children I have seen, I don't know whose fault it is, but there is something missing there. These children come to the nursery every day, five days a week, and they come out and they hardly speak, you know, survival English, they're not fluent, unless a child is very bright.

Mussarat states that there is 'something missing' in the learning of English for bilingual children in nursery. She views the opportunity for 'quality' time with an adult once a day as important for

English language development. Clearly, this relates closely to Nazma's early learning of English. There was no record of these language learning opportunities in Nazma's nursery.

9.2.4 Mother tongue development and bilingual support

Mussarat made a clear statement about how bilingualism was viewed in the nursery and in the education system as a whole:

M   Bilingualism is not really addressed in nurseries. In the nursery I work in, except me, nobody's there. I mean, education... they haven't thought about bilingual children at all, you know. Yes, we are teaching the nursery children all these skills, but they haven't thought about bilingual children. It doesn't matter whether they understand it or not.

The last sentence has resonances with Naseem's reflections on 'not understanding the work'. There is a sense in which the curriculum is delivered to all children, but the specific needs of bilingual children, who are learning through English, their second/additional language, have not been considered.

She then proceeded to describe aspects of her current role as BCA and her experience as a parent;

M   We have been there for about the past 6 years, I mean our BCAs, this job was introduced in 1991? Before that, they didn't have anybody bilingual, even for the school. So children are left, parents, they are still not speaking English. But they are feeling comfortable because they see me.

R   How do you see the development of their home language in the nursery? What happens?

M   Full stop. None whatsoever. If nobody's speaking their language, how can they help with it? And our role is to teach them English through their first language. We're not really teaching the first language.

Mussarat is very clear about the lack of recognition of the home language and about the potential role of mainstream education in supporting the development of the mother tongue and she continues to illustrate this point poignantly by describing how her own daughter 'lost' her mother tongue before she was four years old.

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'I can give you an example of my daughter, years ago. She was a fluent Urdu speaker at home, she was brilliant, she really was. She went to playgroup at the age of nearly 3 and before she was 4, rising 4, she was barely speaking Urdu at all. She was a bright child, she was experiencing English at home as well because she was listening to her older siblings, because they speak English to one another, and she was watching television, and she knew I speak English, so she had that advantage in a sense. And then after 4 weeks in playgroup, I noticed her first language going downhill, because you know I could see it. I could hear her just using more English. And before she was 4, she was almost using full English. One day we were coming home from playgroup and I was feeling a bit sad, you know, about how beautifully she used to speak Urdu and I asked her, 'what happened to your Urdu?' She replied, 'I lost it, on the way from home to playgroup.' And I think she was one hundred percent right. And I feel very sad. I tried very hard to teach them at home. I was teaching them Urdu, and she was reading it, writing it, but speaking English and reading and writing it. And now she's struggling with Urdu. I mean if it happens that she's the only one at home, somebody comes to the front door who can't speak any English, maybe she'll say one word in Urdu, but she doesn't know what to say. So, she lost it. I mean, I'm sure she's got it somewhere, but the fluency's gone.'

R   And do you see this happening to other children in the nursery?

M   Children who live with extended families, they will keep it because they have to use it. They have to keep it to communicate with their grandparents, aunties and uncles. People who are living in a very closed community, they keep it. Maybe they don't develop it. I mean those children in reception now, they hardly speak any first language to me, unless they are stuck with a word some time. So, I think they are losing it, but not as quickly as my children, because we do not live in an area where we have Urdu or Pahari speakers next door. So they lose it at a slower rate, unless they go to Pakistan for 6 months and then come back. You know those children are still very fluent.

Mussarat's personal reflections on her own child's loss of her mother tongue 'on the way from home to playgroup' is presented in contrast to other children, such as Nazma, Samia and Maria, who live with extended families and continue to use Pahari with their extended family and their close community. For Samia, Maria and Mussarat's daughter, by the time they enter school, their mother tongue has given them the linguistic platform from which they can launch themselves into a lifetime of learning in the UK education system. They use Pahari to effect a transition from home to school, and are able to adapt rapidly to new linguistic circumstances when the need arises. However for Nazma, who found the transition to school more difficult, and spoke only when the BCA was there, Pahari was her lifeline to learning, and indeed to her

socialisation. Her interactions in the home suggest that she is capable of greater engagement in the nursery and there is evidence that she is extremely uncomfortable in the setting, as was her sister. We may be reminded of Woods' (1998) description of children being 'overwhelmed by uncertainty' referred to in Chapter 4. I argue that Nazma's early schooling would have been greatly enhanced by the provision of more learning opportunities in her mother tongue at nursery.

9.3 Nazma: 6 years on

On 18 December 2002, I returned to Nazma's home to talk to Nazma about her experiences of early schooling. Nazma sat with her elder sister, Naseem (aged 16), during the interview. Nazma is now just 10 years old and in Year 5.

[R = Rose, N = Nazma, Nas = Naseem]

R   What do you remember about nursery?

N: It's this big place and lots of corners.

R: What was it like when you first went into nursery? What did it feel like?

N: Scary

R: Why was it scary?

N: Because this teacher, Mrs Offley, shouted at me 'cos sometimes she used to shout at me because I never used to speak to her.

R: why didn't you speak to her?

N: I was shy with the teachers

R: Did you speak to anyone?

N: I speak to Musserat. Once I had this different teacher, Mrs Able (Reception class teacher) and all during the register I didn't speak but once I said good morning and she asked me to get my star book out.

R: Really? How did you feel then?

N: Happy

R: Did you have any special friends in nursery?

N: no

R: what would have made it better for you?

N: less children

N: Once I done this work and Mrs Offley said all the children told them look what you doing
         She said to me, you have to tell me
         I told her but she 's keep on asking me and I don't like it.

Naseem's comments

[she has been sitting listening to Nazma conversation]

Nas: She's always been a quiet person

She talks to herself for hours

When I went to the parent consultation meeting, they were happy

They said she is doing fine

They said she is still very quiet

She still has selected friends

They are pleased that she does that because before that she just sat in the corner

R: When did that change?

Nas: Year 1

Nazma said that you helped her a lot and made her feel confident, special

Nas: She's still the baby

I think that might be the reason why she was so quiet because she was the baby

I think she was really attached to my mum

She still can't sleep without my mum and the fact she was away from her mum

I think that's what made her scared

And also in the Asian community you don't really mix with other people

I think she feel frightened

Some children in nursery have really strong characters and she was really quiet

That's why she got scared

Being in the house just tucked away, then with everyone and I think the best solution for her was to shut herself up.

R: Can you see yourself in her experience?

Nas: I was very much like that as well

I was very closed

I was very shy speaking to teachers, but thinking back now, I think that's really stupid,

There're only teachers, but you felt that everything you're going to say, it's going to come out wrong and everyone looking at you

It's getting that confidence

And I suppose you get that when you are growing up and mixing with new people and socialising

It must have been very difficult for Mrs Offley. She was used to children who talked a lot and had strong characters

But Nazma just kept herself to herself

In this interview with Nazma and Naseem six years on, we have an additional perspective on the two sisters' early learning in school. In Chapter 1 we were introduced to Naseem who was the same age as Nazma is now at the time of the interview set out above. What is striking about this

is firstly the ability of Nazma to reflect on and express her feelings about nursery experience in a way which could not have been articulated at the time of her early schooling. This provides a valuable additional insight into Nazma's learning and confirms my own understanding of what was taking place during this time. As Naseem stated clearly at the end of the interview, 'Nazma just kept herself to herself' and we begin to understand the power of the 'Silent period' in Nazma's early learning of English. She felt under pressure to speak to teachers, was socially isolated and 'was shy with the teachers.' Nazma, however, understood the significance of responding appropriately to teachers, including answering the register, 'but once I said Good Morning.' Overall, nursery to her was a 'scary place' where teachers 'shouted' at her and she responded by taking the best solution, as her sister observed, 'to shut herself up.' Naseem also recognises the challenge faced by the nursery teacher, 'It must have been very difficult for Mrs Offley. She was used to children who talked a lot.'

Secondly, we have here in Nazma a mirror image of her older sister at 8 years old and vice versa which now extends to Nazma at 9 being the mirror image of Nazma at 4 and again Nazma at 10 being the mirror image of Naseem at 16. Naseem actually states, 'I was very much like that as well' and we see that a pattern may well be set from the earliest days in school. Naseem during my visit to the family home in December 2002 also talked about the fact that she had left school with no GCSEs or other qualifications. She was now, at 16, helping her mother at home and, if this mirror image of Naseem were to become a reality for Nazma, she would not have met the high expectations discussed with her mother at the beginning of the study. So, this longitudinal ethnographic study of young children at home and at school, is not only about Nazma finding her way through nursery, but about life chances and addressing the inequalities Nazma and Naseem faced during their early schooling. It is also about giving a voice to children and families, like Nazma's and Naseem's, which might otherwise not be heard. I argue that this offers the potential for future longitudinal ethnographic studies of young children, where it is possible for sufficient time to elapse in order to gain a reflective perspective on early learning.

9.4 What can we learn from successful learners: Samia and Maria?

In Chapter 7 I have shown the control Samia and Maria take over their learning through the strategies they adopt as they go through the process of learning English at the same time as experiencing formal schooling for the first time. I argue that the detailed picture, which emerges of Samia and Maria's learning, both at home and in nursery, is not visible to the nursery teacher and therefore not fully understood.

For both Samia and Maria, nursery provision was very similar. They both attended multi-ethnic schools with experienced teachers who planned and delivered a curriculum, which is defined by current policy in the UK. Very similar BCA support was allocated to the two settings, which was approximately 8 hours per week in order to support bilingual children's transition from mother tongue to English. In both contexts there was very little that the system provided for Samia and Maria, which was 'special' in any way. The same learning experiences were presented to bilingual children as were presented to all children. The adults in the nursery taught Samia and Maria in much the same way as other children, but acted with patience as they responded to their 'Silent Period' and allowed time for the children to 'catch up' with their English speaking peers.

Despite the fact that provision for all the children was broadly the same and the nursery environment is viewed as a good context for learning English, I argue that current nursery policy and practice is not designed to meet the distinctive needs of bilingual children. I therefore argue that the children needed to design their own strategies in order to make their way through early schooling experiences. It is, however clear that Samia and Maria fared much better than Nazma in the system. This suggests that there are a number of factors, which enable them to assert their own agency and develop their own strategies.

Firstly, there is evidence in the data that both Maria and Samia understand the importance of engaging with all aspects of learning in the nursery. A specific outcome of my study is a new perspective on the early development of English as an additional language, particularly the 'silent period'. Although second language acquisition studies have established recognisable early stages in the learning of English, they have not been discussed in the wider socio-cultural context of young children's learning at home and at school. I argue that the use of the strategy of self assertion is a normal stage that children go through at the early stages of learning English as they adjust to the new environment of early schooling. The use of self assertion may be viewed as an important aspect of asserting their own identities before early social language has begun to develop.

During the course of the nursery year, the girls begin to engage in social interaction with peers. However, this takes place in contexts, which are not observable by the teacher and in 'safe' places. Both Maria and Samia take risks and experiment with their English whilst playing with other children. Samia uses the strategy of 'practising English' with her friend, Bahriye, in the bathroom (see transcript 5) and Maria uses the strategy of 'rehearsing English' during her play in a quiet corner of the nursery (see transcript 6). As their confidence develops, Samia and Maria use 'asking questions' and 'language play' as strategies for engaging in play with other children at nursery.

A key insight into young bilingual children's learning processes is shown in Samia's play at home with her younger brother (transcript 15). Her play at home reveals not only how school learning flows over into play at home, but also how Samia takes control of her learning herself. She is the key player in the learning process. She 'manages' the play with her brother in such a way so as both to engage him and to reinforce her language learning and the learning that is being acquired through the nursery curriculum. Again, much of the developmental process, which Samia goes through is not visible to the nursery teacher. The skills she shows in play with her brother; her use of English at that point in time, her facility with code-switching, her ability to engage and sustain her younger brother's involvement, her manipulation of 'school knowledge' (for example, knowing colours), are not understood by the nursery teacher.

Secondly, the children's interactions with adults in the nursery are centrally important to their relative success in the education system. Maria and Samia appear to understand the need to engage with the learning that adults expect, both at nursery and at home. Recognising the significance of responding appropriately to adults, Samia demonstrates her control by minimising risk-taking in her response to adults' expectations. A particularly significant strategy for both girls is to show her knowledge of colours, through the appropriate interaction with adults. Samia also demonstrates increasing control over her learning when using her home language with a bilingual adult in the nursery and with her mother and grandmother at home. In contrast, Maria is very confident in her interactions with adults at home and at nursery. She is able to act out a strategic role as 'centre of attention' and 'taking charge' during her early experiences of schooling. She is prepared to respond and take risks and a key strategy for her is to use 'repetition' to engage with adults. This is a role which enables her to be viewed as a successful learner by the nursery staff. The recordings of Maria at home display her mature use of English and Pahari in her interactions with adults at home. She is strategic in the ways in which she conducts herself, taking a leading role in her learning at home and at school.

However, we have seen that Nazma has very little social interaction with her teacher and this experience is confirmed by the similar ways in which her older sister struggles within the schooling system. Of most concern is the fact that children's early interactions in the nursery appear to have a serious impact on their life chances. How well does current provision take account of this and seek to support children like Nazma, as they struggle to learn English in the early years of schooling? For Nazma and Naseem, there is an urgent need for the system to begin to redress the disadvantage which is evident in their experiences of school. Of particular significance here is the role of the cultural mediator, Mussarat, who is able to use the lifeline of Nazma's mother tongue to bring her home experiences into school learning and to help her to make sense of nursery.

9.5 The role of the bilingual adult

If the official literature produced in England has inadequately recognised the distinctive nature of teaching and learning EAL (see chapter 3), it has been even less informative about the role of bilingual staff like Mussarat. For example, while there are Standards for teaching assistants which include reference to working with children learning EAL, there are to date no equivalent Standards for bilingual teaching assistants. 'In general, bilingual assistants have had to make their own niche within the broad continuum of expectations for general classroom ancillary workers.' (Bourne, 2001: 253) There is also a lack of guidance or research on their use of both L1 and L2 to support children's learning. Martin-Jones (1995) and Bourne (2001) are almost unique in having given attention to the distinct role of bilingual teaching assistants.

Bourne (2001) draws attention to the professional isolation of bilingual classroom assistants and to the power asymmetry between the roles constructed for the class teacher and the bilingual classroom assistant. 'Primary classrooms are social worlds of their own, creating specially sorts of identities and ways of behaving for those who enter them. Each social space has its own patterns of legitimate behaviour and ways of speaking which constrain the participants' choices of social action' (2001). This comment applies to bilingual children and to bilingual classroom assistants alike. It relates to the fact that despite the inclusion of the word 'bilingual' in the role title, bilingual classroom assistants may not feel comfortable in using children's other languages in the classroom. '...the presence of an assistant who happened to be bilingual was no guarantee of bilingual language use' (2001: 255).

Bourne points out that the presence of a bilingual teaching assistant in a classroom has a significant impact.

> 'It is not always recognised that inserting bilingual support into what has up to now been a monolingual curriculum often entails that different cultures, different ideologies and practices of teaching are also brought into the classroom, along with the different languages. Bilingualism questions ethnocentrism' (2001: 262).

In these circumstances she argues not only that class teachers will need to reconsider their practice but also that there is a wider need to 'design a pedagogy in which bilingual support could have a place (2001: 263).

'But introducing bilingual support should entail a critical re-examination of the bases of recipes for primary practice. The prevailing power asymmetry between monolingual teachers and

bilingual support assistants does not easily allow for exploration of different pedagogies, and of the possibilities of emerging new forms of pedagogy' (2001: 263).

The data collected from my interviews with Mussarat shows clearly her own perceptive understanding of Nazma's learning situation. Transcripts of her work with Nazma also show that the support she gives is vital to Nazma's limited development in the nursery. However, what Mussarat and others like her have achieved has been carried out without the intervention 'in the reconstruction of concepts of "good practice"' (2001: 266) which is called for by Bourne.

9.6   Implications for practice

Educators need to ensure that early stage learners of English have opportunities to adjust to the nursery as a socio-cultural setting and to be as fully supported as possible in their learning of English. What will assist children like Samia and Maria in the situation in which they find themselves, and how can educators support them in their own highly motivated and active learning?

Provide opportunities for one-to-one interaction with adults.
Early stage learners will benefit from adult interaction, which is responsive to individual activities as they take place. For the child the attention given by the adult is a confirmation that her presence, and what she is engaged in, is valued. The teacher is able to show her interest, adjust to the child's language level, use repetition and give time to assist response, enable known patterns to be practised, and to extend and expand them, and to model language in the contextualised situation.

Provide opportunities for language learning in teacher-led small group work
As was the case with Samia and Maria, teacher-led group work helps bilingual children develop their confidence through joining in choral responses, responding in turn-taking discussion which repeat patterns of language, and listening to the interactions of other children with the teacher. Educators who know the stage of English language development of bilingual learners in the group will be sensitive to contexts, which will enable children to respond or participate, and to those in which children can listen without having to respond. However, even when the linguistic context is beyond their full understanding, early stage learners should still be made to feel part of the group and non-verbal responses should be accepted.

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Reduce the potential for stress in the new learning environment and maximise opportunities for participation

The concept of a 'stress-free environment', which is associated with the work of Krashen (1980) is important. We have seen the relative social isolation that is part of Samia's, Maria's and Nazma's experience and that this is related to their language learning. We also know that coming to terms with the rules and routines of the nursery setting can be stressful. One significant way of reducing stress is to provide bilingual adults who can support early stage learners understand what is expected of them, as well as support their language development. Nurseries which build on children's home experience, facilitate meaningful interactions, and understand that bilingual learners need more positive interventions for language learning than is implied by 'osmosis', will be positive settings for children like Samia, Maria and Nazma.

Seek ways of supporting social interaction

Contexts which encourage English speaking peers to interact with bilingual children will support English language learning and assist early stage learners to move beyond the 'double-bind' so that they learn the social language required for interaction. English speakers can be encouraged to understand the position of the bilingual children and to help them. Hirschler (1994) reports a study of how native speakers interact with second language learners. She concludes that although the former have varying skills in engaging second language learners, 'they should be trained in strategies that have specific benefits for second language acquisition. These strategies include repetition, restatement, and request for clarification.' (op.cit.: 237)

Make the rules and routines explicit

Children like Samia, Maria and Nazma will find it easier to adjust to the nursery setting if the rules and routines are consistent and predictable, if they are made explicit, and if account is taken of the values and cultural norms of the home. 'We must come to know and understand the backgrounds of these learners in the same ways and to the same extent as those of majority group learners.' (Genessee 1995)

9.7   Summary

In this chapter I have presented a new theoretical perspective on young bilingual children's learning. I have considered Nazma's experience of nursery from Mussarat's perspective, as a BCA, Pre-school Outreach Assistant, respected member of the community and a mother. This discussion highlights four key areas in relation to Nazma's achievement in the early years of schooling (see 9.2.1) and makes a contribution to an understanding of young bilingual children's strategies for learning at home and at school. The interview with Nazma, 6 years on

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(see 9.3), provides additional insights into the two sisters' early learning in school. Then, I discuss insights gained into Samia and Maria's success as learners in the nursery and the significance of the role of the bilingual adult as a cultural and linguistic mediator in bilingual children's early learning. Finally, I present some of the implications of my study for educators of bilingual children and policy makers. The final chapter (chapter 10) is a personal reflection on my research and is an 'epilogue' to my thesis.

Chapter 10

Reflections on the study

My research started in 1996, at the time of the Government's publication of 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning' and at a time of considerable personal and professional development. The pilot study of bilingual pupils' underachievement at a multi-ethnic school in Watford (see Chapter 1) provided insights into the learning experiences of children at home and at school and, significantly, introduced me to Naseem, her family and her little sister, Nazma. It was during the process of writing up and presenting this study to the school staff, together with discussions with Mussarat and colleagues in the Section 11 project, that my inquiry began. I was fascinated by the possibility of understanding the experience of Nazma as she started her schooling. The child I met at home, with her mother, siblings and extended family, was about to make the most important transition, in terms of her educational achievement and future life chances, as she entered nursery.

It was at this time that I was appointed by Hertfordshire LEA to lead an innovative Pre-school Community-based project, working with bilingual outreach assistants in the homes of young children from minority language communities (see Chapters 5 & 6). Its aim, to increase opportunities for bilingual children to succeed in the school system, led me back to Nazma and her family. I developed an understanding of the families and the pre-school children in the home context which was in sharp contrast to the view of their nursery teachers, the Baseline Assessment scores and, more significantly, the experiences of the children in school. In the home Nazma was viewed as an active learner, talking and playing in a culturally and linguistically 'appropriate' way. In nursery, the constraints set by the expectations, rules and language of instruction set an enormous challenge for Nazma and her educators. Her early experiences are set out in Chapter 2 and are contrasted with Nina's, a monolingual child in order to illustrate this challenge. I met Samia and Maria during my visits to the homes of other families involved in the Pre-school Project. All three girls shared the same linguistic and cultural heritage. Their families originated from Azad Kashmir and were part of the settled community in Watford. They all began their school careers at the same time, with high hopes and expectations. I aimed to document closely their first year in nursery and then track their achievements as they proceeded through the schooling system. I have therefore set out documentary evidence of their

Key Stage One SAT scores in Chapter 6 as indicators of their likely future achievements in the educational system.

The greatest insight for me during this longitudinal study was the developing understanding of the ways in which all three girls were able to take control of their own learning, both at home and at school. These insights were sparked by a significant piece of data which is set out at the end of Chapter 5. In the early days of the study, The collection of home data was difficult. I had always intended to collect naturalistic data in order to develop an in depth perspective on the children's home learning, as well as school learning. The tape of Samia playing her 'school game' with her little brother provided unique insights into all aspects of this process, confirmed the data collection process and was the trigger for much of the data analysis. The presentation of this 'invisible' learning aims to give a voice to aspects of the children's learning experiences which otherwise not have been heard. The story of Nazma has been shared with many early years practitioners, both through publications and talks. In highlighting her experience during the early days at school, I have provided an opportunity for reflection and consideration of changes in practice to better meet the needs of young bilingual children. I am reminded here of an article I read in the 1980s entitled 'Rehana's Reception' (1984) which had a profound impact on my thinking. It sets out the experience of Rehana, a 5 year-old bilingual child, as she starts school:

> 'For small children school can be a terrifying and confusing experience. For children who have little understanding of English, it is even more terrifying and confusing. It could be argued that Rehana was lucky – her sister was already in the school, her teacher was patient and sympathetic, the other children were not particularly hostile. Many 5 year olds don't experience such a favourable start. But why is school so terrifying for so many children?'
> There is very little training for them [school support staff] and they are left to intuit the ethos of the school. This process is too haphazard for Rehana and all other children like her.'
> (Anon: 1984:13)

Nearly twenty years later, my study raises similar issues, particularly in relation to training for early years educators. Since 1998, during the period of writing my thesis, I have been a lecturer in Early Years Education at the University of Hertfordshire and involved in training teachers and running a degree programme for early childhood practitioners. It is in this context that I have considered in depth the context for young bilingual children's learning, in relation to policy and practice and equality of opportunity. Recent changes in policy have led to more attention being paid to English as an additional language and its implications for equality of opportunity in the early years. The pace and extent of developments and changes in UK policy during the late 1990s and early 21st century has impacted greatly on early years practice and provision. This

sets the context for the current re-focus on equality and diversity, which takes into account the multi-disciplinary nature of services, a revised early years curriculum and renewed emphasis on partnerships with parents. In the past, provision for bilingual children has been viewed as marginal (as discussed in Chapter 3). However, I argue that there has been a recent change of focus and that children learning EAL, who represent approximately 8% of the UK primary school population, have become more central to policy initiatives during the past few years.

Central to this focus are principles embodied in statutory requirements – for example, The Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) which embodies a statutory obligation for all institutions in the public sector to have race equality policies, which are acted on and monitored. Also, improvements have been brought about by policy initiatives such as *Sure Start* through its emphasis on partnership with parents and the requirement that statutory providers in health and local education authorities should work together with local communities to identify need and provide intensive support for young children and their families.

A recent DfES consultation document, 'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils' (2003) reflects an intention to make minority ethnic achievement less marginal and more central to mainstream education and identifies the need for training programmes to increase the competence and confidence of nursery teachers, teaching assistants and childcare workers in the field.

Equally, inclusion and equality are central to the *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* (2000) which has as one its key principles for early years education: 'no child should be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability'. It also recognises the diversity of children in early years settings and includes for the first time separate sections on 'meeting the diverse needs of children' and 'children with English as an additional language.' The recently introduced *Early Years Profile* (2003) also provides new opportunities for recognising and assessing bilingual children's first languages and EAL.

Developing knowledge and understanding of children learning of English as an Additional Language has been highlighted by the TTA in the new Standards as a key area for students on ITE courses. It is also integral to promoting equality of opportunity in the early years.

Statutory requirements and statements of principle by policy makers need to be understood and reflected in the policies written by individual settings. However, I believe it is only through the reflective expertise of practitioners that the intentions of the policy makers can be implemented for individual children with their diverse experiences and needs. The importance of investigating

practice from the perspective of the child, the family and community is highlighted. Here I consider the importance of researching in this area.

My own experience as a researcher began as a reflective practitioner and developed through a network of fellow researchers, involved in exploring the early learning experiences of young bilingual children This is an approach I promote with students and is a strength of the BA Early Childhood Studies (ECS) programme I run. I consider the research studies undertaken by ECS students and other early childhood practitioners crucial to the development of research in the field and a basis for future developments.

In my own research I have taken a socio-cultural perspective. Children's learning is seen in the context of their home and community learning. This perspective allows me to view social and cultural aspects of bilingual children's learning situation as integral to an account of their language and learning development. It takes account of the individual child's own social and cultural heritage and experience from the home and recognises the importance of bilingualism as giving cognitive, social and cultural advantages.

As I now move from Hertfordshire to take up a new post at University College Worcester, I leave the LEA where my study began and the University where my study evolved. I also leave the community where Samia, Maria and Nazma live and continue their schooling. I shall continue to hear the stories of their lives from colleagues and friends in their schools in Watford and my friend, Mussarat. I shall ensure that issues relating to equality and diversity, including the needs of children learning English as an additional language, are threaded through my teaching on the Early Childhood Studies programme at Worcester. My study makes a contribution to a field of research which has hitherto been underdeveloped in this country.

Glossary

Section 11: refers to Section 11 of the Local Government Act (1966) which provided funding through the Home Office to assist provision for 'immigrants'. It applied to people from New Commonwealth countries until 1994 when new legislation enabled the grant to be used to assist people from other countries. In practice, most Section 11 funding was used to pay for additional teaching and other educational posts to support ethnic minority pupils in their learning of English and in accessing the school curriculum. In 1992, following a Home Office review, the grant was used to fund 'projects'. In many cases, Section 11 staff were re-assigned to 'projects' which served the needs of their particular localities. Most Section 11 posts remained related to ESL/EAL.

EMAG (Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant): in 1999, Section 11 funding administered by the Home Office for educational purposes was transferred to the DfEE (now DfES). The main effect was to devolve 75% of the available grant to schools. The funding remained 'ring-fenced', to be used for raising the achievement of ethnic minority pupils.

BCA (Bilingual Classroom Assistant): The Swann Report (1985) recognised the value of providing unqualified ancilliary staff as a 'bilingual resource' to 'help with the transitional needs of non-English speaking children starting school' (DES, 1985: 407). BCAs are hourly paid staff who support bilingual children at an early stage in their learning of English, using the child's home language to assist the learning process. The presence of an adult who speaks the children's home language also helps children to 'settle' in school and to enhance the school's communication with parents. BCAs normally work in the classroom under the direction of the class teacher

EAL: English as an additional language (EAL) is often preferred to English as a second language (ESL) because it reflects the fact that many bilingual pupils have a knowledge of more than one language in addition to their developing use of English. During the 1990s EAL became the accepted term in the UK.

Bilingual pupils: This term is usually used to describe pupils who understand and use two or more languages. These will be home or community languages as well as English. Bilingual pupils may have varying degrees of fluency in the languages they know. In this thesis the term includes those children who are at an early stage in their learning of English.

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Pahari: Pahari is a dialect of Punjabi spoken by people in Azad Kashmir which borders North East Pakistan. Literally, it means a 'hill language' in a region which has a number of dialects. Mirpuri is a dialect spoken in the district of Mirpur. Other districts, including Kotli, have their own Pahari dialects.

Pre-school Community-Based Project: A pre-school project set up in Hertfordshire Minority Ethnic Community Support Service to help minority ethnic parents and their children in the community and school context. It aimed to increase the opportunities for young children to succeed in the schooling system and bilingual outreach assistants were employed to visit homes and work with parents and children in their home language.

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Appendix A

PRE-SCHOOL COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECT

1. Objectives:

A pre-school project is taking place to help minority ethnic parents and their children in the community and school context. It aims to increase the opportunities for young children to succeed in the school system by:

- working with parents from minority language communities and their pre-school age children in order to increase awareness about the expectations of school/nursery

- supporting parents in developing their pre-school children's skills (based on the cultural and linguistic experiences of the home) in order to enhance their achievements in the school system

- developing links between the parents and nursery/playgroup staff in order to enable the nursery staff to enhance the children's early schooling experience

2. Schools:

8 schools have been involved in the project (5 in Watford, 2 in St Albans and 1 in Hemel Hempstead). Bilingual outreach assistants visit homes to work with parents and children in their home language.

3. Project Activities:

Home visits have focused on providing and extending activities in the home to support the development of children's learning strategies in school as follows:

- using materials in the home eg. catalogues, dough, fruit and vegetables

- using materials from nursery eg. beads, scissors, glue, drawing materials

- using books eg. picture books, photograph albums, picture dictionaries

:سکول 2

اس پروجیکٹ میں 8 سکولوں نے حصہ لیا ہے۔
(ولفورڈ سے 5 ، سینٹ البنز سے 2 اور ہیمل ہیمپسٹڈ
سے 1) دوسری زبان بولنے والی اسسٹنٹ گورے
میں جاکر والدین اور بچوں کے ساتھ ان کے گھر
کی زبان میں بات کرتی ہیں اور کام کرتی ہیں۔

پروجیکٹ کا کام:

گھروں میں جاکر بچوں کے لیے اس قسم کی چیزیں
مہیا کرنے اور کام کرنے پر دھیان دیا جاتا ہے جن
سے آگے چل کر سکولوں میں بچوں کو سکینے اور پڑھنے
پڑھنے میں مدد ملے۔ وہ درج ذیل ہیں۔

- گھروں میں پائی جانے والی چیزیں مثلاً کیٹلاگ
آٹا ۔ پھل اور سبزی

- نرسری کی چیزوں کا استعمال مثلاً بیڈز زدموتی
قینچی ، سرشش دلکو اور تصویریں بنانے کا سامان

- کتابوں کا استعمال مثلاً البم ، تصویری کتابیں
تصویریں اور ڈکشنری اور دوسری
کتابیں۔

Young children are very active learning about the world in which they live. Through play they can find out what things do, what things are like, and to interact with others.

Learning takes place through many of the things that children do at home. For example:

- Watching parents cook, helping with making rotis.

- Washing up and bath time.

- In the garden, playing with soil, watering the plants.

- Role play: playing mummies and daddies, acting out films.

- Drawing and writing.

- Watching films and drama, and listening to music from Pakistan and India. Watching T.V.

- Watching parents at work: cutting and sewing fabrics for clothes.

- Quiet time: joining in with prayers, reciting prayers. Singing lullabies.

Through doing things children can develop practical and thinking skills.

- Developing manipulative skills: kneading, rolling.
  Seeing how things change e.g. flour to dough.

- Developing observation skills: floating and sinking, learning about quantities (full/empty)

- Learning to co-operate with others.
  Looking at similarities and differences.
  Observing changes
  Exploring textures.

- Learning new vocabulary to communicate with others.
  Sharing and taking turns.

- Representing what they see and hear.
  Developing hand control.

- Developing listening skills, rhythm and sequencing.

- Learning to be creative, to concentrate and to persevere with a task to achieve an end result.

- Learning to be still and learning to concentrate.

The approach of the British education system is that learning through play is appropriate for young children.

The nursery builds on home experiences and approaches them in a more structured way:

- Cooking activities: play dough, cooking, chopping, rolling, using cutters.

- Water play: using containers of different shapes and sizes, boats, ducks etc.

- Sand: using rakes, spades, sieves and other equipment to make marks and build structures.

- Imaginative play area: home corner, shop etc: telephones, kitchen utensils, dressing-up clothes.

- Drawing, writing materials: pencils, felt pens, templates, stencils, paper, card etc.

- Music area: percussion instruments e.g. tambourines, shakers: singing together and listening to music.

- Art area: painting: sticking materials to make pictures and models.

- Quiet area: books, puzzles, games: learning rhymes and songs: listening to stories